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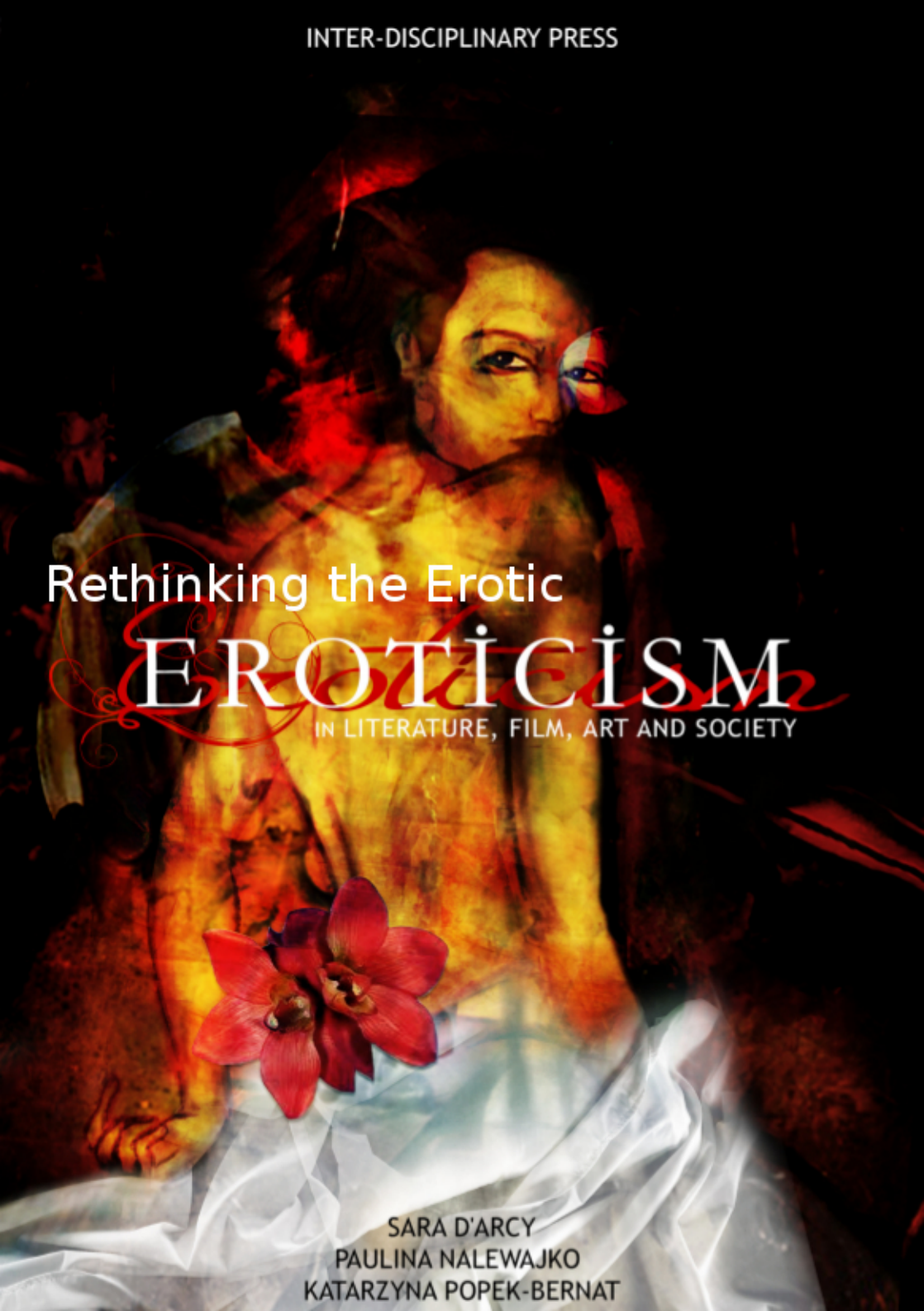

Rethinking the Erotic

EROTİCİSM

IN LITERATURE, FILM, ART AND SOCIETY

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Rethinking the Erotic

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Edited by

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and Katarzyna Popek-Bernat

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Introduction

Sara D'Arcy, Paulina Nalewajko and Katarzyna Popek-Bernat

The erotic is a complex and highly problematic phenomenon that writers and scholars have agonised over for centuries. Generally speaking, the erotic refers to sex and sexuality. However, it is a multifaceted term that holds multiple, albeit similar, meanings for different people. The erotic, on the one hand, is personal – a collection of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and sensations shared with one's self or other people. On the other hand, it is explicitly public. The erotic has been reproduced in literature and in art, provoking scandal, outrage and, in some cases, censorship. It has also undergone ruthless scientific and psychoanalytic study, most notably by the sexologists of the 19th and 20th centuries, and continues to be at the forefront of political, national and transnational debate, with issues such as the legalisation of same-sex marriage and the sexual rights of women being discussed daily across the globe. The erotic refuses to be defined objectively by law, religion or reason – and, as such, produces endless issues and debate.

The erotic is the concept that forms the basis of this volume, which includes chapters from 15 different authors who presented their ideas on eroticism at the 7th Global Conference: The Erotic (Exploring Critical Issues) at Mansfield College, Oxford in September 2012. This interdisciplinary conference invited delegates to exchange ideas on the critical issues relating to the erotic – from the history of eroticism, the politics and ethics of the erotic, eroticism in art, literature and film through to religion and eroticism, understanding the erotic, and the perception of eroticism in different cultures and societies.

The conference proved to be innovative, stimulating and inspiring, as delegates amiably debated the issues of the erotic in great depth. The conference also offered a broad perspective on the erotic with conference delegates representing not only a wide variety of academic and non-academic disciplines – from literature, linguistics, film and art through to anthropology, psychology, theology, and law – but also a range of countries from across the world: India, Brazil, Australia, USA, Poland, United Kingdom, Mexico, South Africa, Israel, Spain, Egypt, Croatia, Algeria, and China.

This edited collection of chapters provides a snapshot of the conference and is divided into four sections – *The Erotic and Literature*, *The Erotic and Cinema*, *The Erotic and Art*, and *The Erotic and Society* – to reflect the conference presenters' principal approaches to the issues of the erotic.

The first section contains four chapters on eroticism in literature, in which the authors provide an insight into the issues of the erotic through their interpretation and study of various literatures. This section opens with an investigation of the debate of eroticism and work ethic in Kabyle folktales, myths, and love poetry, which is followed by an article related to John Milton's literary production, Angela Carter's rewriting of Charles Baudelaire's muse and male *flâneur* trope for

feminist ends, and, finally, a research-based paper on Spanish and Polish contemporary literature.

Sabrina Zerar's chapter explores the eroticism of traditional Kabyle culture in a new light. Following a thorough literature review of previous studies on Kabyle culture, Zerar uncovers the colonial bias that continues to pervade postcolonial work on the Kabyles. In this original and thought-provoking article, Zerar deconstructs the firmly held belief that a strong work ethic is at odds with a satisfying erotic life. By analysing Kabyle folktales, myths and love poetry, Zerar reveals that the hard work ethic of traditional Kabyle culture is harmonious with erotic life.

The second chapter by Boris Beric is a commentary on the focal erotic scene from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Beric explores the connotations of Milton's description of Eve's 'swelling' breast as a vision of prelapsarian sexuality, by analysing the Augustine's phallocentric model and the differing image created by Milton in his focus on the female erection. The central reference point of the analysis is virtual environments, but it is also worth noting that Beric includes large doses of humour when making valuable analogies to present day erotics, such as: 'Whether they have ever read Augustine or not, the pharmaceutical industry definitely turned his theology into our technology by producing Viagra and actualising his idea of relaxed sex at will.'

Sara D'Arcy opens her chapter with an extremely powerful quote from Angela Carter: 'I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode.' In only few pages, D'Arcy succeeds in providing an insight into the relation between the male *flâneur* and abject female in Baudelaire's poetry and its striking appropriation and transformation for new purposes in Angela Carter's novel, *The Passion of New Eve*. In this chapter, D'Arcy demonstrates the ways in which feminist authors can use male authors' literary tropes to dismantle patriarchal ideologies from inside the canon.

The final chapter in this section also represents, to a certain extent, the idea of 'putting new wine in old bottles'. Katarzyna Popek-Bernat and Paulina Nalewajko discuss an interdisciplinary project led by a group of researchers from the University of Warsaw, which aims to study the impact of political changes on erotic life in Spain and Poland in the second half of the 20th century by analysing the representation of eroticism in contemporary Spanish and Polish literature. The 'new wine' can be understood, in this case, as the use of new technologies in literary studies. The authors offer an insight into this ongoing project, particularly its sociological and technical aspects. Popek-Bernat and Nalewajko also introduce the reader to the limitations and potential gains of this type of project, especially the issue of how we understand and define the erotic.

Section II and III are dedicated to the representations of the erotic in visual arts. Kacper Nowacki's chapter on Walerian Borowczyk's surrealist film production opens *Part II: The Erotic and Cinema*. Nowacki's chapter links some of the

approaches to eroticism from *Part I: The Erotic and Literature* as he explores some of Borowczyk's cinematographic adaptations of literary texts, as well as looking forward to *Part III: The Erotic and Painting* in the observation that Borowczyk's films contain close-ups of paintings and focus on landscapes and aesthetic qualities in general. Nowacki examines the erotic dimension of Borowcyzk's surrealist filmography, specifically discussing the boundaries between the erotic and pornography. Nowacki's study aims to demonstrate that despite Borowczyk's refusal to identify his films as 'erotic', it is unavoidable to label them as such.

Evangelia Sempou analyses Pedro Almodóvar's representation of transgressive genders and sexualities as a rebellion against the social conservativism in Spain following Francisco Franco's dictatorship in the film, *Law of Desire*. Sempou focuses on the genders and sexualities of the three main characters and their character development, as well as more general issues of eroticism in her analysis of narcissism and fetishism. Sempou concludes that it is Almodóvar's naturalisation of the gender and sexual transgressions of his characters which enables the viewer to perceive the universality of love, regardless of sexual orientation.

Part III: The Erotic in Art contains two chapters which deal with the issue of eroticism in painting. Sally Clarke explores the representation of the landscape in Australian paintings in the context of the colonialism of the 18th century through to the post-colonialist present day. Clarke draws out similarities between the landscape paintings of the two periods by revealing allusions to seduction and sexual possession in the images, suggesting that both colonial and post-colonial artists treat the Australian landscape as an object of desire, a land to be dominated. Clarkes argues that this eroticisation of the land is reflective of a euro-centric and hetero-normative attitude towards Australia, which is inherent not only in Romantic paintings but also in contemporary works of art. These artistic tendencies are contrasted with Clarke's own paintings, created from a queer and feminist perspective, in which she plays with the conventional forms of representing the landscape by manipulating erotic signifiers.

The starting point for Joseph Blessin's chapter is the engravings of Francesco Bartolozzi and William Blake printed in John Gabriel Stedman's travelogue which documented an English campaign to suppress slave revolt on the island, Surinam, from 1772-77. Blessin produces a comprehensive study of the seductive powers these engravings exercised over the reader, by departing from the established ideas of Jill H. Casid and Marcus Wood, by making makes reference to the philosophies of Isaac Newton and David Hume. Blessin also meditates on the concepts of seduction and pornography by examining their correlations and differences.

Part IV: The Erotic and Society shifts focus from the representation of the erotic in art to the issues of eroticism in society. In the first chapter, Jake Silver discusses the phenomenon and effects of the eroticisation of politics. Silver

examines the gay-friendly images broadcast across the world by the Israeli government to promote Israel as an example of highly developed liberalism in the Middle East, 'pink-wash' Euro-Americans, and legitimise Israel's occupation of Palestine. Silver analyses how 'pink-washing' emerged and transformed the erotic into a transnational and political issue. Furthermore, Silver discusses the concept of queerness in relation to nationalism.

Edgar Rodríguez Sánchez and Julio A. Valencia Maldonado discuss the results of a sociological study on the relationship styles of gay men in Mexico in the 21st century. Rodríguez Sánchez and Valencia Maldonado examine the development in the relationship styles of gay men across three generations in relation to the expansion of gay rights in the late 20th century and the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2009. Rodríguez Sánchez and Valencia Maldonado explain that although there are significant differences in the attitudes of gay men to relationships across the three generations, gay men are unified in their search for love, concluding that love is not a heterosexual privilege.

Yvette Wiid, the author of the final chapter in this volume, begins her paper by outlining the widely accepted concept of universal and fundamental human rights, which include not only obvious rights such as the right to life but also sexual rights. Wiid's principle question is: 'Do persons with disabilities have sexual rights?' She continues by revealing that most non-disabled persons believe that persons with disabilities have no sexual needs and therefore the issue of their sexual rights is irrelevant. In her paper, Wiid presents the difficulties persons with disabilities face in accessing appropriate sexually stimulating material and proposes solutions for some of these issues, with a focus on the need to change social attitudes to the sexual rights of persons with disabilities.

As the editors of this anthology, we would like to thank all of the researchers who contributed to this volume for producing such thought-provoking, original, and interesting studies. A special note of appreciation goes to Inter-Disciplinary.Net, the members of The Erotic project steering group, and the publications project manager, Lisa Howard, for their continued commitment and support not only to the conference, but also this eBook publication.

Part I

The Erotic and Literature

Eroticism in Traditional Kabyle Culture

Sabrina Zerar

Abstract
The following chapter seeks to analyse the erotic dimension of Kabyle folktales, myths, and love poetry collection called *Izlan*. It starts by debunking the French colonial myth that celebrated the Kabyle work ethic as integral to the divide-and-rule colonial strategy and continues by discussing the erotic facets of traditional Kabyle culture. By deploying Georges Bataille's and Malek Chebel's theories of eroticism, this chapter uncovers three major types of eroticism: the eroticism of formation, symbol, and action. If eroticism of formation is the hallmark of both male and female cultural productions, the eroticism of symbol and action are marked by gender in the sense that the former appears most in the female love poetry of the *Izlan* whereas the latter features most prominently in male myths.

Key Words: Eroticism, work ethic, traditional Kabyle culture, the eroticism of action, symbol, and formation.

1. Introduction

> *The concrete eroticism is not as dizzy as it seems at first sight, unless we make it a distinguishing element of a carefree social class steeped in material wealth of all sorts.*[1]

The above quote is Malek Chebel's response to Abdelwahab Bouhdiba's description of Islamic eroticism.[2] Chebel reproaches his fellow sexologist for assigning erotic excesses to Arabs by claiming that the latter are capable of renewing their sexual activity indefinitely between the intervals of sexual abstinence dictated by the Koran. He ironically questions the validity of such a claim by wondering whether the Arabs' supposedly high potential for sex applies equally across class lines to include the lower classes. Chebel suggests that Bouhdiba has fallen into the trap of polemics by aligning himself with the disciples of sexual asceticism who limit devout Muslims to asexual angels in this life with the great expectation that they will be rewarded with Houris in the next world.

2. Literature Review: Issues and Methodology

Chebel's critique of the exaggeration of Islamic eroticism is not as important as the apparent correlation it establishes between eroticism and cultural refinement. In criticising Bouhdiba's study, the Algerian cultural anthropologist suggests that labour is inimical to eroticism. Chebel is not alone in the link he makes between the limited possibilities of eroticism in less economically developed societies, like Kabyle society whose members are highly concerned with work as a means for

subsistence. This assumption seems to lie at the core of colonial ethnologists' study of Kabyle society. Fundamental to the divide-and-rule colonial ideology, French ethnologists produced a hierarchy between the various Algerian ethnic groups wherein the Kabyles generally appear as superior to other groups because of the value they assign to hard work. During the colonial period, Algerians of Arab origin were mostly represented within the confining Orientalist tradition initiated by Eugene Delacroix's paintings of the 1830s such as 'Algerian Women in their Apartments'. At the turn of the twentieth century, Delacroix's Orientalist view of Arabic-speaking Algerians took the shape of a "colonial harem", expressed in the highly erotic postcards of the colonial French establishment circulated to attract Western sex tourism. Malek Alloula has dismissed the eroticism of these colonial postcards as a 'sous-érotisme', a sub-eroticism, because of its association with pornography.[3] At the same time, the myth of Kabyle was consolidated to make this colonial subject an exception to the erotic rule, which in turn governed the behaviour of other Algerian ethnic groups.

One anthropologist who questioned the colonial myth of the Kabyle was the German anthropologist, Leo Frobenius. In his four-volume collection of Kabyle folktales, which were gathered in the 1910s and published in 1921, Frobenius contested the colonial ideology of difference between ethnic groups, specifically the manipulation of Kabyle identity into a beast of burden whose being was abandoned completely to 'material interests'.[4] A case was made against Frobenius's conclusion that Kabyle society is in harmony with Eros, arguably, because of Frobenius's German origin and the strong hold that the Kabyle myth still exercised over both colonial and post-colonial attitudes for slightly different reasons.[5]

To date, apart from the study carried out by Tassadit Yacine on Kabyle love poetry in *L'izli ou l'amour chanté en kabyle*,[6] Kabyle erotic life has been overlooked though written traces of it can be traced back to Apuleius's *Golden Ass*.[7] Yacine's work breaks new ground in research about the erotic life of the Kabyle, but it suffers from the same polemical tone that Chebel reproaches Bouhdiba for in his study of sexuality in the Islamic world. This work was written in the wake of the 1980 Kabyle Spring rebellion caused the Governor of Tizi-Ouzou's ban on a conference on Kabyle poetry at the university. And more importantly, it was published in 1988 the year of the Algerian youth rebellion that witnessed the emergence of Islamic fundamentalist forces in the political scene. The militancy of Yacine's work is displayed in his foregrounding of a Kabyle homegrown eroticism under threat of the Islamic veil.

Chebel has also studied the place of Eros in Kabyle society within the larger context of the North African countries. However, his observations remain peripheral and often suggest that Kabyle Eros is a subspecies of Arab-Muslim eroticism. In other words, Kabyle eroticism seems to be more a matter of derivation and diffusion than a homegrown, Kabyle culture-specific production.

Arguably, Chebel writes about Kabyle eroticism with the same logic of disavowal as the one that predominates in French colonial anthropological discourse. I would argue that the Eros-Psyche love story circulated by Apuleius is so close to the Sfar-Lahoua-Loundja love story in Kabyle folklore that one may hypothesise that it has its roots in traditional Kabyle culture. Following the theorising of Georges Bataille, I will oppose the colonial anthropological claim that Arab-Muslim eroticism is incompatible with the Kabyle work ethic by demonstrating that historically labour is one of the primary conditions for the emergence of eroticism in primitive societies. Unless we perceive the traditional Kabyle people as a people of desire and pleasure, we are likely to overlook an important facet of their humanity – specifically, their predilection for resolving violence with sexual or erotic acts. Eros is a 'hero with a thousand faces',[8] a hero with no national or ethnic frontiers, and in whose eyes we recognise both our contemporary faces and those of our historical Others in the clasps of sexual passions. Following the methodologies of Bataille, Chebel, and Michel Foucault, I will distinguish between three basic types of eroticism manifested in Kabyle folktales and love poetry – Kabyle society's predominant modes of expression.[9] I shall call these three categories: the eroticism of formation, the eroticism of action, and the eroticism of symbol.[10]

3. Discussion and Results

One lesson that Bataille teaches us in his analysis of the erotic function is that eroticism cannot be imagined without taboos and their regulated transgression. Taboos set limits to violence in its various manifestations – in hunting, sacrifice, war, and homologically in sexual activities. Taboos and transgression are not opposite but complementary terms, since it is in the sacred act of transgression that taboos assume their full significance. Bataille's idea of a sacred eroticism that demands both taboos and their transgression finds its best expression in the Kabyle myths collected by Frobenius, principally in the opening from his first volume, 'Wisdom'. In the preface to this volume, Frobenius advises the reader to discard of the colonial Kabyle myth, arguing that people who manage to penetrate to the crux of Kabyle life understand that sexual pleasure is not foreign to them. Nevertheless, readers who adhere to a literal interpretation of the word 'wisdom' cannot fail to be surprised at the highly erotic turn of the opening myth. Instead of collating the 'Kanuns' – the customary laws of the Kabyle – in the manner of Hanoteau and Letourneux, Frobenius presents the reader with a no less important cultural and religious aspect of Kabyle society, in the form of a 'sacred eroticism' that he rightly calls 'wisdom'.[11] The material collected by Frobenius relates to the sacred transgression of the taboos that the Kabyles have instituted to regulate their quotidian existence in all matters of life – sexuality included – which seen from the outside can indeed be qualified as rudimentary.

The opening myth in Frobenius's first collection is an erotic story recounting the initial sexual encounter between the Kabyle Adam and Eve.[12] The story relates

how the first Kabyle woman and man met at a fountain while searching for water to quench their thirst. A quarrel about who will be the first to satisfy their urge ensues, resulting in the woman falling down and the discovery of the female genital organ. Surprised by their sexual difference, the man asks her to identify her erotic zone for him. The woman crudely names her two sexual organs before the man decides to explore her genitalia by thrusting one of his fingers into it. The woman responds to this sexual stimulation with pleasure, which results in the couple spending eight consecutive days making love.

If eroticism, as Bataille theorises, relates to the control of sexual excess through taboos and the possible transgression of those same taboos, then this story provides a perfect illustration of the existence of a sacred Kabyle eroticism. Frobenius rightly identifies this myth as a part of Kabyle spirituality. In Kabyle culture, the fountain is a gendered place in the sense that it is a space reserved for women and forbidden to fellow tribesmen. The latter are assigned another gendered space which is the *tadjmait* or village council space. The transgression of the spatial taboo implied by the trespassing on a female only space would have had tragic consequences if it had occurred in reality. However, at the symbolic level of the sexual myth spatial taboo is not only transgressed, but the transgression itself is made sacred because it is considered to be at the origin of the Kabyle people.

Unlike the Biblical Adam and Eve, the Kabyle couple is not thrown out of Eden for yielding to temptation and losing their sexual innocence. On the contrary, they succumb to sexual excess by acquiescing to an erotic orgy that culminates with the incredible progeny of 50 girls and 50 boys. As the myth unfolds, the reader witnesses an evasion of the incest taboo through the narrative trick that envisions the siblings emerging from two separate earthy, yet womb-like, burrows. As anticipated, the siblings cannot sustain, as Bataille would say, a discontinuous state of being and, unable to regulate their behaviour, sexual excess soon overcomes them. Erotic voyeurism gives way to a violent orgy in which the girl Amazons – as Frobenius calls them – throw the boys to the ground and seize their swelling genitals before sitting on them. This eruption of sexual violence concludes with the suggestion that it is merely a temporary transgression before a sanctioned sexuality – in the form of the monogamous couple – is established to create the origin of the Kabyle community.

Bataille tells us that eroticism differs from animal sexuality because of the cultural limits that are imposed on it through the system of taboos and sanctioned modes of transgression. In the third Kabyle myth recorded by Frobenius, we do not observe this opposition since even animal sexuality is eroticised.[13] The second myth from Frobenius's collection, 'Ali Izerzar Meskin', retraces the sexual life of the first cow and bull. Among other things, we learn from this mythic narrative that aspects of the Kabyles' sexual education derive from observing the manner in which this first cow and bull had sex. The aging Ali Izerzar is chased by his son and takes refuge in the Djurdjura Mountains in a sacred place called Hizzar. In his

solitude, he fantasises about his wife – representative of the first cow – which results in orgasm. Warmed by the sun, his semen produces the animals that populate the earth. In this myth, there is a gradual movement from an 'eroticism of the body' – implying the sexual perversity associated with bestiality – to an 'eroticism of the heart' and finally to a 'sacred eroticism' that transforms Ali Izerzar into a fertility deity. Until recently, infertile Kabyle women travelled to Hizzar to pay homage to a sacred bull-shaped shrine representing Ali Izerzar in the hope of regaining their fertility.

The myth that illustrates most clearly what I call the eroticism of formation is the story of the man-whose-job-is-lovemaking, called 'Nseni' in Kabyle.[14] The tale recounts the story of three sons who, following their father's death, must enter the world of work. The first son becomes a mason, the second a carpenter, and the third son – a Don Juan figure – makes lovemaking his trade. In traditional Kabyle culture, one attains sexual wisdom by following *Elilm n-tilawin*, that is, women's *ars erotica* or sexual education. Until one understands this *ars erotica*, a man remains a 'niya', that is a sexually naïve person. It is this erotic value that lies at the core of the myth. The man-whose-job-is-lovemaking is recruited by sexually dissatisfied women of wealthy households and amasses a fortune in return for fulfilling their erotic desires, while his brothers receive meagre wages from their male employers.

One form of sexual transgression is followed by another. At the end of the story, our Kabyle Don Juan hears about a beautiful and wealthy widowed princess and decides to lure her out of mourning so he can win her hand in marriage. The man-whose-job-is-lovemaking attracts the princess's attention by making terrible noises at night under the pretence that he is a goldsmith – claiming that the marvelous pieces of jewellery he received as gifts during his previous sexual conquests are of his own making. Through her servant, the princess expresses her wish to purchase a piece of his jewellery and each time she inquires she is met with the reply: it is not for sale, but if she really desires the jewellery she must reveal an erotic zone of her body. The widowed princess finally accepts his successive propositions and reveals her most 'shameful part' or most 'precious jewel'. The man whose job is lovemaking pretends to turn away in disgust and tells the princess that it looks askew. The princess starts to weep and pleads with the disguised goldsmith to realign it; a task which he readily accepts on the condition that she agrees to spend 15 days making love to him. Fifteen days later, the man-whose-job-is-lovemaking invites the princess to look at her 'precious jewel' in a mirror and to her surprise she discovers that it has regained its symmetry. Full of gratitude, the princess accepts his marriage proposal because their erotic instruments fit perfectly together.

The myth closes with the re-introduction of the two other brothers – the hard-working yet low-paid mason and carpenter – who receive pity and hospitality from their wealthy Don Juan brother. The wisdom imparted by this myth is that

eroticism is the real cultural capital of the Kabyles. As Pierre Bourdieu reminds us, in traditional Kabyle culture wealth is not a simple matter of material possessions but that of honour and progeny.[15] In this respect, the myth suggests that neither forms of wealth can be attained unless one is endowed with erotic potential. The man of pleasure – not the hard-working man – is the man on whom the wealth of the community ultimately depends. The 'Hebraic' or materialist impulse ironically transgresses the taboos of the traditional Kabyles because the ignorance of erotic energy is synonymous with social death.

So far, I have concentrated solely on the eroticism of formation through which the Kabyles are taught the value of sexual pleasure. In what follows, I will analyse the other two forms of eroticism: the eroticism of action and the eroticism of symbol. Although Kabyle eroticism is mostly expressed in the oral mode due to the ban on visual representation by the Kabyles' Islamic religion, the qualities of the eroticism of action – as defined by Chebel – is the exaggeration of the sex organs' dimensions and an emphasis is placed on the visual rather than the narrative. This emphasis on the erotic *tableaux vivant* presented in Kabyle folktales and songs can be seen as a compensatory strategy for the religious ban on visual representation. Both male and female genitalia are given gigantic forms and are compared, at times, to the large sexual organs of animals as well as monstrous shapes. In the eroticism of action, time is insignificant and the story often culminates with the fainting of one or both of the erotic partners.

In Kabyle eroticism of action, we observe the anguish which Bataille recognises as a fundamental feature of eroticism. The exaggeration of this anguish in the Kabyle myths emphasises Kabyle men's fear of not attaining the high standards of virility expected from them in traditional Kabyle culture. The eroticism of action is mostly a product of male fantasising, in which Eros appears as a virile hero. This differs in the case of the eroticism of symbol, which features prominently in the Kabyle love poetry, the *Izlan*, which is largely produced by women. In this poetry, Eros, to cite Bataille in another context, is 'in tears'.[16] Contrary to the male myths discussed above, Kabyle love poetry does not document the erotic feats of male heroes, but rather invites the reader to listen to complaints of unrequited, and often forbidden, love. Kabyle women do not resort to exaggerated erotic action as is the case with their male counterparts, but to symbols – the referents of which are mostly borrowed from their immediate socio-cultural and natural environment. Compared to the rudimentary eroticism of their male counterparts in the folktales, Kabyle women respond with a refined symbolic eroticism which both empowers women and subverts the social virile order.

4. Conclusion

This study leads to the conclusion that eroticism does not stand in contradiction to the ethic of work as the colonial myth of the hardworking Kabyle suggests. On the contrary, sexual or erotic potential is highly valued by the Kabyle community

because sex is seen as a source of vitality and self-perpetuation through procreation. The emphasis on eroticism in its three major types – formation, action, and symbol – underlines the equation of sex with power in a community where the sexually impotent or inexperienced have no place.

Notes

[1] Malek Chebel, *L'esprit du sérail: mythes et pratiques séxuels au Maghreb* (Paris : Fayot, 2003), 181-182. Translation my own.
[2] Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, *La sexualité en Islam* (Paris: PUF, 1975).
[3] Malex Alloula, *Le harem colonial: image d'un sous-érotisme* (Paris: Slatkine, 1981).
[4] Leo Frobenius, 'La poésie et la littérature orales, un moyen d'expression de la culture et de l'histoire', in *Contes Kabyles, Tome 1: Sagesse*, trans. Fetta Mokran (Paris: Edisud, 1996), 19-23.
[5] N. Tidjani-Serpos, "L'ethnologie colonial et la naissance de la littérature africaine", in *Présence Africaine*, 136, 4th Quarterly, 1985, 156-158.
[6] Tassadit Yacine, *L'Izli ou l'amour chanté en Kabyle* (Alger: Bouchène-Awal, 1990).
[7] Apuleius, *The Golden Ass or Metamorphoses*, trans. E. J. Kenney (London: Penguin, 1998).
[8] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).
[9] Georges Bataille, *L'érotisme* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 2011); Malek Chebel, *L'imaginaire Arabo-Musulman* (Paris: PUF, 1993); Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la Sexualité*, 3 Vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).
[10] Malek Chebel, *L'esprit du sérail*, 167-190.
[11] A Hanoteau and A. Letourneux, *La Kabylie et les coutumes Kabyles*, 3 Vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1872-1873).
[12] Leo Frobenius, *Contes Kabyles*, 27-32.
[13] Ibid., 36-40.
[14] Ibid., 152-164.
[15] Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Sentiment of Honour and Shame in Kabyle Society,' *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J. G. Peristinay (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1965), 191-241.
[16] Georges Bataille, *Les larmes d'Eros* (Paris : Société Nouvelle, 1981).

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The 'Swellings' of the Virtual in, and Outside of, Milton's *Paradise Lost*

Boris Beric

Abstract
Just like postmodernist computer-simulated worlds and reality shows, the narrative of the Garden of Eden has been the testing ground for different models of the world and human sexuality within the Judeo-Christian tradition for a long period of time. To many theologians, poets, and academics the blank on prelapsarian sexuality in the biblical story became a challenge for their own renderings, many of which drew heated responses. In his *Preface* lectures to Milton's *Paradise Lost* C. S. Lewis accuses the poet of making prelapsarian sexuality too voluptuous. In his espousal of Augustine's model in which there are no female erections, Lewis engages in a curious act of censorship of Milton's text. He emasculates Eve's breast of its swelling. However, Milton's 'picture' of Eve's 'swelling' is far more mysterious than Augustine's hypothetical representation of prelapsarian sexuality. Namely, the saint attempts to virtualize the actual fallen sexuality within the limits of political correctness of his own doctrine. This attempt at virtualization of pure Edenic sexuality collapses, literally and metaphorically, into a list of mechanical possibilities. It turns to be *pure sex*, mechanized and pornographically boring, sex devoid of lust, love, spontaneity and emotions in general. Without its doctrinal driving force, no one would wish to do it for the second time. In Milton's rendering, Eve's breast is not simply swollen but in the process of swelling (equally suggestive of Adam's own swelling sublimated into a big smile), revealing the dynamics of their virtual being in the process of actualization. By virtualizing this particular scene, Milton makes Adam and Eve walk back to the originary point of their self-discovery. Their walk down the garden is a departure from the Augustinian dynamics of will and a journey toward a new ontological centre lodged in the capacity of their virtual being.

Key Words: Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Augustine, virtual environments, redefining, dynamics, eroticism.

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In her assessment of the computer-simulated worlds, Marie-Laure Ryan states that those simulations are not created to deceive; rather, their exploration 'can be an instrument of self-discovery.' Since 'they are not supposed to re-present what is but to explore what could be,' they have a strong heuristic value. Accordingly, 'To simulate, in this case, is to test a model of the world.'[1] Needless to say, the creation of such virtual environments did not originate in and with the development of computer technology but can be traced back to the narrative techniques that

rendered, among other things, various accounts of the story of creation, the potential and objectives of which are comparable to those of our technology and reality shows. Without any doubt the Garden of Eden has been a dominant virtual environment of this type within divine philosophy, art, and literature of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and as such it emerges in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Virtual environments can be distinguished from other imaginary worlds by their paradoxical nature. One of the features of the virtual is as Merleau-Ponty says that it throws out its own background;[2] accordingly, the background of virtual environments is desynchronized and delocalized (timeless and deterritorialized) and paradoxically so, deterritorialized by means of delimitation. It is a walled environment. By throwing out its own background, the virtual operates in the manner of Moebius strip, whereby continual exteriorizations of the interior as well as interiorizations of the exterior are possible. There are two obvious cases of this in the broader context of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. As Michael Lieb suggested long time ago, Satan's cosmic journey in Milton's epic seems to be an exteriorization of internal digestive processes.[3] Similarly, in *Areopagitica*, the womb is simultaneously 'the inside of the woman and the outside that contains the child.'[4] The Moebius-strip effect of virtual environments is also evident in constant inversions of private and public spheres of life, and one general consequence of all those inversions is a continual shifting of the point of view, both for the protagonists of those environments and for their observers.

The virtual environment throws out its own setting and rules, and when a certain number of agents are placed into a simulated setting, they are expected to live in accord with their virtual environment's indigenous rules, many of which are inversions of the rules in actual life. Immersion into and interaction within this type of setting is an act of virtualization. As Pierre Lévy points out, 'virtualization is the very dynamic of a shared world; it is that through which we share a reality.'[5] In contrast to an act of actualization which offers specific solutions to a problem, virtualization takes in the opposite direction to the very problematic of being, 'the knot of tensions, constraints, and projects that animate it.'[6] The reason we need virtualization is that actualized solutions tend to become invalid and the very dynamics of our interaction become stifled. In those cases we must go back and untie the problematic knot in order to find new solutions. The virtual, as Lévy points out, is 'a fecund and powerful mode of being that expands the process of creation, opens up the future, injects a core of meaning beneath the platitude of immediate physical presence.'[7]

For Augustine as well as for many other theologians one 'important and knotty problem' inherent in the Paradisal environment has been that of unfallen sexuality and consequently of human sexuality in general.[8] While the biblical account of creation remains 'silent' on the issue, various commentators injected into the story the suspense of postmodernist reality shows: Did it really happen, or where, when, and how it could have happened for the first time? Who and how might have been

involved in the whole affair? As Tuner notes, the problem arises in the blending of 'Jahwist' and 'Priestly' accounts of the story of creation. If God after creating Adam and Eve had commanded them to procreate, how come they did not do it? Did God withdraw His command or was their stay in Paradise so short that they had no time to do it? On the other hand, if they did it, how come Eve did not conceive? Augustine's solution was that they simply did not do it. And his explanation was equally simple. They were supposed to wait for God's explicit command, and the command never came because they must have sinned soon after Eve was created.

Augustine's view on prelapsarian sexuality was so influential in later periods and even among the Protestants[9] that C. S. Lewis questioned Milton's wisdom and accused him of inconsistency of faith for contradicting the saint and daring 'to represent the Paradisal sexuality.'[10] However, Lewis's scholarly inconsistences in this case seem to be as mysterious as Milton's theological ones. He never questions Augustine's wisdom for hypothetical musing over something that apparently did not happen, nor is he offended by his representation of sexual mechanics and hypothetical coitus in a very explicit manner.

Lewis's main objection to Milton's rendering of the unfallen sexuality is that it is too voluptuous and in its dynamics cannot be distinguished from the fallen sexuality in the postlapsarian world.[11] Augustine, for his own part, made that distinction clear by dissociating Paradisal sexuality from the dynamics of lust and by putting it under direct control of the will.

> When mankind was in such a state of ease and plenty, blest with such felicity, let us never imagine that it was impossible for the seed of children to be sown without the morbid condition of lust. Instead, the sexual organs would have been brought into activity by the same bidding of the will as controlled the other organs. Then, without feeling the allurement of passion goading him on, the husband would have relaxed on his wife's bosom in tranquillity of mind and with no impairment of his body's integrity.[12]

The setting and the dynamics of Augustine's Paradisal sex are suggestive of a retired couple in Florida having so much fun doing other things, or nothing at all, that they would not even think about sex if it was not something that had to be done. Although the saint condones the dynamics of love in marriage in a broader context of his work, it seems to be a red herring because when it really matters he completely forgets about it. Not only is his hypothetical intercourse bereft of lust, but also of love, spontaneity, and emotions in general. It is submitted to the dynamics of will and reason. His main concern seems to be to preserve the tranquillity of mind and the integrity of body (which means full control of all its

parts). He believes that the chemistry of the unfallen body made it possible to have erections at will and that sexual organs were controllable like other bodily extremities, hands or legs. In this context the husband could be simultaneously fulfilling his marital duties and contemplating the nature of the universe, or thinking about his next book project for that matter.

Of course, as Augustine's husband collapses and relaxes on his wife there is a great possibility that he might fall asleep, so the saint had to introduce the dynamics of athletics and entertainment industry into Paradisal intercourse to keep him focused. And then the husband begins to perform like all other craftsmen or athletes 'engaged in all kinds of physical tasks, where natural powers which lack strength and speed are developed by active training.'[13] One can assume that both the skill and the tool can be augmented in this context because for Augustine sexual organs belong to the category of bodily members 'constructed of pliant tissue and muscles', like mouth and face, which we can partially control and move 'by shaking, which we extend by stretching, which we twist and flex, contract and harden….'[14] Although we once had full control over those organs, now it is only evident in the rare skills of freakish artists who can at will move their ears or scalp, 'swallow an incredible number of various articles' or 'produce at will sounds from their behind (without any stink) that they seem to be singing from that region.' They can sweat when they choose or 'weep at will and shed floods of tears.'[15]

Little did Augustine know that in outlining the dynamics of will for Paradisal sex, instead of virtualizing the concept of pure sexuality, or even immaculate conception, he was actually writing the choreography of postmodernist pornography and composing soundtracks for faked orgasms. Because of his extensive analogies this choreography received an extended number of possible sexual parts and a great variety of possible sexual operations, as any Google search can testify. Whether they ever read Augustine or not, the pharmaceutical industry definitely turned his theology into our technology by producing Viagra and actualizing his idea of relaxed sex at will.

It should be noted that in his curious denial of Paradisal sex and sanctioning of lust in the fallen world Augustine is phallocentric. What bothers him the most about human sexuality is the capricious behaviour of the male member, and, as Turner notes, 'he never explicitly mentions the erectile nature of female sexual response.'[16] And this is where Milton's treatment of Paradisal sexuality most significantly diverges from Augustine's. Not only does he introduce female erections, but also, by giving them representational and phenomenological priority, he changes the dynamics of human sexuality. And those dynamics become evident as Adam and Eve are strolling down the garden, a 'foreplay' scene in which Adam's erection is metaphorically sublimated into a big smile as a secondary response to Eve's arousal which in Milton's hands receives a direct graphic rendering.

So spake our general mother, and with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreproved,
And meek surrender, half embracing leaned
On our first father, half her swelling breast
Naked met his under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid: he in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds
That shed May flowers; and pressed her matron lip
With kisses pure: aside the devil turned
For envy, yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained.[17]

It is interesting that in his objection to Milton's Paradisal voluptuousness Lewis does not turn to and away from the coitus scene itself[18] – probably because it is completely 'veiled' in Adam and Eve's bower – but from this one and in a very curious act of censorship. Like the devil himself, he seems to be turning away and viewing Adam and Eve's blissful walk 'askance' pretending not to have noticed Eve's *swelling* breast. In his lectures Lewis quotes as follows: 'half her breast Naked met his.'[19] His censorship, whether as Freudian slip or something originating in the dynamics of will, has passed unnoticed by other literary critics. It is very doubtful that his emasculation of Eve's breast was a typo because he also omits a reference to this particular quotation. Since he is very meticulous about all other references, one can assume that his scholarly inconsistency was intentional: he wanted to hide the illicit part from his students and readers.

Of course, Lewis could have omitted the whole line, but what he did served his purpose better than a complete omission. By taking the swelling off Eve's breast he turned the whole line into an erotic platitude with no special appeal. In his hands Eve's breast becomes just like any other ordinary breast or 'quiet' extremity of human body obediently waiting for God's command, and probably a more appropriate setting. Lewis must have realized the virtual potential of Eve's swelling breast to draw responsive swellings in her environment, and he did not want to lead his students and readers on the track of voyeuristic reading, or to turn them into Satanic peeping Toms or masturbators.[20] With that type of lustful attitude it would have been apparently very difficult for his students to keep a clear mind when studying *Paradise Lost* for the exam.

By flattening Eve's breast, Lewis deprived it of its potential to attract the audience but, more importantly, he took from it the dynamics, the virtual power, through which Adam and Eve are sharing their reality. He turned it into a thing, and a static thing that does not move and cannot initiate any further movement in others. It should be emphasized that in Milton's graphic rendering Eve's breast is

not just a swollen breast but a breast in the process of *swelling*. It is caught in the process of arousal whose dynamics are not autonomous of but ensue from the dynamics of Adam and Eve's movement and deliberate and accidental touches. It is hard to say whether her arousal comes in response to the touch of Adam's breast or the flowing movement of her 'loose tresses' which intermittently hide and reveal it. It is equally hard to say how much of Eve's breast and for how long we see. Those are only short glimpses of something that is in a process of reshaping arousal.

The arousing potential of Eve's swelling breast is in Milton's ability to render the virtual in the process of actualization. As Brian Massumi states, no single image can do justice to the virtual; it cannot be captured in the stills of form and content.[21] Nor is it in the 'twisting' and 'flexing' by the power of will or hand, as Augustine suggests. The only way 'an image can approach it alone is to twist and fold on itself, to multiply itself internally.'[22] Paradoxically, the power of the virtual becomes perceptible in the fleeting nature of images that attempt to capture it. It does not reify into stills at the point of arrival but keeps 'vanishing into self-variety.'[23]

This multiplication of an image into 'self-variety' engages the perceiver; it turns him/her into an agent of the actual. In other words, the dynamics of the virtual initiate actualization of multiple images in as great number of variations as there are perceivers. That is so because the dynamics of the virtual, as Merleau-Ponty observes, operate in a centrifugal manner, whereas the dynamics of actualization are centripetal in their movement.[24] And Lévy seems to concur noting that the virtual should be understood 'as a way out' and the actual as an event at arrival.[25] In this sense the virtual power of Eve's swelling breast spreads from the centre toward peripheral areas and engages not only Adam, who is closest and most legitimate recipient, but a whole set of tourists and voyeurs exploring the virtual environment of Paradise. Satan is closest to the pair and watches but is also being watched by the narrator, and the reader is in the position to watch all of them.

While Augustine in his attempt to virtualize prelapsarian sexuality actually transforms the postlapsarian reality into a variety of possibles (he frequently draws his conclusions on the 'wouldn't it then be possible' basis), Milton virtualizes it by shifting the ontological centre of Adam and Eve's being from the phallocentric dynamics of will to the dynamics of spontaneous interaction and self-discovery. If Adam and Eve's behaviour is not consistent with the prevailing views of Augustine's doctrine, it is meant to be so. Virtualization also entails a change of identity. Milton's Adam and Eve would not be recognized by Augustine, and Lewis definitely turns away from them. However, their behaviour is consistent with the problematic field of the virtual environment in which they are placed.

In the foreplay scene Adam and Eve are in the process of self-discovery, a discovery of their emotions, their love, their senses, their sexuality and their

identity. They are discovering what it is that binds them together and they are doing it in a spontaneous way, unbound by any doctrinal obligations. They are 'caught' in, what Erwin Straus calls, the most intimate state of human existence, a process of 'immediate becoming.'[26]

Notes

[1] Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 63. Historically speaking, the term 'virtual' started assuming the connotations of the visual 'double' or 'illusion' in catoptrics in the eighteenth century. With the development of computer technology and the Internet at the end of the twentieth century, 'virtual' assumed the negative connotations of 'unreal' and became synonymous with 'simulacrum'. In more recent years a group of philosophers, students of architecture, and literary scholars (Pierre Lévy, Elizabeth Grosz, Antoine Picon, Marie-Laure Ryan) are attempting to dissociate the term from this visual imperative by restoring it to its original meaning in Medieval Latin. Derived from *virtus* and *virtualis*, the term originally signified 'miraculous power' and 'capacity'. In scholastic philosophy *virtus* was synonymous with *potentia*, and neither term was considered in binary opposition to 'real' but they were bound in a dialectical relationship to 'actual'.

[2] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2002), 128.

[3] Michael Lieb, *The Dialectics of Creation: Patterns of Birth and Regeneration in 'Paradise Lost'* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), 28-9.

[4] Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 94.

[5] Pierre Lévy, *Becoming Virtual: Reality in the Digital Age*, trans. Robert Bononno (New York: Plenum Trade, 1998), 184.

[6] Ibid., 25.

[7] Ibid., 16.

[8] James Grantham Turner, *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 40.

[9] Peter Lindenbaum, 'Lovemaking in Milton's Paradise' *Milton Studies* 6 (1974): 281.

[10] C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 122.

[11] Ibid., 70, 124.

[12] Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 591.

[13] Ibid., 585.

[14] Ibid., 587.
[15] Ibid., 588.
[16] Turner, *One Flesh*, 44.
[17] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, 2nd ed. (Harlow, UK: Longman, 1998), 4.492-504.
[18] Ibid., 4.736-43.
[19] Lewis, *Preface*, 124.
[20] Satan's voyeurism has been generally recognized. According to Lewis, he is 'a thing that peers in at bedroom or bathroom windows.' *Preface*, 99. In a plate for the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost,* J. B. Medina rendered Satan as an ithyphallic masturbator.
[21] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 133.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] 'Concrete movement is therefore centripetal whereas abstract movement is centrifugal. The former occurs in the realm of being or of the actual, the latter on the other hand in that of the virtual or the non-existent.' *Phenomenology*, 128.
[25] Lévy, *Becoming*, 172.
[26] Erwin W. Straus, *Phenomenological Psychology*, trans., in part, Erling Eng (London: Tavistock, 1966), 220-21.

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Abjecting the Male *Flâneur*: Angela Carter's Appropriation and Subversion of Baudelaire in *The Passion of New Eve*

Sara D'Arcy

Abstract
Literature often depicts the 'uncivilised' female body as abject, grotesque, unclean; a 'monstrous-feminine' that must be expelled from the symbolic order. Following Kristeva's theory of abjection, feminist writers have perceived a transgressive potential in abjection, which threatens gender boundaries and the subject/object hierarchy. Angela Carter is one such feminist writer who repeats and then subverts patriarchal literary tropes to expose the constructions of femininity as 'extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree.' Carter – notorious for her demythologising project – replicates and undermines suspect literary predecessors. For example, she explicitly engages with Charles Baudelaire in her rewriting of *Les Fleurs du mal* in 'Black Venus.' Literary critics, however, have neglected the extent of Carter's interest in Baudelaire and his images of female abjection both anterior and posterior to the composition of 'Black Venus.' By examining Carter's engagement with Baudelaire in *The Passion of New Eve*, this study will explore the ways in which Carter appropriates and subverts Baudelaire's fetishisation of the abject female body for feminist means.

Key Words: Angela Carter, abjection, gender performativity, Charles Baudelaire, sexual reciprocity, literature.

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> *I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode.*[1]

Angela Carter is notorious for her demythologising project, whereby she repeats and then subverts patriarchal literary tropes to expose mythology and the construction of femininity as 'extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree.'[2] Carter has deeply divided critics through her engagement with male literary predecessors, most notably in her non-fictional piece *The Sadeian Woman* (1979), in which she appropriated arch-misogynist Marquis de Sade's anti-establishment theory of sexuality. Carter's affiliation with suspect literary precursors does not rest with de Sade. She explicitly engages with Charles Baudelaire throughout her oeuvre, with critics paying specific attention to her rewriting of Baudelaire's 'Jeanne Duval cycle' from *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857) in her short story 'Black Venus' (1980).[3] Critics, however, have neglected the extent to which Baudelaire's poetry and essays influenced Carter's literary works both anterior and posterior to the composition of 'Black Venus.'[4] By teasing out the Baudelairean motifs that

feature in *The Passion of New Eve* (1977), I will explore the ways in which Carter engages with Baudelaire beyond 'Black Venus.'

Carter's appropriation of male literary predecessors can be read as a response to her discomfort with essentialist strains of 1970s feminism and the 'invocation of hypothetical great goddesses,' in which women 'are simply flattering themselves into submission.'[5] Carter detected a liberating potential in the anti-essentialist theories of de Sade and Baudelaire who established non-reproductive paradigms of female sexuality. Carter's fiction, I will argue, is particularly captivated by Baudelaire's fascination with abjection. By abjection, I refer to Julia Kristeva's theorising that the symbolic order expels the primordial state – a condition of *jouissance* that refuses identity and order – when one enters subjectivity. The subject fabricates binary oppositions to produce the symbolic order, transporting the abject from the position of covetousness in the semiotic to repugnance in the symbolic.[6] Ostensibly, Baudelaire exemplifies the subject's aversion to abjection in his assertion, 'Woman is natural – that is to say, abominable,'[7] maintaining that culture is the only means to redeem corporeality. However, he also admired women, particularly prostitutes, for their use of cosmetics, claiming that such artistry produces 'a sublime deformation of Nature.'[8] Baudelaire's attempt to redeem Nature, however, summons the abject he wishes to dispel. In *Les Fleurs du mal*, Baudelaire constructs his Ideal by depicting female figures that alter nature through their artistry only to produce grotesqueness, to which Baudelaire's male *flâneur* responds to paradoxically – finding her simultaneously alluring and repulsive.

Feminist critics have acknowledged the transgressive potential of the abject. Despite expulsion from the symbolic realm, the abject continues to threaten patriarchal order by disrupting the subject/object hierarchy and the demarcation of gender boundaries; for the abject – refusing to be contained or repressed – persistently 'disturbs identity, system, order.'[9] The abject, therefore, can be seen to possess a performative capacity, whereby its disruption of order exposes the symbolic realm's anxiety to repeat, reinforce, and regulate gender performances to reveal the projection of natural order to be a façade. Like gender performativity, abjection causes 'gender trouble' in its refusal to adhere to legitimate gender praxis, which ultimately disturbs the gender binary and undermines the symbolic order's subject/object hierarchy.[10] Critics have detected this disruptive potential in Baudelaire's abject female figure. Firstly, Baudelaire's female abject refuses to conform to the category of feminine object as defined by the symbolic order; embodying multiple and, at times, contradictory meanings – 'O Beauty! [...] infernal and divine'[11] – and is therefore not 'easily defined and thus controlled' by the male *flâneur*.[12] Secondly, the female abject transgresses the politics of the gaze by returning the gaze of the male *flâneur* and consequently blurring the delineations of the *flâneur*/*passante* hierarchy.[13] These subversions can be read as threatening the order of the symbolic realm by disturbing the subject/object binary.

Baudelaire's portrayal of the female abject is not without its complexities as the reader only accesses her through the male *flâneur*'s gaze. The *flâneur* emerges in modernity as a response to 'the crisis of legibility within the social body,' in which people of all sexes and classes anonymously coalesced in the city.[14] Initially, critics defined the *flâneur* as an 'unwilling detective'[15] whose seeming idleness disguised his surveillance of the modern crowd in an 'attempt to identify and place the self in the uncertain environment of modernity.'[16] Following this premise, Baudelaire's male *flâneur* can be seen as the epitome of male authority, who classifies to produce order within the chaotic city. Recent criticism has revised this analysis emphasising the ambiguity of the male *flâneur* as 'scopically authoritative yet wandering and placeless,' highlighting 'an instability in his sense of superior masculine self-identity.'[17] This instability associates the male *flâneur* with the female abject and can be understood, like abjection itself, as either radical or reactionary. Some critics maintain that the male *flâneur*'s unstable subjectivity requires him to expel his abjection onto the female figure in order to consolidate his subjectivity.[18] Conversely, the male *flâneur*'s abjection can assist in establishing the illusory quality of subjectivity and challenge the symbolic order he allegedly sustains; a perspective that Carter pursues in her refiguring of the poet in 'Black Venus,' and, as I will demonstrate, throughout her oeuvre.

By exploring Carter's engagement with Baudelaire in *The Passion of New Eve*, I will examine the extent to which Carter appropriates Baudelaire's abject to produce the female body as a site of transgression. Carter, however, is also aware of the problems associated with appropriating male literary predecessors, especially the potential danger of falling prey to complicity with the misogyny of their writing. Carter's approach has been acknowledged by critics as equivocal, by highlighting her distrust while simultaneously acknowledging her engagement with their theories.[19] In 'Black Venus', Carter contests Baudelaire's portrayal of Jeanne Duval by locating abjection, not in Duval, but in Baudelaire himself: 'For herself, she came clean [...] she'd picked up the germ [syphilis] from the very first protector.'[20] With this in mind, I will also examine the ways in which Carter subverts Baudelaire, especially his representation of the male *flâneur*, while simultaneously exploiting his theories for her feminist ends.

In *The Passion of New Eve*, Carter parodies Baudelaire's 'Jeanne Duval cycle' in the liaison between her protagonist, Evelyn, and the black erotic dancer, Leilah.[21] The male *flâneur*, Evelyn, follows Leilah through the labyrinthine streets of an apocalyptic New York, classifying her within the Baudelairean motif of ambiguous animality. Like Duval, whose portrayal abounds with multifarious animalistic images – 'sphinx', 'tiger', 'serpent'[22] – Leilah is also depicted as a composite of animal imagery: 'a strange bird-like creature [...] not a flying thing, nor a running thing, nor a creeping thing, not flesh or fowl, some in-between thing.'[23] By diminishing Leilah to bestial imagery, Evelyn strips her of status within the symbolic order by positioning her sexuality as animalistic and therefore

necessitating male control.[24] Carter parodies Baudelaire's metaphor by rendering Evelyn's narrative as a caricature, in her conflation of Baudelaire's repetitive animalistic images into Evelyn's single, nebulous description. Leilah's resistance to classification renders her outside the limits of Evelyn's reason and beyond the boundaries of the symbolic order. Despite Leilah's evasion of the male *flâneur*'s power of categorisation, Evelyn finds himself both 'appalled and enchanted' as he becomes seduced by her abjection.[25] Leilah's ambiguous animality not only bewitches Evelyn, but also distorts the traditional power dynamic between the male *flâneur*, as subject and pursuer, and female *passante*, as object and pursued. When the 'magic space' that separates Evelyn from Leilah dwindles, he 'drop[s] down upon her like a bird of prey, although my prey, throughout the pursuit, had played the hunter.'[26] Like the speaker of 'Hymn to Beauty,'[27] Evelyn associates the beloved with the destruction of the male subject when his retrospective narration permeates the storyline, repositioning Leilah as 'hunter' and underlining her disruption of the subject/object hierarchy.

Despite Leilah's threat to the male *flâneur*'s subjectivity, Evelyn attempts to consolidate his masculinity when he observes Leilah applying cosmetics in preparation for her nocturnal labour:

> she watched me watching the assemblage of all the paraphernalia that only emphasised the black plush flanks and crimson slit beneath it, so she, too, seemed to abandon her self in the mirror, and allowed herself to function only as a fiction of the erotic dream into which the mirror cast me.[28]

By literalising the objectification of Leilah as female genitalia, Evelyn attempts to degrade Leilah to merely a sexual function and bolster his own position as male *flâneur* who freely exercises the power of surveillance and classification to control the female sex object. Evelyn's categorisation of Leilah as the sex object of his erotic dream further diminishes her autonomy by rendering her person as fictional, a mere illusion cast from his imagination. In doing so, Evelyn unwittingly deconstructs gender, revealing that Leilah's femininity is not the effect of a gendered subjectivity but a cultural construct masquerading as an innate identity imposed on her by the male gaze. Despite the control of the male gaze, Leilah returns this gaze, holding the overriding look, therefore retaining an element of the disruptive potential of the *passante* who returns the gaze of Baudelaire's speaker.[29] Finally, Evelyn's subjectivity, like Leilah's, is demonstrated not to be an essential selfhood but provisional, dependent on him observing his 'self' alongside Leilah's painted body in the mirror.

Like Baudelaire, Carter writes from the male *flâneur*'s perspective. However, Carter ventriloquises the voice of Evelyn – similar to her technique of engaging with her male literary predecessors – ironically, rendering his patriarchal points of

view as clichéd and grotesque. Carter's irony establishes the limitation of patriarchal ideology by revealing the discrepancy between the hegemonic notion of femininity and the reality of woman. This incongruity is revealed when Carter appropriates Evelyn's voice in a deadpan register when he is at his most brutal:

> If she fouled the bed, I would untie her and use my belt to beat her. She seemed to me a born victim and she submitted to the beating and the degradations with a curious, ironic laugh [...] isn't irony the victim's only weapon?[30]

The narrative itself undermines Evelyn's statement that Leilah is a 'born victim.' For this 'born victim' is both prey and predator, foreboding the revelation that she is, in fact, Lilith, a feminist guerrilla fighter and the daughter of Mother whose mission is 'to lead the unwary into temptation'[31] indicated by the etymology of her name: serpent. Leilah/Lilith reveals herself to be more than what she seems through the proliferation of her identity that moves beyond the bounds of the patriarchal stereotype of femininity. For Leilah/Lilith's dual identity 'destabilises the reliable labels with which Evelyn used to define his world,'[32] disrupting his patriarchal discourse to render the sexual hierarchy as fallacious and the symbolic order as a delusion. While Carter's omniscient narrator disrupts Evelyn's narrative, permitting a feminist discourse to emerge since Leilah, like Duval, lacks a voice. This feminist voice permeates Evelyn's patriarchal discourse with a rhetorical question that is ironic. As the reader is aware, irony is not the 'victim's only weapon.' Evelyn is the target of sexual vengeance in the form of an enforced sex change portended in the opening chapter when Evelyn states, 'the black lady fitted me up with a uterus of my own.'[33]

In *Les Fleurs du mal*, Baudelaire represents the erotic as macabre and at times sexually violent. This is most notable in '"I love you as I love...,"' in which the speaker responds to his mistress's sexual indifference by equating his imaginary sexual conquest of her with maggots devouring a corpse.[34] Baudelaire's portrayal of the female body as a corpse, however, holds a dual meaning. Baudelaire's mistress is simultaneously depicted as an abject figure that corrupts the speaker and obstructs his transcendence, as well as an innocent beloved who undergoes textual violence for not returning the lover's feelings. Debarati Sanyal – acknowledging Baudelaire's irony – argues that Baudelaire's speaker occupies a shifting position between '*victime* and *bourreau* [executioner]' in his poetry.[35] In '"I love you as I love...,"' however, there is a distinct power imbalance between the threatening abjection of the sexually disinterested mistress and the textual violence of the speaker who renders her corporeality as putrid. Sanyal concedes that her argument attends merely 'to the construction of corporeal alterity, rather than seeking signs of these bodies' subjectivity.'[36] By acknowledging the limitation of Baudelaire's male *flâneur* and the female abject's lack of autonomy, I will now observe the

ways in which Carter reworks the power discrepancy between the male *flâneur* and the abject mistress through the use of violence as a form of sexual vengeance.

Evelyn believes Leilah's abjection is the cause of the pestilence that sweeps New York. However, on leaving the city for the desert, he realises that 'the darkness and confusion were as much my own as that of the city and I took the sickness with me since I was myself infected.'[37] In the desert, Evelyn is captured by separatist feminists who control the subterranean feminist state, Beulah.[38] In Beulah, Evelyn is forced under the knife, undergoing violating 'plastic surgery that turned me into my own diminutive, Eve, the shortened form of Evelyn.'[39] The sexual aggression enacted by Mother aptly punishes Eve(lyn) by turning him into 'the *Playboy* centrefold' of his monolithic male fantasies.[40] When Eve(lyn) looks in the mirror, s/he no longer observes a Lacanian corporeal unity but a disparity between their body as female object and their mind as male subject – 'the cock in my head twitched at the sight of myself'[41] – which constructs both the male subject and the ideal female body as abject. By rendering Eve(lyn)'s flawless body as grotesque, Carter de-familiarises the patriarchal notion of ideal femininity by shifting the ideology behind the construct and its key advocator (the male subject) to the position of abjection. This inversion of the sexual hierarchy highlights the arbitrary quality of the symbolic order; however, it does not critique the power structure itself, for the matriarchy of Beulah simply re-enacts the sexual inequalities of the patriarchal order.

The sexual aggression that Eve(lyn) encounters in Beulah allows her/him to suffer as a victim of patriarchal society when s/he falls into the hands of the misogynistic Zero and is 'raped unceremoniously.'[42] Through her/his sexual experiences as a woman, Eve(lyn) begins to critique the patriarchal ideology that s/he once faithfully adhered to stating, 'this crucial lack of self forced me to know myself as a former violator at the moment of my own violation.'[43] Merja Makinen tentatively praises the sexual vengeance of Mother stating, 'in the end the mighty female violator's actions are shown to be a source of political enlightenment for both Eve and the reader.'[44] Although Eve(lyn) becomes enlightened after the non-consensual sex change, I believe that Carter does not place Mother's violatory praxis as the origin of this transformation. In fact, Carter judges matriarchy and patriarchy to be similarly monolithic, sadistic, and dictatorial. Carter locates sexual enlightenment not in the sexual violence of Baudelaire or the sexual vengeance of the separatist feminists in her fiction but in abjection; Eve(lyn) attains sexual enlightenment through critical introspection produced by a 'lack of self.' It is, therefore, Eve(lyn)'s abject state that allows her/him to critique the constricting ideologies of matriarchy and patriarchy.

At the close of the novel, Eve(lyn) takes a final look in the mirror to find that s/he is no longer a male subject nor an object within the symbolic order but a figure of abjection. Eve(lyn) decides to leave the apocalyptic world of sexual violence and hierarchy, floating off into the 'ocean, mother of mysteries, bear me to the

place of birth' to rediscover the semiotic realm. [45] However, in this move beyond the gender binary of the symbolic order, Carter unwittingly re-establishes the pervasiveness of essentialism. By depicting the return to the semiotic through the feminine symbolism of water and the mother's womb, Carter invokes the pre-Oedipal mother she endeavoured to evade in her caricature of Mother and essentialist feminism. Carter's unconscious positioning of the semiotic with the mother demonstrates the impossibility of imagining a complete return to the semiotic, free from the shackles of essentialism. However, within this closing scene Carter proposes that the 'vengeance of the sex is love;' [46] foreboding the sexual analysis she undertakes in *The Sadeian Woman* whereby she envisages this love as a sexual reciprocity that is free from the annihilating Sadeian dualism and attainable through abject performativity. Carter, therefore, creates 'gender trouble' not by creating 'a utopian beyond, but through the subversive confusion,' [47] personified in Eve(lyn)'s abject identity and dissident relationship with the transvestite Hollywood star, Tristessa – where identity is always in process and a restrictive sexual subjectivity is postponed.

Carter's engagement with Baudelaire demonstrably extends beyond that of her explicit rewriting in 'Black Venus', with the appropriation and subversion of Baudelaire's trademark symbolism in *The Passion of New Eve*. By ironically exploiting Baudelairean symbolism, Carter reveals the inadequacy of patriarchal ideology through her portrayal of the abject female figure, Leilah/Lilith, who provokes multiple meanings that refuse to conform to the narrow definition produced by the male *flâneur.* Carter's proliferation of Baudelairean symbolism undermines Baudelaire's literary tropes – which despite their abject imagery ultimately fix woman as passive object to his male *flâneur* – by declining to locate woman as object through the production of a heterogeneous and performative female protagonist. Carter also shifts Baudelaire's *flâneur* from subject to abject, by inflicting sexual violence on her male *flâneur* in a role reversal of the sexual hierarchy. Ultimately, Carter views sexual vengeance as a form of complicity with patriarchy; however, a return to the semiotic realm results in essentialism that restricts the female body to a reproductive sexuality. In her vision of Eve(lyn) and Leilah/Lilith's abject performativity, Carter visualises the origin of sexual reciprocity as devoid of the violent sexual hierarchy of the symbolic order and the essentialism of the semiotic. By appropriating Baudelaire and subverting the patriarchal principles that pervade his work, Carter's unrelenting de-mythologising project establishes that the pressure of performative feminist analyses and playful rewritings can make patriarchal ideology explode.

Notes

[1] Angela Carter, 'Notes from the Front Line,' in *Shaking A Leg: Collected Writing*, ed. Jenny Uglow (London: Penguin, 1998): 36-43, 37.
[2] Ibid., 38.
[3] See: Jill Matus, 'Blonde, Black Hottentot Venus: Context and Critique in Angela Carter's "Black Venus,"' in *New Casebooks: Angela Carter*, ed. Alison Easton (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000): 161-72; Rebecca Munford, 'Re-Presenting Charles Baudelaire / Re-Presencing Jeanne Duval: Transformations of the Muse in Carter's "Black Venus,"' *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 40:1 (2004): 1-13; and Maggie Tonkin, *Angela Carter and Decadence: Critical Fictions/Fictional Critiques* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
[4] Carter's enthrallment with Baudelaire began in her school days, where she found *Les Fleurs du mal* 'so exciting that I got the feeling of being scalped.' John Mortimer, *In Character* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 45.
[5] Angela Carter, *The Sadeian Woman: an exercise in cultural history* (London: Vintage, 1998), 5.
[6] Kristeva associates the semiotic with the pre-Oedipal mother; the stage prior to the individual's initiation into the symbolic order of subjectivity and the Law of the Father. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia U. P., 1982).
[7] Charles Baudelaire, 'My Heart Laid Bare,' in *My Heart Laid Bare and Other Prose Writings*, trans. Norman Cameron (London: Soho Book Company, 1986): 175-210, 176.
[8] Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life,' in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (New York: Phaidon Press, 2001): 1-41, 33.
[9] Kristeva, *Powers*, 4.
[10] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990).
[11] Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal*, trans. James McGowan (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1993), 45.
[12] Deborah L. Parsons, *Streetwalking in the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2000), 24.
[13] See: Parsons for criticism on the 'returned glance.' Ibid., 72-3.
[14] Debarati Sanyal, *The Violence of Modernity: Baudelaire, Irony, and the Politics of Form*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins U. P., 2006), 99.
[15] Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn (London and New York: Verso, 1976), 40-1.
[16] Parsons, *Streetwalking*, 41.
[17] Ibid., 19.

[18] Kristeva, for example, argues, 'the true Baudelairian world' is a 'war waged against *abjection* in order to maintain a Self.' Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia U. P., 1987), 319.
[19] Sally Keenan believes Carter's 'paradoxical' approach to de Sade is 'the point and challenge: an attempt to jolt the reader out of customary associations and habits of thought.' Sally Keenan, 'Angela Carter's *The Sadeian Woman*: feminism as treason,' in *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter: Fiction, Femininity, Feminism*, ed. Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton (London: Longman Press, 1997): 132-148, 135.
[20] Angela Carter, 'Black Venus,' in *Black Venus* (London: Vintage, 1996): 1-14, 5.
[21] Her body, like Duval's, is doubly marked – black and female – constructing her as the eroticised, exotic other. See: Julia Simon for further criticism on race in *The Passion of New Eve*. Julia Simon, *Rewriting the Body: Desire, Gender and Power in Selected Novels by Angela Carter* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004).
[22] Baudelaire, *Fleurs*, 39; 47; 55.
[23] Carter, *Passion*, 20-21.
[24] According to Patricia Hill Collins, pornography portrays white women as objects and black women as animals; for 'Black women receive no such redeeming dose of culture and remain open to exploitation' comparable to animals. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 150.
[25] Carter, *Passion*, 21.
[26] Ibid., 22; 25.
[27] 'The panting lover bending to his love / Looks like a dying man who strokes his tomb.' Baudelaire, *Fleurs*, 45.
[28] Carter, *Passion*, 30.
[29] See: 'To A Woman Passing By,' in Baudelaire, *Fleurs*, 189.
[30] Carter, *Passion*, 28.
[31] Ibid., 174.
[32] Anja Müller, *Angela Carter: Identity Constructed/Deconstructed* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1997), 63.
[33] Carter, *Passion*, 9.
[34] 'I climb to the assault, attack the source, / A choir of wormlets pressing towards a corpse.' Baudelaire, *Fleurs*, 53.
[35] Sanyal, *Violence*, 110.
[36] Ibid., 129.
[37] Carter, *Passion*, 37.
[38] In Blake's poetry, Beulah is a mythological feminine realm of innocence and the Daughters of Beulah are his muses. Aidan Day highlights the irony in Carter's naming: 'the myth of the great female principle is seen by Carter as being less an

escape than a confirmation of patriarchy.' Aidan Day, *Angela Carter: The Rational Glass* (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1998), 114.
[39] Carter, *Passion*, 71.
[40] Ibid., 75.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 86.
[43] Ibid., 101-02.
[44] Merja Makinen, 'Sexual and Textual Aggression in *The Sadeian Woman* and *The Passion of New Eve*,' in *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter: Fiction, Femininity, Feminism*, ed. Joseph Bristow and Trev Lynn Broughton (London: Longman Press, 1997): 149-165, 163.
[45] Ibid., 191.
[46] Carter, *Passion*, 191.
[47] Butler, *Gender*, 46.

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Interdisciplinary Project on the Representation of Erotic Relations in Spanish and Polish Contemporary Literature and Its Application to Other Disciplines

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Abstract
This chapter deals with the interdisciplinary project concerning the ways of representing erotic relations in literary language, developed by the research group from the Institute of Iberian and Ibero-American Studies at the University of Warsaw. Starting with the solutions adopted by the project to display the study results, we highlight the importance of using advanced technologies in the humanities. Online access to the results – in the form of an online database – make them useful not only for literature and linguistics investigators but also for researchers from other disciplines, for example, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists etc. from all over the world. The main objectives, challenges, and perspectives of the project were presented during a workshop held at the 7th Global Conference: The Erotic (Exploring Critical Issues), Mansfield College, Oxford. The conference delegates – representing a variety of academic and non-academic disciplines – were shown some of the database's functions and were asked to complete some activities related to the project based on text samples in English. The feedback we received from the workshop has provided us with valuable and interesting insights into some of the problems which our research team has been facing, for example, the issues of interpreting erotic relations. This article will systematise and recapitulate the main points and results of the project and workshop.

Key Words: Erotic relations, erotic language, contemporary Spanish literature, contemporary Polish literature, interdisciplinary project, categorisation.

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1. Introduction

During the mid-1970s in Spain and the late 1980s in Poland, there was a political transformation from an authoritarian form of government to a democratic one, due to deep ideological changes in both societies. Nevertheless, the direction and outcome have been different in Poland and Spain. Despite both Polish and Spanish society being considered conservative forty years ago, there are now stereotypically seen as two opposite poles of Europe in terms of social conventions, particularly regarding erotic issues. This difference is reflected not only in law but also – and above all – in individual and social attitudes towards eroticism.

A group of linguistic and literary researchers from the Institute of Iberian and Ibero-American Studies at the University of Warsaw – which we belong to – has observed that these ideological changes are diversely reflected in Spanish and Polish contemporary literature. Taking into account that one of the basic components of literature is language, we predict that some of the linguistic aspects of contemporary novels will reveal the social perceptions of erotic issues. As a consequence, our research group – led by Aukasz Grützmacher and made up of academics and scholars specialising in Spanish and Polish studies – began to develop an interdisciplinary project concerning the ways in which erotic relations are presented in literary language in 2009. This chapter aims to present the main hypotheses, challenges, and perspectives of the project as well as some solutions adopted by it, which were presented during the workshop we held for delegates of the 7th Global Conference: The Erotic (Exploring Critical Issues) at Mansfield College, Oxford in September 2012.

2. Project Objectives

The primary objective of the project is to analyse the image of erotic relations encoded in Polish and Spanish prose of the last forty years. In other words, we are interested in the linguistic categorisation of erotic relations revealed in literature with particular emphasis on the changing forms of eroticism's institutionalisation and the issue of gender. To reconstruct this image, a thorough study of contemporary Polish and Spanish prose is required. It should consist not only of categorising and analysing the linguistic aspects of the examined texts, but it should also interpret the changes observed in authors' expressions of eroticism against a background of socio-political transformation.

The major challenges of such a study – and of the humanities in general – is the objectivity of analytic methods, the transparency of applied solutions, and the project's functionality. Therefore, for the past two years we have tested a variety of research criterion and designed an online database that aims to systematise the information on the analysed texts which may be found useful by a large range of researchers – for example, linguistics, anthropologists, or sociologists interested in investigating the socio-cultural perception of erotic issues in Spain and Poland with the scope to make comparisons with other societies. In other words, our goal is to ascertain the feasibility of producing a study of eroticism in literature in such a schematic way and to provide a tool for literary and linguistic based research, as well as for other interdisciplinary studies.

3. Erotic Relation Concept

One of the most problematic issues that arise from this project is the notion of erotic relations. Although the research aims to be as objective as possible by following the common analytic criteria, there is no unanimity among the members of our research group in regards to the interpretation of this crucial concept. Some

associate erotic relations sexual intercourse, for others this concept is broader as they consider erotic relations not only to include sexual intercourse but also erotic games and/or caresses. There are also researchers who define eroticism as any relation that involves desire. Another possible form of understanding erotic relations is its association with acts in which excitement plays a part. The last definition of this term proposed by some representatives of our research group is that erotic relations are widely perceived phenomenon that cover, for example, titillation and fantasies.

The task of defining erotic relations is not only difficult for our research group but even for the renowned specialists in this field who have compiled erotic dictionaries, such as Félix Rodríguez Gonzalez, Allan Peterkin, Francisco Sánchez Benedito, Antonio Tello or Camilo José Cela.[1] These specialists define the concept of eroticism vaguely, including heterogeneous vocabulary in their lexicographic works; for example, intercourse, prostitution, desire, love, genitalia, contraceptives, intimacy, seduction, and different sexual practices and positions.

It is interesting to observe that the results of the questionnaire carried out on 25 participants during the workshop held at the 7th Global Conference: The Erotic (Exploring Critical Issues) confirm that the way of understanding the concept of eroticism is full of discrepancies. Although the surveyed group was not a large sample, it should be considered relatively representative as it included people from various academic and non-academic disciplines who apply their own perspectives to the exploration of erotic matters. When the participants were asked the multiple choice question, 'How do you understand erotic relations?', most participants marked at least two or three answers and nine respondents added additional comments to specify their interpretation in greater detail – which in most cases was highly complex and ambiguous. The results are presented in the graph below (Figure 1).

During the workshop, the participants were also requested to write down five words which come to mind when they think about the notion of erotic relations. The results yielded 57 different terms that the respondents associate with this concept. Among them, we found 15 words that were recurring answers while the other 42 words were mentioned only once. The most repeated word was 'love' (8 responses) followed closely by 'sex' (7 responses) and sex-related terms such as 'penetration', 'oral sex', 'sexuality', and 'sexual' (4 responses altogether). Other terms mentioned by more than one respondent include: 'sensuality' and 'sensations' (5 responses), 'touch' (5 responses), 'intimacy'/'intimate' (4 responses), 'gaze'/'look' (3 responses), 'hot'/'heat' (3 responses), 'kiss(ing)' (3 responses), 'passion' (3 responses), and 'skin', 'naked'/'nudity', 'body', and 'desire' (2 responses each). As for the words mentioned by only one respondent, it should be emphasised that some of them may be considered as belonging to the same superordinate category.[2] By way of illustration, 'satisfaction' may be connected both to 'orgasm' and 'happiness', while 'happiness' may be related to

'laughter'. This chain of connections suggests, however, that erotic relations are hyponymically associated with something pleasant and positive.[3] All of the multiple choice words that the workshop participants felt described erotic relations are illustrated in Figure 2.

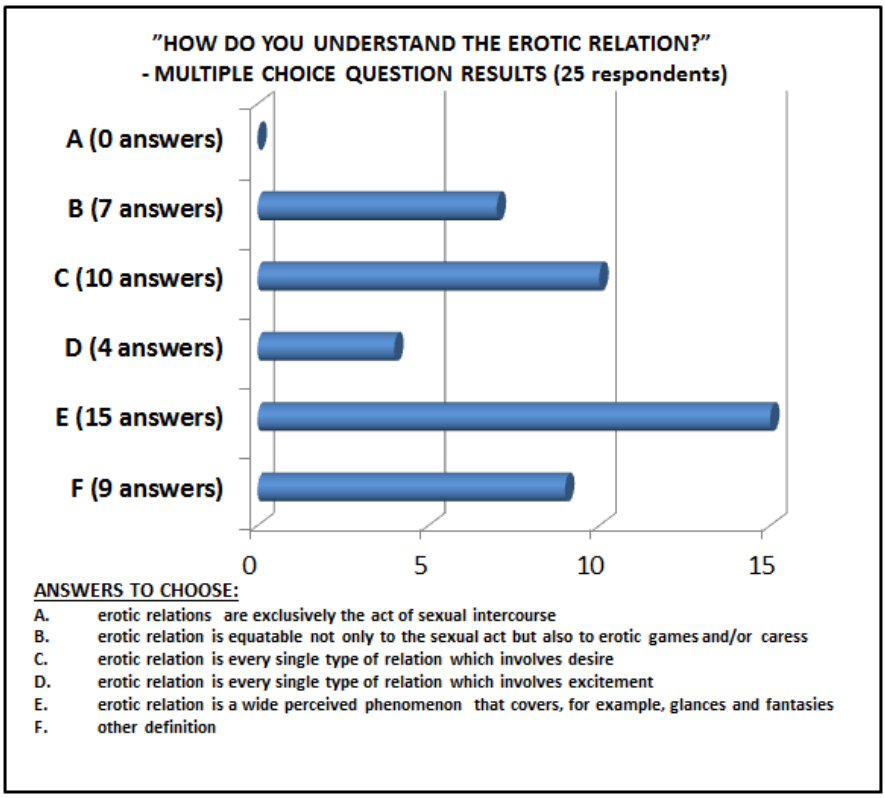


Figure 1: How do you understand erotic relations – multiple choice question results

The interpretation of erotic relations evidently influences the selection process for determining which literary extracts are included in the database and the subsequent linguistic analysis used when tagging the text. The workshop participants were given a task to classify nine extracts from Graham Green's novel *The End of the Affair* as erotic or not to determine whether they would include them on the database. The categorisation of the extracts varied from participant to

participant suggesting that subjectivity is unavoidable when exploring erotic relations and that there is no single way of understanding eroticism.

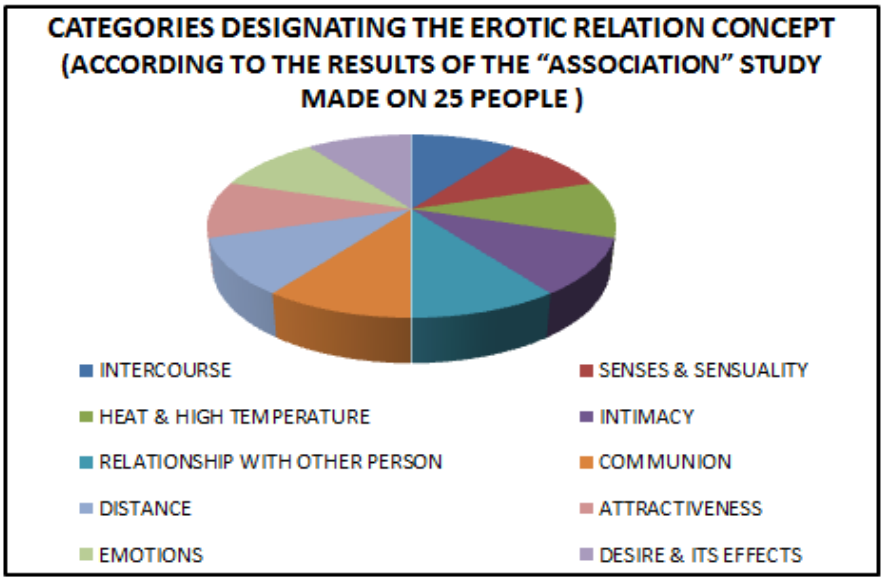


Figure 2: Categories Designating The Erotic Relation Concept (According To The Results Of The "Association" Study Made On 25 People)

In the remainder of this chapter, we will present some aspects of the online database created by our research group, outlining the purposes of the project and its possible applications in the humanities.

4. Project Stages

The process of creating the database can be divided into three parts:

1. Identifying potential users, their needs and possible uses of the information collected in the database.
2. Entering textual material into the database.
3. Creating the searching module.

We are currently in the second stage of the above process: entering extracts from literature into the database and tagging them to optimise the database search engine. This is an extremely important stage as we need to establish a set of rules

to eliminate inconsistencies in the database and ensure that the search engine is effective. For this reason, it is also the most laborious element of the project.

5. Selected Practical Applications of the Database

As mentioned above, all of the database's functions are designed to respond to the needs of potential users. In this part of the chapter some selected practical applications of the database will be presented.

One of the most extensive features of the database is the information on literature. This feature was created taking into account researchers from different fields – for example, sociologists and psychologists – who occasionally refer to literary representations in their research. In using our database, those researchers may find some appropriate literary extracts which will support their research. The tagged information about narration, period, and location will enable the researcher to determine whether the book is worth further exploration.

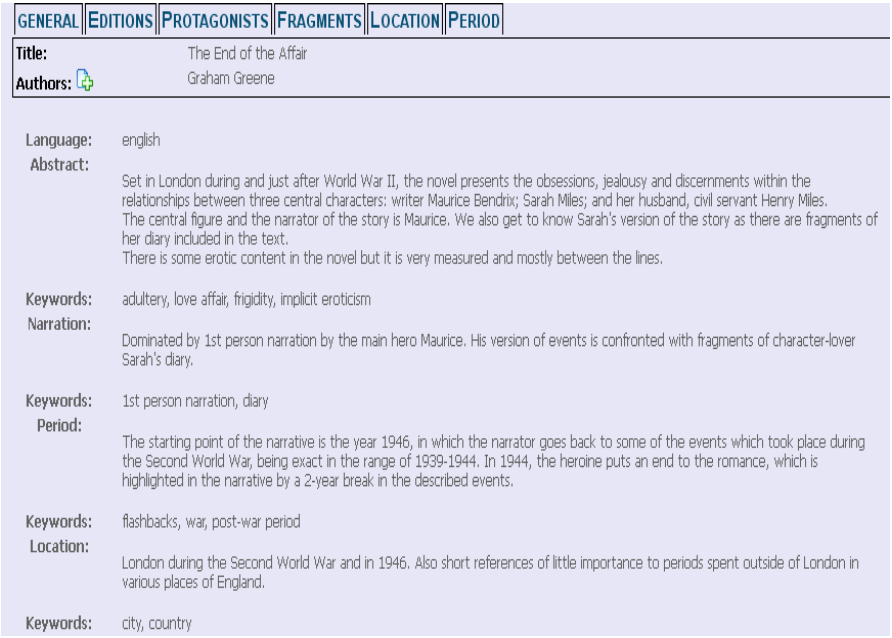
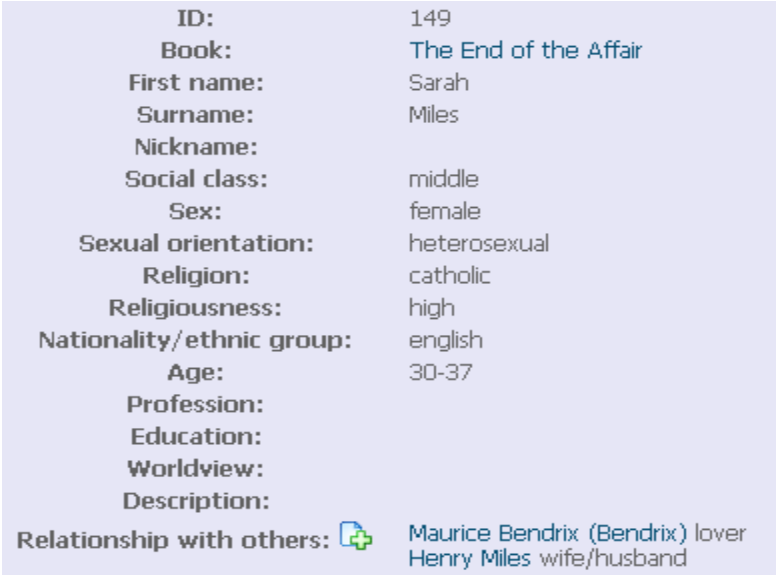


Figure 3: General book information

The database will also contain information on the protagonists' characteristics, including a wide-range of data such as social class, sex, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, age, profession, education, and worldview. By using this

search unit, researchers will be able to filter protagonists in the database and find those who best suit their subject matter. For example, a sociologist may search for a middle-class female protagonist between the ages of 28-35 years old. In this case, one of the search results would be presented as follows in Figure 4.



ID:	149
Book:	The End of the Affair
First name:	Sarah
Surname:	Miles
Nickname:	
Social class:	middle
Sex:	female
Sexual orientation:	heterosexual
Religion:	catholic
Religiousness:	high
Nationality/ethnic group:	english
Age:	30-37
Profession:	
Education:	
Worldview:	
Description:	
Relationship with others:	Maurice Bendrix (Bendrix) lover Henry Miles wife/husband

Figure 4: Protagonist form

In the 'Location information' section, we will enter the setting of the book including continent, country, and region, and label whether it is the main location of the book or not. To complete the form, we will specify the size and type of the location, for example, city, small town, camp, tourist resort, secluded spot, on the road, village, etc. The 'Location information' was designed with those researchers in mind who search for novels based on precise locations like London or Europe. If one was to filter the database with the criteria of London as the main location, one of the results would be presented as follows in Figure 5.

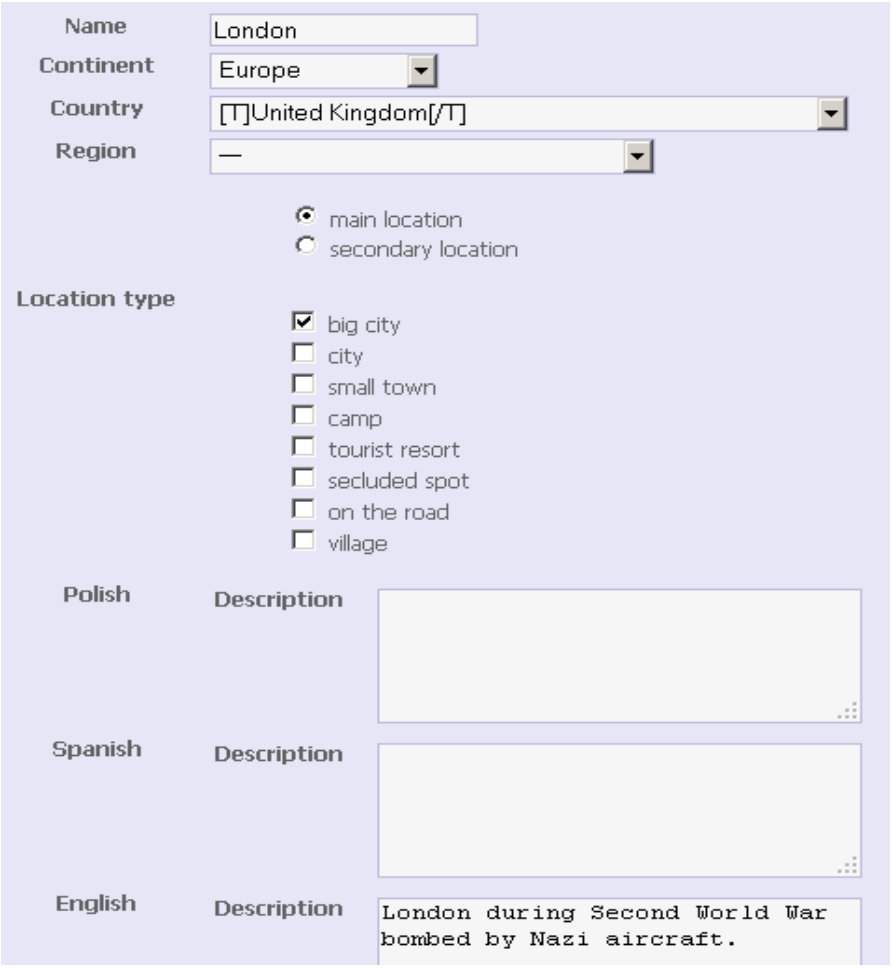


Figure 5: Location information

As with the 'Location information', we will have an analogous situation when recording the 'Period information'. Once more we will determine the main periods of the books with those researchers in mind who may search, for example, for books set in the 1940s. The search results for books set in the 1940s would yield the following result presented in Figure 6.

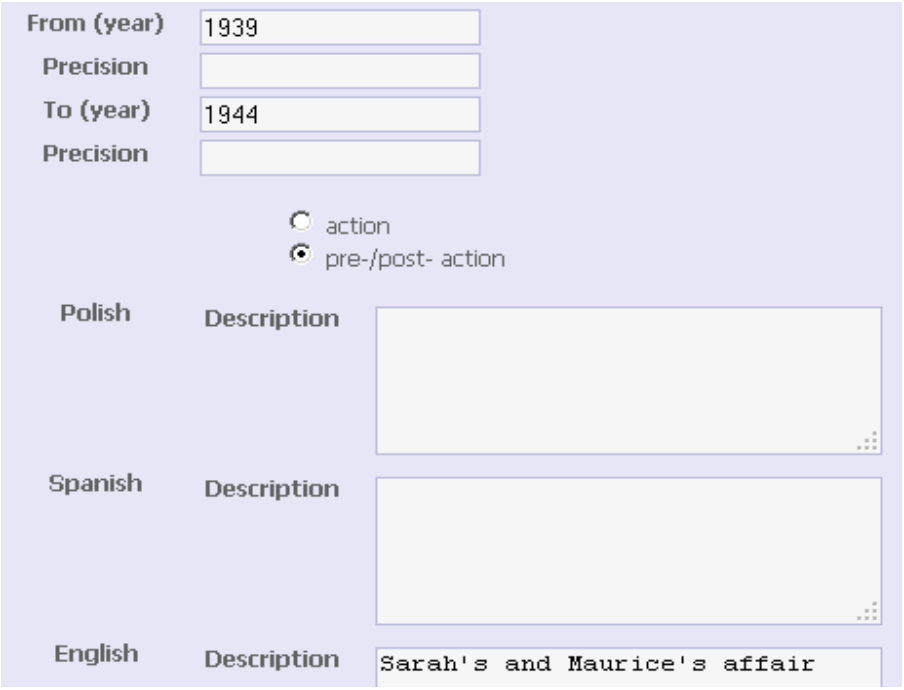


Figure 6: Period information

Throughout the process of constructing the database, we have taken into account the needs of non-literary scholars whose research focuses on extracts from literature rather than the whole text. For this reason, the database provides extensive details about selected scenes which include among others: narration, space, location, year, season, and time of day. In the descriptive fields, we can add any other crucial information about the scene if it does not appear in the multiple choice field. If a scholar searches for scenes in literature taking place in winter and in cities, they will come across this particular example and will obtain extra information including the specific context in the description section – 'The intimacy takes place in the church which changes the context of the scene' – as demonstrated in Figure 7.

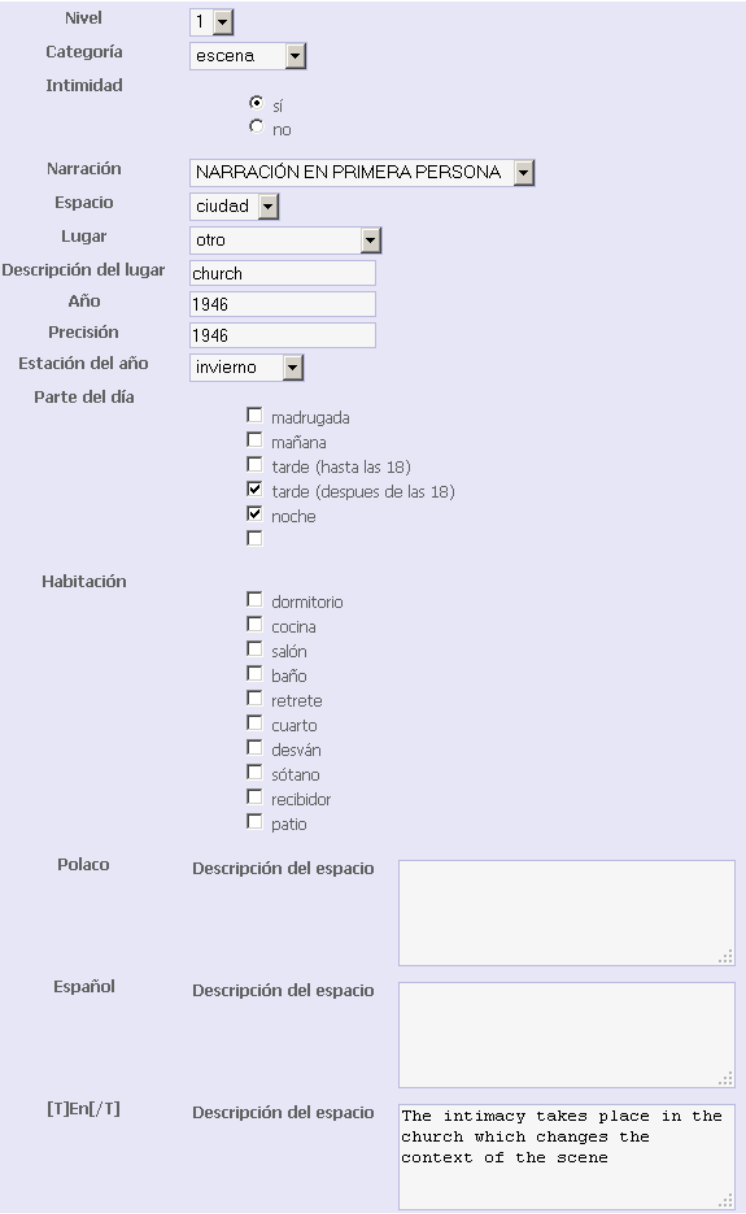


Figure 7: General scene information

Another important feature at the level of scene is the multiple choice 'sexual practices' tags presented in Figure 8. The list has been developed using *Lexicon der Erotic*.[4] This list was designed with those researchers in mind who may search for scenes which allude to, for example, bisexuality, orgasm or sadism – either individually or by combining some of those sexual practices.

Figure 8: Scene sexual practices tagging

Another extremely interesting and innovating function of the database is the tagging of the linguistics elements of the scenes. Figure 9 presents the basic view of a tagged extract. The elements that have been tagged include: verbs with their complements, body parts with their descriptions, and dialogue.

Figure 9: Scene basic view

If we tag the verbs and their complements which appear in an erotic scene, we will obtain a list of verbs in context. By analysing these verbs in context, researchers will be able to conduct a wide range of studies from quantitative ones and author style identification through to gender studies.

Content:

VERB PHRASE	VERB	COMPLEMENT(s)		
I put my arm round her	put	I	my arm	round her
[I]touched her breast	touched	[I]	her breast	

Figure 10: Scene verb list

Body parts constitute another linguistic content that can be tagged in our database, which will prove beneficial for cultural studies, among others.[5] Figure 11 is an illustration of the tagging of a male arm and female breast that appear in the literary sample.

Content:

NAME	SEX	REG	CORE	PHRASE	DESCRIPTIONs
arm	male	arm	arm	my arm	my
breast	female	breast	breast	her breast	her

Figure 11: Scene body part list

In this case, the references to body parts are direct and literal. However, there are numerous authors who refer to body parts using metaphorical expressions. In an automatic computer search, those indirect metaphorical references would be

irretrievably lost. For this reason, close reading and manual tagging proves indispensable in the humanities. We can see it in this example from an English translation of the Spanish bestselling novel *Las edades de Lulú* (*The Ages of Lulu*) by Almudena Grandes: 'That bit of slippery reddened flesh has turned into the star of the evening.'[6] The only identification of the penis as a 'bit of slippery reddened flesh' is contextual. Its metaphorical description – 'the star of the evening' – would also elude an automatic computer search for key terms.

NAME	SEX	REG	CORE	PHRASE	DESCRIPTIONs
bit of slippery reddened flesh	male	penis	bit of slippery reddened flesh	That bit of slippery reddened flesh had turned into the star of the evening	the star of the evening

Figure 12: Example of indirect reference to body parts based on *The Ages of Lulu* by Almudena Grandes

The last element we will discuss in this chapter is the dialogue list. We decided to tag the parts of the dialogue which are erotic in content, as not all dialogue that takes place during sexual intercourse is erotic in content. It is extremely interesting and worth exploring what characters say and which subjects are discussed during erotic acts. An example of a dialogue list is presented in Figure 13.

speaker	text
148 Maurice Bendrix (Bendrix)	'This is where we begin again,'
148 Maurice Bendrix (Bendrix)	'I've been a bad lover, Sarah. It was the insecurity that did it. I didn't trust you. I didn't know enough about you. But I'm secure now.'

Figure 13: Scene dialogue list

6. Further Project Development

Although the erotic content database still requires further tests and improvements, we believe it is valuable – and possible – to extend the database to include languages and literatures other than Polish and Spanish. This study has yielded positive results with regards to the feasibility of the project, which suggests that it is possible to approach complex literary creations on eroticism and other themes in a schematic way. Following this result, we plan to include thematic modules beyond the erotic in the database.

We welcome any commentary or collaboration proposals on this subject. Please contact: katarzyna.popekbernat@gmail.com or paulina.nalewajko@gazeta.pl .

Notes

[1] Félix Rodríguez Gonález, *Diccionario del sexo y el erotismo* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2011); Allan D. Peterkin, *The bald-headed hermit & the artichoke: an erotic Tesaurus* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1999); Francisco Sánchez Benedito, *Dictionary of English euphemisms and dysphemisms for the taboo of sex with Spanish equivalents* (Albolote [Granada]: Comares, 2009); Antonio Tello, *Gran diccionario erótico de voces de España e Hispanoamérica* (Madrid: Temas de hoy, 1992); Camilo José Cela, *Diccionario del erotismo. Tomo I: Abajo – Eyacular. Tomo II: Fabricar hombres – Zurrón* (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1988).

[2] By superordinate, we refer to the more general concept of the prototype. For example, if the prototype is 'car', the superordinate category will be 'vehicle' while the subordinate category may be 'Volkswagen Beetle'. See: Friedrich Ungerer and Hans-Jörg Schmid. *An introduction to cognitive linguistics* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2006 [1996]), 69-74, 77-88.

[3] In linguistics, hyponym is a word with a specific meaning that is included within the semantic field of a more general term (its hypernym). For example, 'chair' is a hyponym of 'furniture'. See: Renata Grzegorczykowa. *Wprowadzenie do semantyki językoznawczej*. (Warszawa: PWN, 2011 [2001]), 70-73.

[4] Lykke Aresin and Kurt Starke. *Knaurs Lexicon der Erotic* (München: Droemer Knaur, 1996).

[5] David M. Friedman, *A Mind of Its Own: a Cultural History of the Penis* (New York: The Free Press, 2001).

[6] Almundena Grandes, *The Ages of Lulu*. Trans. Sonia Soto (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005). 25

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Ungerer, Friedrich, and Hans-Jörg Schmid. *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics*. Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2006 [1996].

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Part II

The Erotic and Cinema

Eroticism and Surrealism in the Cinema of Walerian Borowczyk

Kacper Nowacki

Abstract
Walerian Borowczyk was a multifaceted artist, painter, writer, screenwriter, set designer and film director. Born in 1929 in Poland, he emigrated to France in 1957, and then began his career with experimental short animated films appreciated by the surrealists. This chapter will explore the main themes of his films and the way Borowczyk applies the surrealist perspective in his cinema. In 1968, after his first feature film, *Goto, Island of Love*, Borowczyk was revealed to the public as an erotic filmmaker. The raw nudity, the blurry dreamlike atmosphere and the Pan's violence which he typically presented on the silver screen have been the subject of several controversies and even of censorship in the years 1970-1980. His cinematic universe draws its richness from characters or places coming from the variety of literatures and historical periods such as Lucrezia Borgia and Erzsébet Báthory in *Immoral Tales* (1974), Raffaello Sanzio in *Three Immoral Women* (1979), *Lokis* by Prosper Merimée in *The Beast* (1975), *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson in *Dr Jekyll and His Women* (1981) or André Pieyre de Mandiargues's novels adaptations *The Streetwalker* (1976), *Love rites* (1988). In his films, Borowczyk tends to underline the sexual potential of art and literature as well as the sublime metamorphosis of sexuality. One can believe that the La Rochefoucauld quoted in *Immoral Tales* represents his artistic motto: 'Love pleases more by the manner in which it shows itself than by itself.' This chapter will analyse the most representative of Borowczyk's erotic films in their relation to the surrealistic aesthetics.

Key Words: Borowczyk, cinema, surrealism, eroticism, amour fou, literature, adaptation.

*****

1. Introduction

Before Walerian Borowczyk started his adventure in cinema, he was a multifaceted artist, painter and writer. Born in 1929 in Poland, he immigrated to France in 1957 where he began his career with experimental short animated films such as *House* and *Renaissance*, both of which were appreciated by the surrealists. André Breton admired his *imagination fulgurante.*[1] It was in 1968, after his first feature film, *Goto, Island of Love*, that Borowczyk realized that he could also work with actors. In total, Borowczyk made 38 shorts and 14 feature films between 1946 and 1988. However, despite achieving a degree of fame in the 1970s, especially in France, these days his films are difficult to find even on DVD. I discovered his film *Immoral Tales* thanks to his French friend and writer André Pieyre de

Mandiargues, whose short story *Tide*, Borowczyk adapted as the first of four episodes/tales. I remember my first impression was rather ambiguous and I could not find words to describe what I saw and heard (the music in Borowczyk's films is hard to forget). To sum up, one could recall the artistically filmed outdoors, a lot of historical props, renaissance Spanish songs, and a slate of quite controversial[2] topics (virginity, masturbation, blood lust, incestuous sex) and female nudity. The film critics[3] nowadays rate this film very poorly and often speak about Borowczyk's descent into soft porn after 1976. After watching other available films, one can be really confused and ask oneself questions about that kind of criticism: was Borowczyk really a pornographer? Is it possible to find artistic value in films other than *Goto, island of love* and *Blanche*? Is there any possible relation of his filmmaking with the surrealism?

Rather than viewing Borowczyk's later film productions as a break from his earlier, lauded work, this chapter will analyse his most representative productions, arguing that the characteristic techniques that he developed in his early work continued to mature within his later work. Cinematic elements that grew out of surrealism became Borowczyk's artistic signature.

2. Non-Conformist Boro-Style

In order to answer these questions, first of all, it is useful to know the film-maker's own opinion. In one interview,[4] replying to Daniel Bird, Borowczyk sees nothing unusual in his interest in sex: 'Excuse me, Sir - I'm not the only one, everybody's interested in sex! Always have been.' However he refuses the label of the erotic director and explains why:

> Seriously, I contend I'm not of erotic films as I'm thought to be. [...] if someone mentions the word "erotic" or says I make erotic films it's always with ironic innuendo or a feeling of denigration.[5]

Borowczyk was continuously fighting against his image as a pornographer and critics 'literary vision' of his cinema. For example, he criticized Daniel Bird in the same interview for calling him a pervert just because of showing explicit sex. Borowczyk could not understand and thought that it was wrong to judge a director by identifying him with the topic of the film (if someone speaks about sex he must be a sex maniac). Here he explains the presence of the erotic content:

> You know, it's not in order to show sex. If you see an erotic scene in a good film, one where there is naked people or even the sexual act - it's not there without reason. The reason isn't just to show the scene because there are specialist film theatres for that kind of thing...cabarets....brothels...[6]

Finally, when the journalist provokes him, he replies: 'Listen - who isn't perverted? Our fantasies are identical to the consumers. All I do is expressing everyone's dreams.'[7]

3. Surrealism

This dream content could make us think about the surrealist element of his oeuvre, but Borowczyk consistently refused that label, too:

> I don't mind being labelled; it's just that I wasn't a real surrealist. I am totally myself when I create, but my work is never automatic. My films, my paintings or art objects I make are all out of norms.[8]

However, in Walerian Borowczyk's films, one can distinguish some affinities with surrealism.[9] Elements such as juxtaposition, the frequent use of shocking imagery, experimental editing all are present in his most representative films.[10] Moreover, Borowczyk often tends to be original and to create his own type of cinema based on human desires and fears.

The term 'surrealism' coined by Guillaume Apollinaire[11] served to describe one of Jean Cocteau's works, namely *Parade*, as an artistic representation provoking the audience's reaction to the fiction which goes beyond the real. That first definition was at first very impressionistic: it was more about the extraordinary effect that someone's imagination could engender. Later on, in 1920s and 1930s, it was André Breton who developed this concept and transferred it on a more psychoanalytic, Freudian, ground. When it comes to cinema, Michael Richardson explains that there is neither a model nor a definition of a surrealistic film and we are not able to establish criteria. As he remarks:

> Surrealism was never in any sense a 'film movement', and to try to see it as though it was is to distort what is most vital about it. In the analysis of film in the context of surrealism we should not be asking whether a particular film or film maker is surrealist. The principal question to be considered ought rather to be: how does consideration of this particular film or film maker in relation to surrealism help us to illuminate either surrealism or the film?[12]

That is exactly the question one may ask about the generation of contemporary film-makers who were sometimes inspired by this double literary and psychoanalytic movement in their artistic productions. Walerian Borowczyk was certainly one of them. The polish director approved of the freedom of expression in what he intended as surrealism in film: 'Surrealism is a program of absolute non-

conformity, in life and in poetry that speaks equally to the cinema. I'm all for it.'[13] The Polish director was inspired by the idea of applying this program and presenting it on the silver screen. However, he was also very aware of the danger of being part of the movement. He always wanted to stay an outsider, as he explains:

> If I speak of surrealism, or if I intend to speak, I'm not thinking about Art. Art? This is the disciplines, constraints, the models, the artistic talents, psychology, theories, and the schools. Art, that's 'the artists'. Only creators are free.[14]

So we can say that impromptu creation was the most suitable understanding of surrealism in his case. Borowczyk did not like the critics for their reduction of the concept of surrealism to a direct impressionist definition, as he commented ironically: 'a film is surrealist because a gentleman walks upon the ceiling of a room. The majority of film critics are the captives of a literary vision.'[15] He called for more ambitious works and chose the stories for his films with an extreme care. Contrary to some of the surrealist artists, Borowczyk was not working in the state of psychic automatism. He did not consider himself any specialist of one genre; if any, he wanted to be a specialist of cinema in general. Borowczyk's idea was to reproduce one's dreams from memory in a new creative way. That is why, from a surrealist perspective, a single famous scene, extracted from a film, could be as important as the work as a whole.

Borowczyk was inspired by many genres of art. As recalls Richardson:

> If surrealism cannot be seen as a style or a mechanism, equally it is not a mode of existence. Surrealism can never be tied down to a thing; it is a relation between things.[16]

In this way Borowczyk explores several themes in his own, very personal style, his involvement in the ideas of surrealism is indirect. He did not participate in the Surrealist movement, but maintained many contacts with writers and artists familiar with this milieu. The Polish director liked to work with historical themes, showing a timeless value of art, as he states:

> A masterpiece is never tedious. What's more, its interest is more durable than fashion. I prefer those works which are the proof of an instinctive imagination, but not affectation or plagiarism. I admire humour, but never when it's gratuitous or facile. I applaud rebellion, but not when it's opposed to life.[17]

Once again Borowczyk underlines the link between cinema and life, his understanding of surrealism is often shown in a personal way.

4. Eroticism

That is why a part of his aesthetics might be related to another theme treated quite late by the surrealists, namely eroticism.[18] Although the Polish director refused to call his films 'erotic', it is hard to neglect the way he introduces the spectator to voyeurism. In his films, Borowczyk tried to express the law of transgression which was already mentioned by Georges Bataille.[19] In this way, one can try to explain the rush always present in his films as a symbolic expression of the impossibility of eroticism which often leads to madness or death. The way Borowczyk understands eroticism and surrealism combines the concepts of beauty, dream and mad love.

Beauty is often represented in the female[20] body. It is important to underline which parts of the body are shown in the close-ups. On the one hand, Borowczyk starts with eyes and mouths, which are channels to the verbal and visual communication. On the other hand, his definition of beauty recalls Bataille's concept.[21] According to the French philosopher, there is a paradox in our perception of the beauty of the human body. At first, there is an innate abjection of anything that recalls the animal form (for example, the anthropoid one). However, the desirable female body should suggest a secret animal element. As remarks Bataille: 'The hairy parts are the desired one.'[22] It would be the sexual parts of the body that Borowczyk will prefer in his shooting. Furthermore, erotic desire is often unconsciously linked to the need to soil and to profane. Eroticism is understood as a call for transgression. The very existence of limits (social conventions or catholic religion in Borowczyk's case) gives an opportunity for a transgressive act. The mysterious human nature was the main topic of Borowczyk exploration of eroticism. It recalls Gombrowicz's idea of pan-erotic reality, when one of his characters shouts: 'Oh, the young girl, that receptacle of shameful secrets, sealed in her own beauty!'[23] However, Borowczyk was not as critical as Gombrowicz and rather than judging he was more interested in asking ethical questions concerning human behaviour through the artistic language of cinema. When it comes to the love of art, it is important to recall his friendship with André Pieyre de Mandiargues, French writer, close to the surrealists. Borowczyk made several cinematographic adaptations of his works: *La Marée, Le sang de l'agneau*, *La Marge*, *Tout disparaîtra*. The polish director shared the same passion for ancient times, female characters, animals, religion and the bizarre objects. The main characteristics of Mandiargues's style, the uncertainty based on the confusion between life and death, the real world and the dream, are always present in his movies.

Regarding the oneiric element, several typologies of dreams are treated in Borowczyk's productions. His two first feature films *Goto* and *Blanche* explore the

dream of power, of revenge and of love. His next films explore the taboo in form of the loss of virginity, masturbation, blood lust, incest, rape, (*Immoral Tales*, *Three immoral women*), zoophilia (*The Beast*) and forbidden love (*Story of Sin*, *Art of love*, *Love rites*). The dreamlike atmosphere was represented thanks to series of techniques Borowczyk used in his films. The details were extremely important and there were no scenes that could have been cut from the picture.

The storytelling is often composed by opposed elements. The first juxtaposition is the one of the spectator and the actor's view.[24] In many films female characters are staring into the camera, while the next shot gives the spectator a chance to see the same.[25] The second one is the contrast of sound and silence. On the one hand, Borowczyk's films are rather silent, there are not many dialogues. On the other hand the music, composed of enchanting pieces from Haendel, Scarlatti and Bach, medieval music and even contemporary hits, is extraordinary. Borowczyk adores music and his immediate perception which is faster and more unconscious than the sight. The third contrast will be the juxtaposition of scenes, as a product of editing. For instance, in *Immoral tales*, the group sex scene of Lucrezia Borgia with her brother and father (the pope!) is contrasted with the speech of Savonarola cursing the lust of the Vatican City. The fast flashbacks of memories, paintings, and landscape shots often contrast with the sex scenes. The treatment of the actors is also very distinctive. The beauty of the main female character is often juxtaposed with the ugliness of the rest of the actors. Borowczyk was always showing women's stories. His actresses were beautiful women, often presented in complicated relationships.

As for the final element, the mad love, maybe it's more convenient to speak about the general tension that leads any of Borowczyk's fictions, according to André Breton's opinion that the surrealist creation has to be uncanny and has to confer on the spectator a sense of uncertainty. To underline the tension, characters are often shown in a visual dynamics. They are running, going up and down the stairs, riding etc. In *Immoral tales* a young couple is riding to the beach and then running to be on the shore before the tide. Thèrese ran chased by her auntie and the vagabond, Ewa in *Story of sin* travelled around Europe to find his lover. Especially female characters are often presented as torn by emotions (Glossia, Ewa). The erotic tension is often caused by and related to secrets and lies. The mystery of the relationships leads to the interrupted sex scene. We could number a lot of examples, such as in *Goto, Island of love*, where Glossia has a love affair with Gono while Grozo is secretly in love with her, and *Blanche* who is having an affair with her knight. Moreover the secrets are present in *Immoral Tales*: teenagers are running to the beach while the parents are gone, Thèrese's masturbation in her room, incestuous sex of Borgias at the backdoor of the Vatican and in other films Lucy's dreams about the Beast, Eva's erotic fantasies about Lukasz are hidden inside the walls. Page of Erzsébet is lying to her; Margherita is lying to all her lovers (*Three immoral women*), Roman women are lying to their husbands (*Art of*

Love). The general tension in the film shows female characters following some kind of rite of passage from the unknown. Julie discovers oral sex, Thèrese discovers masturbation, and Erzsébet discovers the secret of virginity (*Immoral tales*). The tension is somehow underlined by the attention paid to symbolic objects and animals. For example the walls are always richly decorated. Borowczyk has a fetish for the use of unique objects such as boxes, hats, shoes. Apart from those typical elements that construct the surrealistic and erotic mark of Borowczyk's cinema, one could extend the list of his *licencia poetica*, but this could be a topic for another book.

5. Conclusion

All in all, Walerian Borowczyk has created his own style. Replying to the questions asked at the beginning of this chapter, it is difficult to avoid the erotic interpretation of Borowczyk films. They are however far from pornography and can't be treated as such. Even if we are not Borowczyk's fan, we can't deny the artistic value of all of his movies, even of those produced after 1976. His own artistic perspective was not surrealist but it is possible to find some affinities such as non-conformism, dreams, madness (tension) and a Bataillian conception of beauty. Borowczyk stayed inspired by his own imagination against all odds, that is why it is possible to find some traces of intertextuality between his films.[26] His cinema of sensual dreams was an expression of his definition of the Eros:

> Eroticism, sex, is one of the most moral parts of life. Eroticism does not kill, exterminate, encourage evil, lead to crime. On the contrary, it makes people gentler, brings joy, gives fulfilment, it leads to selfless pleasure.[27]

Notes

[1] Afterword to Pascal Vimenet, *Walerian Borowczyk* (Paris: Editions de l'Oeil, 2009).

[2] The controversy being still quite relative, because one can't forget that we are in the 1970ties after the sexual revolution, when films like Berolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (1972), Oshima's *Ai no corrida* (1977) and Pasolini's *Salo* (1975) were shown in the theatres.

[3] The most explicit example is a chapter 'Walerian Borowczyk and the Touch of Desire' in Michael Richardson, *Surrealism and Cinema* (New York: Berg, 2006), 107-120.

[4] All quotations that follow in this paragraph are taken from the archive interview with Borowczyk *In the Beginning was Lust* (dir. Daniel Bird, 2004) available on the DVD of *Story of Sin*, Nouveaux Pictures, UK 2004.

[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Gilles Gressard, supplement to *Borowczyk: cinéaste onirique*, trans. by author, (Paris: Editions Walter/Albatros, 1981), 25.
[9] See for example Jeremy M. Robinson, *Walerian Borowczyk, cinema of erotic dreams* (London: Crescent Moon, 2012), 45-47; Daniel Bird, 'Devils' Games: Surrealism in Polish émigré cinema,' in *A Story of Sin: Surrealism in Polish cinema*, ed. Kamila Wielebska and Kuba Mikruda (Krakow-Warszawa: Korporacja Ha!art, 2010), 75-82; Richardson, *Surrealism and cinema*, 107-120.
[10] The films which are most popular and most representative of the best period of Borowczyk's work : *Goto, The Island of Love*, *Immoral Tales*, *Story of a sin*, *The Beast*, *Three immoral women*, *Art of love*, *Love rites and The Margin*.
[11] Marie-Paule Berranger, *Panorama de la littérature française : le surrealisme*,(Paris: Hachette, 1997), 31-32. The word "surrealism" is used for the first time in May 1917.
[12] Richardson, *Surrealism and cinema*, 14.
[13] 'Walerian Borowczyk on surrealism', UbuWeb, accessed 12 June 2012, http://www.ubu.com/film/borowczyk.html.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Richardson, *Surrealism an cinema*, 10.
[17] 'Walerian Borowczyk on surrealism', UbuWeb, accessed 12 June 2012, http://www.ubu.com/film/borowczyk.html.
[18] On the relation between the eroticism and the surrealism in France, see Sarane Alexandrian, 'Sexe(s) exquis sans dessus (ni)dessous : érotisme surréaliste', accessed 12 June 2012, http://melusine.univ-paris3.fr/astu/Alexandrian.pdf. Alexandrian remarks that it was only after the Georges Bataille's publication of *L'Érotisme* that surrealist started to use this word and integrate it as their fundamental term.
[19] Georges Bataille, *L'Erotisme* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1957).
[20] Indeed all of the main characters of Borowczyk feature films are women: Glossia, Blanche, Julie, Thèrese, Elisabeth Batory, Lucrezia Borgia, Ewa, Lucy Broadhusrt/Romilda, Diana, Margherita, Marceline, Marie, Claudia, Miriam.
[21] Bataille, *L'Erotisme*, 151-157.
[22] Ibid., 156.
[23] Witold Gombrowicz, *Ferdydurke*, trans. D. Borchardt (Yale University Press, 2012), 158.
[24] There is a certain fetish for optical objects: binoculars, cameras, windows.

[25] Unforgettable eyes of Ligia Branice in *Goto* or Paloma Picasso in *Immoral tales* are examples of this art.
[26] The use of flower petals spread on a female body is used in *The Story of Sin*, *The Beast*, *The Margin*. The discovery of the erotic book is represented in the episode Therèse of *Immoral Tales* then again in *The Story of Sin*, *The Beast*. Sex in the hay scene and horses appear more than once in *Goto, Island of love*, *Immoral Tales*, *Blanche* and *Beast*.
[27] Robinson, *Walerian Borowczyk*, 21.

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The Representation of Masculinity and Male Sexuality in Pedro Almodóvar's Film *Law of Desire*

Evangelia Sempou

Abstract
Pedro Almodóvar's *Law of Desire* (1987) is one of the most discussed films of its time due to its overt representation of homosexuality. The portrayal of anal sex scene between men constituted a breakthrough in the history of Spanish filmography. In this chapter, I will start by analysing the soft core pornographic sequence at the beginning of the film and its connotations. In the main body, I will examine the ways in which the Spanish director subverts traditional notions of masculinity and gender by acquainting the viewer with the everyday life of a homosexual couple and demonstrating their similarity to the archetypal heterosexual couple. Other themes from the film that I will discuss include: suppressed homosexuality, the representation of erotic desire, and the fluidity of gender identities. I also make reference to the role of fetishisms in gay male desire and produce an extended analysis of the three main characters: the protagonist, Pablo, his lover, Antonio, and Pablo's transsexual sister, Tina. The main point of my argument is that binary categorisations such as 'gay' and 'straight' are overthrown and sexual orientation is presented as fluid and unfixed.

Key Words: Queer sexuality, gender, fetishism, the body, destabilisation of gender/sexual identity.

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1. Introduction

Law of Desire (1987) is undoubtedly one of the most challenging films by Pedro Almodóvar, as it deconstructs traditional gender stereotypes and sexual roles, specifically those of masculinity and male sexuality. The film follows the manipulative gay director, Pablo Quintero, and documents his fiery and destructive relationship with the impassioned Antonio and the unconventional life of his transsexual sister, Tina. Created only 12 years after Franco's death, we may consider it as a conscious effort to undermine the conservative cultural policy of the regime by focusing on homosexuality and highlighting the fluidity of gender and sexuality. Francisco Franco, the Spanish Head of State by dictatorship from 1939 to 1975, implemented authoritarian politics through censorship and the promotion of traditional and conservative values, such as the reinforcement of Catholicism and the family ideal. Almodóvar's stance can therefore be perceived as a rebellion against this era, as the director attempts to subvert the conservatism imposed by the junta by illustrating more radical forms of sexuality in his art.

2. Main Part

2.1 The Opening Scene

Before commenting on the opening scene of *Law of Desire*, it useful to mention an interesting point made by Chris Perriam about the function of the male body in contemporary Spanish cinema. He states that, 'the body of the Spanish male star is, inevitably, a key point of inflection of stardom, masculinities and national specifics.'[1] The Spanish male body vacillates from connotations of muscularity to weakness in relation to nationalism, depending on the intentions at stake. A muscular Spanish male body personifies the image of a strong and united national (male) Spanish identity. However, by inscribing homosexuality in such a body, Almodóvar blurs the boundaries between traditional national stereotypes. Consequently, the viewer may become estranged from the narrative as they are unable to project their self onto the constantly changing characters, resulting in the questioning of their own identity.

The film opens with a provocative soft-porn sequence showing a young athletic man in an unspecified room with a bed and a mirror. Voices outside the frame give him instructions to undress and caress himself, which eventually lead to him masturbating. Afterwards the camera focuses on two older men reading from a script – the instructions for the young model. This scene is revealed to be a film-within-a-film, directed by the protagonist, Pablo.

In this particular scene, the body of the young man is deliberately seen through the perspective of the gay male viewer, as the unseen voices direct him with the aim to pleasure the voyeuristic viewer. According to Santiago Fouz-Hernández and Alfredo Martínez-Expósito, 'the male body is multiply objectified' and its vulnerability is emphasised by the 'words he is asked to declaim.'[2] The voices − with their sensuality increased by the fact that they come from unidentified and unseen speakers − manipulate the model, who seems to lack the will power or ability to resist. Although hesitant, the young man eventually succumbs and obeys every sexual instruction given by the voices.

The concept of the 'objectified body' is dominant in *Law of Desire*. The young man is dissociated from his subjectivity and becomes an object – a mere vehicle to satisfy the lusts of the older men. Bruce Williams observes, 'in Almodóvar's complex sexual couplings − as in the opening sequence – there is a merging of subject and object.'[3] Lost in the game of desire, the voices also lose their subjectivity and seek to objectify themselves in order to be desired by the model. This conscious attempt to objectify themselves could be interpreted as a signifier of the power of lust – a lust so strong that it can potentially generate the will to renounce their own subjectivity to satisfy their desire.

Does this scene activate the voyeuristic pleasure of the viewer? For Paul Julian Smith, the view of the vulnerable, unkempt dubbers juxtaposed to the virile, polished performer disables the hierarchy of voyeurism.[4] The viewer of *Law of Desire* can choose to identify with either the unattractive dubbers – an unlikely

situation – or abstain from the identification process altogether, thus diminishing voyeuristic pleasure. Furthermore, the ostensibly exposed young man ultimately holds the prevailing power in this sequence, as the voices become completely captivated by his presence. The fluidity of dominance in sexual relationships of any gender is emphasised here. This opinion is further reinforced by the fact that 'the camera focuses on the man's behind instead, thus somewhat preserving the phallic mystique.'[5] The avoidance of the man's penis underlines his elevated status and renders his genitals as something exceptional that must remain hidden.

According to Smith, the opening scene is 'not simply a scandalous provocation'[6] but also includes many references to the main themes of the film, such as the shift of power in sexual relationships and narcissism. Indeed the change of dominance between the model and dubbers mirrors the changes of sovereignty in the sexual relationship between Pablo and Antonio. As I will demonstrate in the following chapter, the narcissistic approach to the male body is equivalent to the egoistical and manipulative attitude of Pablo.

2.2 Deconstructing Gender Identities

A. Antonio and Pablo

In the beginning of the film, Pablo appears to be deeply in love with Juan, who does not return his love but rather abandons him for a summer job. Antonio, an athletic young man approaches Pablo and becomes his lover. Although Pablo initiates the reluctant Antonio into homosexual love, at the close of the film Antonio proves to a skilful student, capable of transcending his teacher as he is willing to pay the price of desire by murdering Juan and sacrificing himself. In this way he succeeds in finally making Pablo fall in love with him.

How exactly do these two characters express their masculinity within the frame of the relationship they develop? Antonio generally displays a virile and heterosexual masculinity. At the start of their relationship, he explicitly says to Pablo, 'I don't sleep with men', and is presented in two scenes holding a replica gun, establishing his role as a predator. As Smith asserts, '[Antonio] represents a certain intolerant and inflexible notion of masculinity.'[7] This image, however, is deconstructed when Antonio eventually adopts the role of the 'deranged wife' when he envies and spies on Pablo. He becomes hysterical and jealous, thus assuming characteristics traditionally attributed to women. According to Santiago Hernández and Chris Perriam, Antonio's 'submission to his own obsession; a sex act classically disruptive of masculinity's self-definition through bodily integrity […] all deconstruct stable identity, the meanings of love, and, in Antonio, manliness.'[8] Indeed, driven by desire, Antonio renounces his previous beliefs and surrenders himself to homosexual love. The sex act between him and Pablo reinforces the deconstruction of traditional notions of masculinity, as an athletic male body is penetrated by another man and ostensibly becomes vulnerable.

The categorisation of Antonio's sexuality is problematic as his sexual orientation vacillates from straight to gay. For example, Antonio does not reveal his suppressed homosexual desires to his mother and pleads with Pablo for discretion. On the other hand, he also acts impulsively by publicly kissing Pablo in a train station during the daytime. Antonio's contradictory behaviour is perhaps indicative of Almodóvar's message to the viewers: to abstain in thinking about sexuality in absolute terms. By exalting Antonio's fluid sexuality, the director not only destabilises the concept of masculinity but, in doing so, also explicitly criticises the staunch conservativism in many societies which instils and perpetuates homophobia.

Pablo's personality also encompasses contradictory elements: he is athletic despite his age, as well as being a celebrated director and an intellectual. He is not ashamed of his sexuality, although he does not like to broadcast it. Pablo is also the narcissistic and manipulative director of the opening scene who, like the gay subject outlined by Thomas Waugh, 'looks at and desires the object within the narrative. As artist-intellectual he also bespeaks him, constructs him, projects him, fantasizes him, in short, *represents* him.'[9] Despite Antonio – an ostensibly oppressed character – becoming the critical force at the end of the film, this does not change the fact that Antonio is emotionally carved by Pablo.

We may therefore deduce that despite Pablo's overt homosexuality, his masculinity derives from his social eminence and from his ability to manipulate others. We can also consider that his athletic body and his intellectuality reinforce his male sexuality. According to Smith, Almodóvar insists on 'showing us the 'normality' and 'naturalness' of his sometimes extravagant but never effeminate or affected characters.'[10] Pablo and Antonio may cross the boundaries between 'masculinity' and 'femininity' on occasions, but in general they are not presented as feminine. In my opinion, the important aspect of Almodóvar's film is the emphasis on the non-fixity of gender. Almodóvar insists on subverting long-standing ideas of masculinity, subsequently blurring the boundaries between 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. This non-fixity of gender accompanied with an innovative presentation of homosexuality on screen can be observed in two ways: firstly, in the presentation of the gay relationship between Pablo and Antonio. Almodóvar establishes similarities between gay and straight relationships; jealousy, obsession, lack of reciprocity, and rampant passion are all inevitable problems of human relationships, regardless of sexual orientation. Secondly, the Spanish director deconstructs traditional gender stereotypes by projecting a new type of nuclear family: 'a gay male as father; his sibling, now a lesbian transsexual, as mother; and the daughter of a lesbian to complete the new familial trinity.'[11] The motif of the conventional family with straight parents is completely overthrown as happy scenes from the life of this alternative family confirm the idea that masculine fathers and feminine mothers are not a necessary element in the functionality of the family.

B. Tina

Tina is Pablo's transsexual sister. Her story is a travesty of the Oedipus complex. Since her boyhood, Tina was in love with her father instead of her mother – in a reversal of the Oedipal syndrome – and as an adult obtains a sex change to cultivate a sexual relationship with her father. Following her sex change, her father abandons her for another woman, which Tina reacts against by becoming a lesbian. Tina's actions lead to castration and social exile because her choices subvert gender codes. Once again Almodóvar destabilises the traditional concept of masculinity by transforming the body and identity of a boy into a feminine figure. Almodóvar produces further sexual fluidity by transforming the sexual orientation of Tina, as she becomes a lesbian due to her disappointment with men.

Tina successfully assumes characteristics traditionally attributed to women. She embraces her new maternal role by taking care of her ex-lover's daughter, Ada, and emphasises her femininity by wearing striking dresses and concealing her age with plastic surgery. Tina is emotional and overly sentimental, at times verging on hysterical. However, Almodóvar also renders Tina as exceeding such confining gender categories. Although Tina is mostly ostentatiously feminine, she does not hesitate over divulging her transsexual status which gives her a complex character. Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito comment that, 'the cultural effect of transvestism is to destabilize all such binaries: not only 'male' and 'female' but also 'gay' and 'straight', and 'sex' and 'gender'.'[12] Tina combines 'feminine' and 'masculine' characteristics; for example, when two policemen offend her, she knocks one of them down with a virile punch – thus transcending the gender binary.

We may conclude that in her sex change and constantly altering sexual orientation lies Tina's struggle to construct a true and singular identity. The transformation of her body and her own personal construction of gender imply her attempt to invalidate binary oppositions and to form a unity without precedent. In two conversations between Tina, the priest, and her brother, she repeatedly declares that her memories are all she has left. Her past is unique as she recalls memories of herself as both Tino and Tina. Almodóvar suggests that the much-celebrated masculine ideal may not be sufficient for every individual. Nevertheless, some male traits are still present in Tina's personality. Through her narrative, she triggers the imagination of the spectator and enables them to see her not only as a defiant transsexual but also as a young traumatised boy. Oscillating between memory and current condition, she suggests that gender and sexual orientation is not something inherent and inviolable.

Finally, another interesting point about Tina can be deduced from the scene in which she observes a man cleaning the road with a hose. She exclaims that she cannot stand the heat and persistently asks to be cooled down with the water. When finally hosed down, she is satisfied. For Mark Allinson, Tina personifies desire in this scene.[13] I believe that Tina – as a transsexual – incorporates features of both

sexes and possesses a complex, nuanced, and therefore more complete notion of desire. The water hose signifies both the phallus and woman, due to its phallic shape and the female connotations that water holds. From this privileged point of view, Tina is able to achieve this figurative orgasm because she is the only character capable of fully appreciating it. She is the character who most fully dismantles the binaries between biology and self-construction, male and female, gay and straight.

2.3. The Presence of Fetishes

A fetish is an object that is connected to a sexual fixation. For Freud, the male fetish-object is 'a substitute for the [mother's lack of] penis', which symbolises both the recurring threat of castration and the 'masculine triumph' over such a threat.[14] Williams comments that 'fetishism in Almodóvar crosses gender barriers yet is always ultimately recouped as germane to gay male desire.'[15] Indeed, in *Law of Desire* there is an abundance of such objects, all entangled within the relationships between the main characters. In one of the opening scenes, Pablo talks to a stranger outside a bar and expresses his desire to steal Juan's motorbike to fulfil his 'fetish' because Juan intends to leave Pablo the following day and Pablo wishes to keep a memoir of his lover.

Another fetish in the film is white underwear – a garment that the model, Pablo, and Antonio all wear. The repeated projection of the white underwear instead of the penis establishes it as a fetish – a symbolic force that underlines the hidden power of the phallus and reinforces the male sexuality of its wearers. The use of this particular fetish also triggers the lust of the viewer, enabling them to use their imagination creatively. By avoiding an illustration of the phallus, the director grants the viewer the freedom to project their own personal fantasies rather than being restricted to a specific image. In addition, Pablo's colourful shirt can also be considered a fetish, as Antonio buys a similar one in an attempt to possess everything Pablo has and transform himself from the object of Pablo's desire into his own ego ideal.[16] The fetish of the shirt is indicative of Antonio's desire to assert himself as an active subject.

Finally, the ultimate fetish of the film is the typewriter, a fetish created by Pablo for himself. The typewriter is a symbol of Pablo's attitude in his gay relationships – controlling and egoistical – in which the scripting of his lovers' lives bolsters his own masculinity. It is the key object that reveals the incurable obsession Pablo has with himself. Only at the close of the film does Pablo realise the destructive force of his typewriter. Finally freed from egocentricity, he manically tries to destroy the typewriter and surrenders himself to *amour fou*. In Almodóvar's film, fetishes are detached from heterosexuality and reveal, as Williams comments, 'the complexities of the male erotic realm.'[17] Almodóvar gives the fetish a universal status by emphasising their role in gay male sexuality as psychological symbols that reveal desire.

3. Conclusion

Law of Desire overtly tackles the representation and problems of homosexual love and desire. By dismantling established traits of masculinity, Almodóvar seeks to convince his audience to adopt a more tolerant stance towards homosexuality. Almodóvar undoubtedly projects some challenging male images for the post-Franco era. However, the naturalness with which he depicts the principle gay couple reduces the distance between 'straight' and 'gay' by acquainting the viewer with the domesticity of homosexuals.

In addition, the tragic closing of the film is deliberately exaggerated as Antonio sacrifices everything to acquire an hour alone with Pablo. In a climactic ending, their lovemaking is followed by Antonio's decision to commit suicide, which points towards the idea of *amour fou* – the type of love that mentally unbalances people regardless of sexual orientation – as the main theme of the film.

To conclude, the close of the film resolves all ambiguities. Pablo finally realises that his egocentricity has disabled his ability to love. His final tears can be interpreted as recognition of his guilt as he holds the corpse of Antonio in front of a flaming altar – an image that mirrors the Pietà. The film's title – *Law of Desire* – is invalidated by the narrative, as desire cannot be treated rationally or be restricted by law. It must be concluded that unrequited love can have the same fatal consequences, whether gay or heterosexual in orientation.

Notes

[1] Chris Perriam, *Stars and Masculinities in Spanish Cinema: From Banderas to Bardem* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11.

[2] Santiago Fouz-Hernández and Alfredo Martínez-Expósito, *Live Flesh: The Male Body in Contemporary Spanish Cinema* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 204.

[3] Bruce Williams, 'Playgrounds of Desire: Almodóvar, Fetishism, and the Male Ideal Ego', *Journal of Film and Video* 52.2 (2000): 39.

[4] Paul Julian Smith, 'Pornography, Masculinity, Homosexuality: Almodóvar's Matador and *La ley del Deseo*', in *Refiguring Spain: Cinema, Media, Representation*, ed. Marsha Kinder (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 186.

[5] Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito, *Live Flesh: The Male Body*, 205.

[6] Paul Julian Smith, *Laws of Desire: Questions of Homosexuality in Spanish Writing and Film, 1960-1990* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 1992), 189.

[7] Paul Julian Smith, '*La ley del deseo* (*Law of Desire* 1987): A Talent For Production', in *Desire Unlimited: The Cinema of Pedro Almodóvar*, 2d ed (UK and USA: Verso, 2000), 84.

[8] Santiago Fouz-Hernández and Chris Perriam, 'Beyond Almodóvar: 'Homosexuality' in Spanish Cinema of the 1990s', in *Territories of Desire in Queer Culture: Refiguring Contemporary Boundaries*, eds. David Alderson and

Linda Anderson (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 98.
[9] Thomas Waugh, 'The Third Body: Patterns in the Construction of the Subject in Gay Male Narrative Film', in *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video*, ed. Martha Gever, John Greyson and Pratibha Parmar (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 145.
[10] Smith, *Laws of Desire*, 199.
[11] Marvin D'Lugo, *Pedro Almodóvar* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 56.
[12] Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito, *Live Flesh: The Male Body*, 154.
[13] Mark Allinson, *A Spanish Labyrinth: The Films of Pedro Almodóvar* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 96.
[14] Sigmund Freud, 'Fetishism' in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Volume XXI*. Trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), 152; 154.
[15] Williams, 'Playgrounds of desire', 28.
[16] Ibid., 40.
[17] Ibid.

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Part III

The Erotic and Art

Seduction and Possession: The Power of the Erotic in Romantic Australian Landscape Painting

Sally Clarke

Abstract
Romantic representations of the Australian landscape are constructions framed in erotic metaphors. Together with the sexualisation of the processes and mediums of painting itself, those forms of landscape painting suggest an array of potent sexual metaphors that appear to open up the possibility of taking possession of the land through the disarming language of 'love' and seduction rather than by violent conquest. In this paper I discuss the proposition that from the moment of colonisation in 1788 to the present, Australian landscape painters have seen and understood the land itself as a gendered space into and onto which erotic desires are projected. I examine how the liberal desire for a benign form of settlement are eroticised and transmitted through the vehicle of romanticism into Australian landscape painting; and then how the principles of an eroticised romanticism have functioned ideologically as part of a colonial and hetero-normative claim over the land itself. The artistic conventions of an eroticised romanticism appear fully formed just prior to the federation of Australia's six independent colonies in 1901. These conventions continue to be reinforced not only by Australia's cultural and political institutions but also by those artists resisting the call to think critically about the dominant culture's political relationship to the land. Within this context I discuss a body of paintings I have created as a way of addressing some of the issues that I perceive as being inherent in any euro-centric, hetero-normative representation of the Australian landscape.

Key Words: Erotic, desire, painting, romantic, landscape, gender, Australia, sexuality, queer, identity.

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W. J. T. Mitchell describes landscape as a social construction into which identities are projected.[1] As such, paintings of the Australian landscape are very much a reflection of the artist's identity and the culture to which he or she belongs. Bound up within the notion of identity are the things one desires, what one's own culture has collectively deemed as desirable and how this relationship is articulated. Romantic landscape painting offers an idealised notion of place. Artists are in the position to reflect or expose the desires of a culture, even to forge them. 'Desire is hunger, is the fire I breathe,'[2] sings Patti Smith, and desire is inextricably linked to notions of the erotic.p

Prior to the publication of *Eroticism in Contemporary Art* in 1971, the author Volker Kahman located the following part-definition of eroticism in the *German Encyclopaedia of Sexual Research*:

> The aesthetic elements which can restrict or modify our total experience of sexual or sensual desire. Eroticism corresponds to the sex drive in the way that appetite corresponds to hunger ….[3]

Kahmen adds, 'Eroticism refers to the sensual impulses which are at work in the mind.'[4] In relation to works of art, 'erotic refers to the creation of a work of art from an initial sexual impulse, however concealed this initial impulse may be.'[5] The aesthetics of the erotic is predominantly framed by heterosexual desire but theorists such as Gayle Ruben and Judith Butler have successfully argued that sexual desire is not essentialist, that is, it is not biologically determined to exist solely between a man and a woman, but rather it is a fluid notion that extends to fluid and performative-based sexualities.[6] Queer theory has opened up new possibilities for the reading and creation of the erotic in art and it is within this context that I will discuss my own work, as an alternative perspective to the dominant trends in Australian landscape painting, later in this chapter.

The erotic in painting is a cultural construction whether it is created consciously or sub-consciously and can be overtly displayed through sensuous representations of the body or concealed in bodily likenesses or metaphors. The anthropomorphism of the landscape has a long history in the arts with a particular emphasis on the female form by predominately male artists. Freud states, 'the complicated topography of the female sexual organs accounts for their often being represented by a landscape with rocks, woods and water.'[7] Eroticism is relational to the body and relies on a relationship between subject and object, even if the object is a fantasy within the subjects mind. Paint has long been regarded as a sensuous medium and through the methods of painting the erotic body is dislocated and sublimated into themes of landscape. The brush serves as a conduit from mind to medium for the transmission of expressive, sensuous impulses. John Curran, a New York figurative artist who emerged in the early 1990s, provocatively states:

> When I hold the brush, it's a weird object … As if part of the female sex has been taken and put on the end of this thing that is my male sex to connect with a yielding surface.[8]

This statement is indicative of a debate that has circulated around the act of painting: that painting, as a discipline dominated by men, has long functioned as a vehicle for the objectification and subordination of women to male desire.

Paint has erotic capital and depending how it is organised and structured will appeal to particular sexual fields. Manifestations of the erotic are not universally

shared but rather, the idea of the erotic is constructed according to the desires and impulses of different individuals and cultural groups. For this reason, the erotic can be constructed to manipulate the way audience members or even societies see and respond to works of art. Ideology can be transported through painting by the erotic as a way of appealing to or engaging support for a prevailing hegemony. Romantic Australian landscape painting, past and present, functions as a cultural agent to support and reinforce the ideology and narrative of a Eurocentric, patriarchal and hetero-normative culture in Australia. Today, works of early twentieth century romantic landscape painting hang on the walls of major galleries, courthouses and parliaments to reiterate Australia's white pioneering history in the nation's most powerful institutions as a way of legitimising white occupation.

By painting the landscape the romantic artist engages in the act of possession of that place both psychically and symbolically. When their work becomes iconic within a culture that vision is shared. Romantic landscape painters have regularly declared, as a result of their sustained observation of the landscape, a deep connection with the land. The painter studies the form, surface texture, changes of hue, tone and saturation in response to shifting light, the shallowness and depth of space and the artist's own position in relation to and within it. The notion that one has a right to claim possession of a place can come with a sense of knowing it well, in much the same way that a connection is made through love and/or sexual intercourse. The language of possession is shared in this respect. Power is exercised through the transformation of place into paint, by laying it down and pushing it around, and transposing it onto a portable surface. Through this process an image of place is possessed and eventually made available as a commodity for distribution in the art market, holding the potential for gaining value and significance in a broader cultural context. *Connection*, indeed *deep connection*, however, is a misleading term commonly employed by artists who deem to speak on behalf of what or whom they are declaring their connection to. *Connection* suggests the land reciprocates this feeling of union. The term *attachment* more accurately reflects the relationship as a one-way affection that an artist may develop toward a place.

Colonisation in Australia began in 1788 with the landing of Captain Cook's First Fleet in Botany Bay, now the site of Sydney. The first images of Australia tended to be characterised by the motivation to record early settlement and the unfolding comprehension of an unfamiliar place and peoples. These images were infused with both *nostalgia* and anxiety, reflecting the sensibility of Europe in the context of this unfamiliar environment. From the time Europeans settled in Australia, the landscape has been perceived to embody feminine qualities of passivity, mystery and allure. To the new settlers and pioneers the wilderness was an object of desire to be tamed and possessed. In many of the early images of Australia the anxiety of the new settler is captured through what I would identify as castration symbols. Tree stumps and limbs litter the ground in the face of an

untamed wilderness. The transmission or hindrance of male desire was being expressed symbolically but, at that stage, there was no particular engagement with the sensuality of paint itself.

Fast forward to the years surrounding the Federation of Australia in 1901 when all six British colonies on the continent joined to form one Commonwealth nation. This was a defining and nationalistic period for a dominant white and hetero-normative culture that was searching for icons to set it apart from an ailing Europe. This uniqueness manifested in what cultural historian Lucy Frost labelled the 'bush brand.'[9] The bush is an idea symbolised by the space between Australia's capital cities into which the grand master narrative of Australian history is projected. This was a narrative in landscape painting where women were rarely imaged beyond the home paddock and where Indigenous Australians were erased. This narrative of the bush was famously painted by a group of artists known as the Heidelberg School who have been credited with importing Impressionism to Australia and for employing its strategies to create a uniquely Australian palette. Their images are of a post-settlement period when a confidently established white culture celebrated the bounty and beauty of a domesticated land, the bravery of its pioneers, nation-building, and comparative sense of ease within the Australian landscape.

It was predominately male artists who constructed early romantic Australian landscapes as women were not allowed to enrol at art schools and were considered 'mere dabblers' when it came to painting. As a consequence landscape painting described masculine journeys into the bush and as such became projections of male desire. Arthur Streeton, a member of the Heidelberg School, created the iconic *Fire's On (Lapstone Tunnel)* 1899. The likeness of *Fire's On* to *L'Origine du monde* (1866) by Gustave Courbet is striking.[10] They both reveal an arousing viewpoint of the female form. Streeton was aged twenty-four at the time and approached this new work with excitement and ambition:

> … arrive at my cutting, 'the fatal cutting', and inwardly rejoice at the prosperous warmth all glowing before me as I descend and re-ascend the opposite side up to my shady, shelving, sandstone rock, perched high up … 12 o'clock … and now I hear 'Fire, fire's on', from the gang close by … BOOM! and then rumbling of rock, the navvy under the rock with me, and watching says, 'Man killed'.[11]

Men have an endless fascination with trains, tunnels, missiles and explosions. *Fire's On* provides a metaphor for sex and the signs of sex having taken place litter the represented terrain. A gully drawn back to reveal the tender layer of fresh white earth, a tunnel and an erect rock appear to stand-in for female genitalia. A crown of scrub covers the hills. An explosion has just occurred and the tunnel is in the steaming aftermath of a collapse. A fall of earth could be construed as another

post-coital symbol. The narrative here is very much constructed as a masculine narrative of heroic nation building and conquest. Whether or not the artist constructed this scenario consciously or subconsciously, the signification of sex is clear: a train tunnel is being excavated to penetrate the interior of Australia.

> ***Image 1:*** Arthur Streeton, *Fire's On (Lapstone Tunnel),* 1891, oil on canvas, 183.8x122.5cm. http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/832/
>
> ***Image 2:*** Gustave Courbet, *L'Origine du monde*, 1866, oil on canvas, 55x46cm. Musée d'Orsay. http://www.musee-orsay.fr/index.php?id=851&L=1&tx_commentaire_pi1[showUid]=125&no_cache=1

W. Lister Lister's oil painting *The Golden Splendour of the Bush* (1906), now on permanent exhibition in the Art Gallery of New South Wales, depicts a stand of gum trees seemingly on the edge of wilderness. When exhibited in the prestigious Wynne Prize in 1906 the daily paper reported:

> A huge canvas from the president [of the Art Gallery of NSW] is always anticipated ... The artist has here employed the intense and warm radiance of sunset to give the supreme quality of picturesqueness to objects of such frequent repetition in nature that in our daily walks we hardly deign to see them. But the artist shows us how a few red gum trees, with bare trunks, and clumsily outspread arms above a patch of bracken, may be glorified and transfigured.[12]
>
> ***Image 3:*** W. Lister Lister, *The Golden Splendour of the Bush*, 1906, oil on canvas, 239.8x190.5cm. http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/649/

Yet within this painting, the erotic embeds itself not only to glorify the bush but also the virility of the artist and the President. Lister Lister's primal instincts and drives transform *The Golden Splendour of the Bush* (1906) into an erotic tableau. The painting presents the bush as a menagerie of naked pink flesh, an orgy of twisting bodies writhing on the edge of the feminine wilderness as it submits to Lister Lister's gaze.

Most contemporary artists avoid analogies between the landscape and the female form. Nevertheless, themes of the erotic and sensuality continue to persist within the work of some Australian landscape painters. While it is no longer a

preserve of the male artist it does continue to be a predominantly white and heterosexual narrative.

Luke Scibberas is a city boy gone bush. The construction of Sciberras as *the artist* presents as a cliché of the heroic male artist of the past. Bohemian and gregarious in suit and cravat, Sciberras appears on National television kissing clients in the city gallery, pushing paint around in his open weather shed and, dimly illuminated by a crackling fire and two burning candles, discussing his technique in the rustic atmosphere of his bush shack. An erotic undercurrent is present in his persona, his work and his marketing.

Author Anna Johnson's 1999 essay about Scibberas' work reads like a romantic and sexual conquest. The landscape initially refuses possession, the mountain refuses to be taken; it's a futile yet tantalising challenge that Scibberas is prepared to take on:

> … with the rivers dissecting like a gigantic finger cutting back into itself, cleaving into the river, interlocking into its own very ancient logic. The land is incredibly eventful when you are in it, literally kneeling into it; feeling the sensuality and the detail. Nothing flat or uniform at all.[13]

His experience grew from one of intimidation in a land that didn't need him to attaining a deep connection where 'the obliterated history became a part of me.'[14] Scibberas has his wicked way.

An antidote to the romantic gestures of Scibberas is Fiona Lowry's critical interpretation of the bush as a contested or paranoid and certainly non-erotic site. While working within the field of romantic painting her content is far removed from its precursors. For a number of years Lowry chose Belanglo State Forest as her subject matter. Belanglo entered the collective consciousness as the site where, from 1989 to 1992, one of Australia's most notorious serial killers, Ivan Milat, murdered and dumped the bodies of seven young tourists and backpackers. Lowry responded by producing airbrushed figurative landscape paintings in black and white as well as screaming, acidic colours. Lowry's interest in Belanglo lies with the way events influence the way a formerly insignificant site is read, how it becomes framed by its past and how it becomes charged with new signifiers. The employment of the erotic in this context seems like a dubious decision yet it works effectively to create a sense of anxiety and vulnerability in the bush relative to both its colonial and violent past. The artist captures the viewer's gaze with naked bodies posed in bush land settings while her airbrush technique creates a sense of detachment. Artist and writer Melody Willis states:

> The latent power of the land becomes a fully developed and seductive presence that plays off against internal, innate forces

within us. Her paintings suggest that we are now mature enough to be uncertain about what's good for us.[15]

Image 4: Fiona Lowry, *anything you see in me is in you*, 2006, acrylic and gouache on canvas, 167x305cm. © 2006.
Image courtesy of the Nick and Miranda Tobias Collection.

The body of work I exhibited in 2008 *The Transplanted Bush* offers an alternative perspective of the bush brand paradigm. This work functions as a queer parody of the masculine, hetero-normative and to some extent, euro-centric narrative of the Australian bush as its been represented through romantic Australian landscape painting. Informed by Judith Butler's theories of gender performance,[16] the focus of this work is to reconceptualise the bush brand so it can accommodate new themes of identity, particularly in relation to gender and sexuality. The paintings adopt the position that the bush is an idea that has relied heavily upon myths, legends and mono-cultural perspectives for its construction and, as a result, is open to negotiation. Consequently, my work operates at the very heart of the bush paradigm, within its grand master narratives, by engaging with its symbols and signifiers and disrupting their logic. It reviews the ideological and representational role played by the traditional model of Australian figurative landscape painting, and considers how it can be reinvested with new signs, symbols, motifs, colours and ideas. By developing and introducing a new vocabulary of signs and symbols that erode the distinctions between the bush, the urban and the domestic, my paintings disrupt the internal logic and coherence of the bush brand and its binary gender categories.

Image 5: Sally Clarke, *My Pink Bush and the Lost Limb*, © 2004, acrylic paint on plasticised paper, 44x31cm. Mixed Media Photographic Studios.
Image courtesy of the artist.

My work avoids the sublimation of the erotic through conventional techniques of heroic gesture and invests it instead into colour symbolism and a system of motifs. The colour pink is a symbol of queer but also has a relationship with the skin. It underpins every painting as well as being infused within particular motifs. My method of incorporating pink as an under-painting reflects my alienation from the history of Australian landscape painting while the symbolism reflects my own queer desire and aims to subvert the conventions of the heterosexual male gaze that has, for so long, dominated this genre. The horizon and topography of the bush is flattened, and domestic patterns fill the silhouetted figures to cross-dress and disrupt the binary gender divisions of space so marked in romantic paintings of the bush. The method of cross-dressing also goes some way to acknowledging the issue of cultural representation in relation to landscape although this is a more complex issue. Tree trunks and limbs stand in for the body, they threaten castration and function as forms that are governed by organ logic where one body part becomes attracted toward another. Titles such as *My Pink Bush and the Lost Limb* and *Dismemberments* play on the multiple meanings of text and transform notions such as the phantom limb from psychological phenomena to broader notions of cultural anxiety and loss.

Image 6: Sally Clarke, *Dismemberments: The Road to Brewongle*, © 2004, acrylic paint on canvas, 101x137cm. Mixed Media Photographic Studios. Image courtesy of the artist.

Image 7: Sally Clarke, *Phantom Robbery*, © 2006, acrylic paint on canvas, 51x61cm. Mixed Media Photographic Studios. Image courtesy of the artist.

The erotic in the context of my own work reframes hetero-normative attraction as queer desire, yet it does not aim to prescribe what this could be but rather, to leave the reading of desire and representation ambiguous. My landscape becomes a libidinous site that carries a disrupted system of significations that do not belong entirely to its predecessors. By intentionally manipulating the significations of the erotic I aim to demonstrate that the channeling of desire need not be a

subconscious process but one where the artist can take responsibility for it's expression and implications.

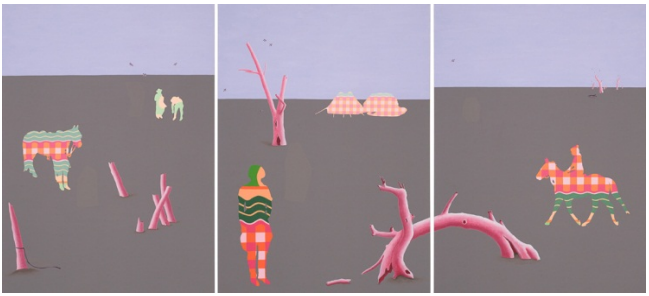

Image 8: Sally Clarke, *Loose Trousers*, © 2008, Acrylic paint on canvas, 122x277cm. Mixed Media Photographic Studios. Image courtesy of the artist.

Notes

[1] W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., Introduction to *Landscape and Power* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1994).
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[3] Volker Kahmen, *Eroticism in Contemporary Art* (Translated by Studio Vista Publishers, London, 1972). 7.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Gayle Rubin, 'Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality' *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, eds. H. Abelove, M. A. Baral and D. M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1994) and Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge 1999).
[7] Ibid., 24.
[8] Jemima Montague, 'John Curran, Serpentine Gallery', *Modern Painters* (Winter, 2003): 118-119.
[9] Lucy Frost, 'Escaping the Bush Paradigm', in *Imagining Australia: Literature and Culture in the New New World*, eds. Judith Ryan and Chris Wallace-Crabbe (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 2004).
[10] This was an observation also made by Simon Schama when he compared Gustave Courbet's *The Source of the Loue* (1863) with his later work *L'Origine du monde* (1866) in Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (Great Britain: Harper Perennial, 2005), 373.

[11] R. H. Croll, *Tom Roberts: Father of Australian Landscape Painting* (Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens, 1935), 187-189.
[12] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 August, 1906.
[13] Anna Johnson, *Luke Scibberas* (Sydney: Tim Olsen Gallery, 2009), Viewed 15 June 2012, http://www.timolsengallery.com/pages/artists_details.php?artist_id=22.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Melody Willis, *Fiona Lowry*, catalogue, Sydney: Barry Keldoulis Gallery, 2006.
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Vegetable Pornography: The 'Moral' (Scientific) Debate Surrounding Francesco Bartolozzi's 'Stipple Gardens' and William Blake's 'Vegetable Earth' in John Gabriel Stedman's *Surinam Travelogue*

Joseph Blessin

Abstract
Literary critics like Jill H. Casid and Marcus Wood have already made great strides to expose the pernicious manner instruments of colonial power sought to cloak themselves in something other than the violence and cruelty, defining the history of European intervention in the New World. Their respective interests in 'picturesque intermixing' of colonial landscape architecture and the moral audacity to commiserate with victims of slave torture (according to Wood's notion of 'empathetic pornography') both show attempts to paint the experience of colonization with seductive hues of an ethereal aesthetic quality. This was markedly on display in amongst the engravings in John Gabriel Stedman's famous travelogue documenting his involvement in an English campaign to suppress a slave revolt on the island Surinam from 1772-77. Both critics took up reproductive prints to make their cases and, although they gleaned much content therefrom, one blind spot that has remained is the extent to which the formal properties of the prints added their own meanings to the viewership. To this issue a very different moral question was in play, one central to the scientific debate since the Cartesian revolution, the triumph of Isaac Newton and the emergence of 'moral sciences' in the High Enlightenment.

Key Words: Empathy, pornography, stipple/line engraving, moral sciences, slavery, Francesco Bartolozzi, William Blake, Isaac Newton, David Hume, John Gabriel Stedman.

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1. Context

In the first chapter of her book, *Sowing Landscapes: Landscape and Colonization*, Jill H. Casid made the case that reproductive prints were important parts of the machinery of English colonialism. She described the colonial landscape in Jamaica as developing from a particular manner of delicate negotiation on the part of English gardeners. On one hand, they had to avoid gardening mishaps that could lead to the monstrous intermixing as the allusion in James Grainger's poem, *The Sugar-Cane*, suggested:

> The ghostly trace of miscegenation and imperial guilt are there.
> The appeal to 'so God ordains' is likely an effort to keep at bay

> the theologically based criticism of hybridization encapsulated in the two laws from Leviticus that declare 'Do not mate different kinds of animals' and 'Do not plant your fields with two kinds of seeds'.[1]

On the other hand, the inevitable close proximity colonization fostered meant these gardeners sought ways to maintain precarious separations all the while creating something worthy of beholding. In order to achieve the latter while avoiding the former a device was required. For England colonialism this device was 'picturesque intermixing'.

Image 1: Thomas Vivares, *View of Roaring River Estate* (after George Robertson), 1778. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roaring_River_Park

From William Beckford of Somerly's *A Descriptive Account*, Casid discovered the secret to how 'weeds' of miscegenation could be managed in a well-maintained garden. Thomas Vivares' engraving of George Robertson's *View of Roaring River Estate* (Image 1) exhibited a picturesque landscape emblematic of the gardening principle Beckford would describe as 'all together compos[ing] an embroidery of color'.[2] The paradoxical result sought was not only the prevention of points of direct contact that would otherwise threaten the constitution of each individual part but also the maintenance of the illusion that these points harmoniously coalesce when in reality they really work against one another. It was from this avoidance of

'miscegenation' that the illusion was produced. Casid described this particular engraving as comprising contrasting 'lines, incisions, barriers and blocks of the landscape's enclosures, private property, fortifications and confinements all intermingling to produce beauty'.[3] She would go on to describe the slaves in the field as partitioned from the slave-owner's family but harmoniously so; slaves together with their families worked at ease in a field with sign of neither backbreaking toil nor inevitable familial estrangement.

Image 2: Francesco Bartolozzi, *From different Parents different Climes we came*, printed from a stipple engraving, © 1796, John Carter Brown Library Collection

Casid's gardening analogy dialogues in interesting ways with the formal features of Francesco Bartolozzi's engraving *From different Parents different Chimes we came* (Image 2), published in John Stedman's novel, *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam: in Guiana from the year 1772 to 1777*. Like Vivares, Bartolozzi too used dots to seduce viewers into seeing something sweet that was otherwise infected with internecine enmity. In her book, *The Technique of Prints and Art Reproduction Processes*, Jan Poortenaar described this stipple technique as a 'process using [tonal] gradations so soft resulting prints would lack strength, outline, contour, and therefore form';[4] in toto, these gradations amounted to machine-produced 'fog' of dissimulation. And Marcus Wood would take up this interesting image in his own development of the term 'empathetic pornography' in his essay, 'John Gabriel Stedman, William Blake, Francesco Bartolozzi and empathetic pornography in the 'Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam'. Though he did not focus on how a medium like engraving could backstop such a colonial aesthetic vision, he did use 'empathetic pornography' to describe the ambivalent reception of both Stedman's firsthand involvement in the revolt and that of a wider readership who would have consumed with vicariism both his narration and the famous accompanying engravings that aestheticized scenes of 'White' reactionary violence. Wood summed up for both the ambivalence this way:

> Stedman's text [and Bartolozzi's engraving] lay out an essentially competitive theory of *co*-miseration nicely encapsulated in the challenge: 'never Poor Devil felt more than I on this occasion'. The spectacle of extreme physical suffering is the ultimate test for the capacities of the sentimental imagination, but also shades very easily into pornographic fantasy.[5]

Wood focused on Stedman's complicity as someone who both collaborated with violent perpetrators and purported excesses of empathy for their hapless slave victims, doing so for apparent moral gain. And, to the readership, he added a like incrimination: he exposed the hypocritical logic behind spectatorial effrontery, when, as soon as the natural order of idyllic plantation collapsed before their eyes, during say a slave revolt, they too could play the part of victim. Wood insightfully drew on Adam Smith's 'economy of sympathy' as an explanatory device for both manners of reaction: 'pain is seen to exist in an immediate and isolated present, [but] its very incommunicability… a test […] of the capacity for sympathy - the central measure to the degree of an individual's moral development'.[6] Copied, bound and published in a book that went on to become a late eighteen-century best-seller, Stedman's travelogue really ended up being a 'standardized test' of one's 'moral fitness'.

Though Wood thoughtfully incorporates this point into his wider critique of the moral lapse, which is the visual history of slavery, an important dimension is missing to a fuller understanding of the story. Wood's across-the-board treatment as 'empathically pornographic' Bartolozzi's engravings and those of William Blake, lying side by side in Stedman's travelogue, papers over important distinctions between how the two engraving styles would have been received by general viewers and talked about by erudite commentators of the period. Moreover, the questions surrounding these distinctions contributed a much different spirited 'moral' debate at the time, one bearing very little resemblance to the one Wood is instigating from his 'postcolonial' position. The debate was more fittingly scientific: a debate pitting the Newtonians/ Cartesians against 'moral scientists' of the High Enlightenment. The point of Wood's anachronism falls on a definitional incompatibility between seduction and pornography, both terms treated as equal in his application of 'empathetic pornography'.

2. Seduction

In her book, *Multimedia: Text and Context,* Anne Cranny-Francis, through Rex Butler's Baudrillard-inspired concept of 'seduction', made the workings of media the fons et arigo of her critical model, i.e., media possessing the insidious potential to manipulate spectators by making sensations feel inviting that would otherwise challenge moral sensibilities. Relatedly Bartolozzi and Vivares also worked on such a principle of 'seduction'. Their techniques of both holding back miscegenation and allowing spectators to relish spectacles uninvolved come down to how they juxtapose color and shade: colored dots on engraving plates; colored bodies in bucolic scenes within plantation narratives.

Bartolozzi constructed a highly managed, sinisterly beautiful scene operating with the same 'lines, incisions, barriers, blocks of enclosures, private properties' culminating into a harmonious partitioning of whites and blacks just like those on that idyllic Southern plantation in Vivares' work. The bodies for both form territorial limits of two neighbors whose private properties/ 'private parts', though separated by clear demarcations of color, shade and form, intermingle in picturesque harmony. The black skin of the slave(s) mingles with not only the river's flowing whitecaps/ soldier's pants but also the white community at the 'foot' of the hill/ soldier's lily feet but never so much as to rupture the veneer holding them in chiaroscurist separation. A survey of the slave and soldier's body tells a tale only too implicit in Vivares' landscape: for every limp limb is an engaged hand with a weapon at the ready: powerless slave bodies under surveillance amongst the diffused structures of plantation control. Traditional readings of Bartolozzi's image have always emphasized the delicate contact made between the two competitors, confirmed by not only a title seeming to want to understate what is really 'different' between their' 'Parents and Climes' - done so

with an appeal to emotion - but also the usual homoerotic readings, one expressed as a sexual allusion, both of which Wood develops in this subsection of his book. These two parts for him constitute the pernicious device, labeled: 'empathetic pornography'.

In how Bartolozzi and Vivares' engravings seamlessly flow in transposition here, the term 'pornography' seems unconvincing as configurations of signs are always only contiguous, passively floating - in a state of waiting - never seeming to breach the veneer that must be the end point of pornography's beginning. It has already been suggested that a device like 'seduction' be more apt here to characterize what is really at play, 'seduction' holding back significatory forces only as long as the first thrust towards some action-potential is initiated. Active forces behind bodies (and the passivity of being acted upon by such forces); and the nature of spectatorship, a central aspect of pornography as sex without the voyeur is really only sex, were all complementary issues that would become points of contention for those in the 'scientific' camps, with which artists like Bartolozzi and Blake can be said to have been loosely affiliated.

3. Blake

The reality of this relational antagonism would be central for what Morris Eaves would say in his essay, 'Blake and the Artistic Machine', about Blake's animadversion against certain print-making practices in his time. He would lament 'chiaroscurist techniques that achieved unity only as clokes of folly, disguising fragmentation and incoherence below the surface.' [7] Against the vigor and expressiveness of line so central to printmaking techniques such as dry-point, line engraving and, even more so, etching, tone-based techniques, including intaglio, mezzotint and Bartolozzi's stipple technique, were considered by Blake as 'bags of tricks of unorganized [colored or tonal] Blots & Blurs'.[8] This attack is conjures up an earlier philosophical/ scientific battle brewing at the time of Stedman's participation in the English military campaign of his travelogue. This debate can be summed up in the following question: if the mechanistic model of the cosmos implicit in Newton's successful explication of the forces of gravity be true, what implication does it have on understanding human life especially if the system's vitality seems reducible to part-to-part functionality; or, more explicitly, where resides the impetus sui generis of human life - and all the dignity and value it entails - if its action is caught up in machine-like functionality?

The having-long-since-deceased opponents to Blake's position had had their own version of forces holding back 'miscegenation', along with the belief in the naturalness and inevitability of such forces; and from these positions originated Blake's lamentation and effort to introduce some form of corrective realignment. The issue behind Blake's attack on Enlightenment thinkers like Isaac Newton and David Hume can really be summed up in proper and improper perspectives concerning landscape architecture. If a magazine hypothetically existed in a

fictitious time that brought together all three of these actors, a magazine dedicated to eighteenth-century landscape architecture; and this magazine happened to run a feature, titled: 'Vivares' *View of Roaring River Estate*, a beautiful, idyllic plantation in the American South', Blake would have been the angry editorial writer to Newton and Hume, the magazine's editors. Blake's idea of landscape architecture is complex, described very elegantly by Donald D. Ault, in this book, *Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton*. Here is a sampling, cited by Ault, of what sort of landscape architecture schema Blake would have used to interpret Newton and Hume's magazine article:

> Around Golgonooza lies the land of death eternal; a Land/ Of pain and misery and despair and ever brooding melancholy:/ In all the Twenty-seven Heavens, numberd from Adam to Lucifer;/ From the blue Mundane shell, reaching to the Vegetative Earth./ The Vegatative Universe opens like a flower from the Earths center:/ In which is Eternity. It expands in Stars and the Mundane Shell/ And there it meets Eternity again, both within and without/ and the abstract Voids between the Stars are the Satanic Wheels.[9]

The key points to take from such an editorial riposte, albeit metaphor-imbued and quite impenetrable for those unfamiliar with Blake's poetics, are twofold: a) there is a proper landscape architectural model, one emanating outward from Golgonooza - the city of proper form - into the generation of the 'Vegetable Earth'; and b) there is an improper counterpart, lying within the asymptotes, receding outwards to the stars above and inwards, the floral minutiae amidst, inside both of whose 'voids', Blake claimed, Satan couched his malevolent powers. It is out of these recesses that Blake could be said to have exposed both imperial guilt and the artist's complicit hand, elements already unmasked in Casid's critique of 'picturesque intermixing'.

4. Newton and Hume

Blake's signs are deployed in manners highly saturated, in relations aiming at 'non-negating Contrariety'. This non-negating feature contrasts with signs worked in systems of logic and dialectics, described by Ault as central to Newtonian cosmology and Humean causality. What do 'negating signs' mean in Newton's logic of the cosmos? In his criticism of Newtonian mechanics in *The Analyst* George Berkeley declares the ultimate end to Newton's concept of 'fluxion' this way:

> […] the Scaffold of a building, as things to be laid aside or got rid of, as soon as finite Lines were found proportional... [are they] velocities of evanescent Increments […] neither finite Quantities nor Quantities infinitely small, nor nothing […] Ghosts of departed Quantities?[10]

And Ault would further this argument laconically comparing logic to these fluxions as eliminative contrariety of signs in relations where isolated qualities of otherwise embodied objects end up cancelling one another out. The unviability of such a mode of relationship in concrete terms comes when one considers the following scenario: a gardener seeks a strong arm to pull out a stubborn root gripping the earth with its sinewy roots. Out of a group of four helpers, only one person is strong enough to accomplish this task - the three others thus vanish into thin air. What then do 'negating signs' mean in Hume's causality? Ault summed up '[Hume's] idea of cause [for us being] no more than habituation to seeing similar events followed by other similar events [;] we can never know beyond this causal chain which takes on meaning through our memory'.[11] The eliminative contrariety here is that the sign cannot be selfsame if its position is altered in the slightest in the sequence of time. What is knowable is only what can be explained by routine, something no more advanced than how taxis guides the livelihoods of species of the lowest rungs in the animal and plant kingdoms. The unviability here is demonstrated when one considers this scenario: after lengthy observation of an apple orchard, a spectator sees that one last apple hangs from a tree. The wind then blows it off. The 'one last apple hanging from the tree' is henceforth gone. And so is the 'one last apple hanging from the tree' tree? All that remains are apple trees in an orchard that shed their apples once every year. In sum, Ault declared: '[i]n each case something is lost: in the case of logic, it is time; in […] dialectics, it is space'.[12]

Blake sought signs of a different cast and deployed them in ways countering the obscuring influences of Newton and Hume. His strategy rather was to draw lines, and through the hand of the mythical character, Los, these bounding, finite lines, sweeping circles, imbued with their own fluctuations, shut up the image of the infinite in Urizen's demonic world,[13] something like the infinitude falling into the chasms lying amongst Newton and Hume's respective spatial and temporal pixelations. The visible hands of Los at work counter Satan's invisible ones, which works to remain hidden just as it was the case for the hands of the artist and colonial planner already mentioned. Blake's 'working hands' have been offered a possible neurological explanation in recent research into 'embodied empathy' (see the 2007 collaboration between David Freedberg and Gallese Vittorio for a more detailed explanation). It is believed that though more investigation is needed to confirm this proposition conclusively the much more embodied reception to an engraving like Blake's *Flagellation of a Female Samboe Slave* (Image 3) does

tempt such an interpretation. More securely, however, is to consider the formation of the question of pornography within the context of the period of interest, something not adequately done by Wood.

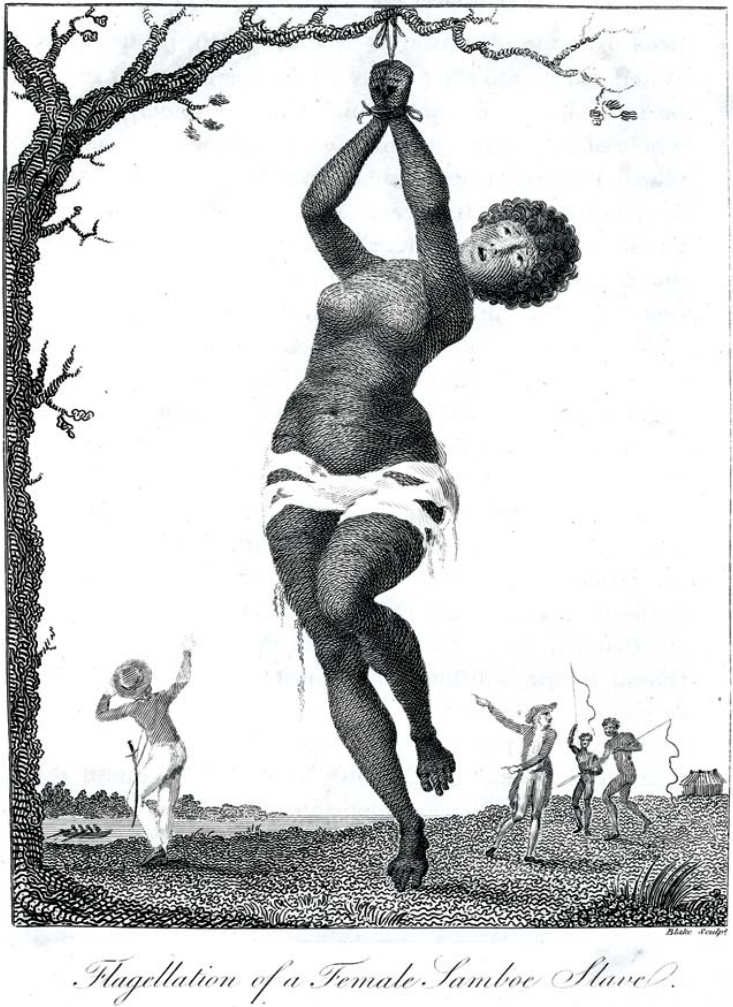

Image 3: William Blake, *Flagellation of a Female Samboe Slave*, printed from a copper engraving, 1796, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:BLAKE11.JPG

5. Pornography

Though Wood, in his equal treatment of Bartolozzi and Blake's engravings, has been criticized for offering a definition of pornography much too broad, his definition is in another way no near broad enough to adequately cover just what constituted pornography as a genre in the mid to late eighteenth century. Robert Darnton in *The Forbidden Best-sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* made issue of a curiosity in the period's legal definition of pornography that included amongst racy materials also anti-clerical tracts, political satire and other controversial writings, of which nothing necessarily overtly sexual can be isolated. And taking as true that observation by Michel Foucault in his *The Order of Things* when he spoke of the importance of systems of 'positive' knowledge ('ideology') in the formations of disciplines with the onset of the Modern Age must not have all subsequent manners of arranging statements using this new 'episteme' been only as effective as they were seductive? And did not its predecessor (in the Classical Age), suggested by Foucault's term 'isomorphism': the selfsameness of knowing and doing in the speak-act,[14] mean pornography could be illicit words rolling off lips accompanied with the same fears of unwanted pregnancies (of ideas) as anything pornographic too would have elicited? The clincher: Blake's opposition to Bartolozzi (and, in effect, Newton and Hume) is a moral call for transparency, one to whose loss in the Modern age finds a preparatory debate in the behind-the-scenes tit-for-tat concerning two styles of engravings housed in Stedman's travelogue. Pornography should be seen here as the principle impetus of life, individuals' 'epigenetic' intercourse with objects in the world, an intercourse really only reaching its terminus in death. The frontispiece of 'To the Deists' (Chapter 3) of Blake's epic poem, *Jerusalem* illustrates vividly the pervasive melancholy whenever seduction takes the place of what is otherwise pornographic. The human figure, the flower's bud, sits distraught surrounded by stars, planets, flower petals and all the flower's other patterning - the chiaroscuro of the natural world. Blake is here demonstrating that it is the 'vegetable', coming up through the middle where life resides - not the objects whose edges form oppositions, the seductions, which really only operate as life's 'means'. Like 'stipple gardens'. 'Vegetable earth' is a place not utopian in being free from such ruses but one open and acknowledging enough to prevent the fester. On this account is conflating Blake and Bartolozzi, as Wood does, highly problematic. Wood's discussion of pornography is perforce really only working on its own level of 'seduction'.

Image 4: William Blake, *Frontispiece for 'To the Deists' (Chapter 3) in Jerusalem,* 1804, Rare Books and Special Collections Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Notes

[1] Jill H. Casid, *Sowing Landscapes: Landscape and Colonization* (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 2005), 16.
[2] Ibid, 10.
[3] Ibid, 12.
[4] Jan Poortenaar, *The Technique of Prints and Art Reproduction Processes* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1933), 81.

[5] Marcus Wood, 'John Gabriel Stedman, William Blake, Francesco Bartolozzi and empathetic pornography in the Narrative of a Five Years Expedition again*st the Revolted Negroes of Surinam' in* An Economy of Colour: Visual Culture and the Atlantic World, 1660-1883 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 136.
[6] Ibid, 135.
[7] Morris Eaves, 'Blake and the Artistic Machine: An Essay in Decorum and Technology' (PMLA 92, 1977), 911.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Donald D. Ault, *Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 36.
[10] George Berkeley, *The Analyst*, (Dublin: S. Fuller at the Globe in Meath-street and J. Leathly Bookseller in Dames Street, 1734), 30.
[11] Donald D. Ault, op. cit., 122.
[12] Ibid, 176.
[13] Ibid, 132-33.
[14] See the chapter 'Speaking' in Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* for a fuller explanation.

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Part IV

The Erotic and Society

‘Showing Our Best (Gay) Face Abroad’: On the Erotics of Capital, Queerness, and the Nation

Jake Silver

Abstract
In recent years, queer tourism has emerged as a transnational phenomenon linking bodies all over the world based on intimacy, attraction, and economic efficacy. Taking root in anthropology while employing queer theory and critical race theory, this chapter uses the erotics of Israeli politics in order to interrogate the affects of queer tourism, queer identity, and nationalisms. In a contemporary climate of liberal politics in which welcoming queerness becomes symbolic of a national morality, I use Israel as a case study to argue that the queer body resurfaces as a depoliticized, commodified, and even strategic form. I examine representations of sexualized bodies in queer tourism campaigns in order to bring to light the tactical uses of sexuality in nation building (and in making a nation sexy). These politics also call to mind the importance of unravelling what ‘gay and lesbian’ or ‘queer’ mean when used in a global context, as in queer tourism or international campaigns. This chapter calls for an interrogation of such an etic—or seemingly shared—queerness, which not only masks the heterogeneity of queer embodiment in terms of race, gender, and class, but also reifies a standardized queer desire that ignores regional, historical, and sociocultural contexts. Unearthing how queerness is valued in a global context sheds light onto how and why nations are valued for their ‘liberal’ atmospheres and others are criticized for their ‘savage,’ ‘immoral’ intolerance.

Key Words: Queerness, sexual politics, Israel, queer tourism, nationalism, transnational sexualities, desire and distance, the Middle East, intimacy.

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1. Global Landscapes and Intimate Bodies

Queerness is tricky, and it is tricky for many reasons. It is personal, felt, and embodied, yet so deeply tied to politics, power, and history. It is constantly shifting and changing for, as Jose Muñoz notes: ‘Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality.’[1] Queerness has a historicity itself, inextricable from gender, sexuality, nation, and the globe. It is rife with complexities and contradictions, and it is a term that so many use so differently.[2]

In contemporary Israel, queerness is emerging as an identity and an experience that is part and parcel of national and global economies as well as affective intimacies. Israel is a nation that has made undeniable strides in gay and lesbian legislation in a uniquely speedy time frame: in 1988, the Israeli parliament decriminalized sodomy; in 1992 Knesset passed the Equal Opportunities in

Employment Act; and in 1993 it was ruled that anyone, regardless of sexual orientation, can serve in the Israeli Defense Forces (the IDF). Yet in a nation of civil disputes and unrest—like most contemporary nation-states—sexual politics have become tied to national politics.

For example, in 2003, Calev Ben-David wrote an article in the *Jerusalem Post* reviewing the Israeli film *Yossi and Jagger*, a film depicting the secret romance between two young Israeli men serving in the IDF.[3] Titled 'Showing our best (gay) face abroad,' the article argues that within the film 'is a powerful implicit message in its accurate portrayal of Israeli society—even in the despised IDF—as far more varied, tolerant and advanced than that of its enemies.'[4] Yet the film *Yossi and Jagger* also reinforces a larger national heteronormativity, as the two male soldiers in the film engaging in a secret love affair stay in the closet and, by the end when one of them dies, their homosexualities become forever closeted. Not only does Ben-David's article purport to a history of liberal Israeli sexual politics, but such a piece of media also places Israeli sexual identity—specifically an Israeli queer identity—within a global frame.

How sexualities and nationalisms come together in Ben-David's article is emblematic of a cultural and political issue that permeates Israeli sexual citizenship and the politics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. How sexualities and nationalisms intimately align in a global frame also points to important issues about erotic subjecthood and erotic autonomy. Central to these social issues are everyday politics of the erotic: what does queerness mean in both local and transnational contexts, and how are places and bodies linked globally based on intimacy?

At the centre of this discourse in contemporary Israeli sexual politics is the debate over *pinkwashing*, a term used to signify any action that attempts to politicize sexuality or queerness by mobilizing the discourse of Israeli liberalism and gay-friendliness. The history of pinkwashing dates back to 2002 when Ido Aharoni and several other Israel officials convened to discuss how to confront the issue that to many individuals in America and Europe, 'There is no sense of the human element in Israel.'[5] Such efforts came immediately after the Second Intifada, a time when the media was branding Israel as a nation inextricable from war and conflict. What emerged within the Israeli Ministry of Tourism was the Brand Israel campaign, a concerted effort to advertise a modern Israel to young, Western subjects.

After a stint of advertisements directed at various, largely heterosexual groups,[6] the Brand Israel campaign shifted gears in 2009 and began labelling Israel as a queer mecca. Since that year, many Israeli short films premiering at film festivals worldwide have covered queer subject matter and have generated support within liberal film communities;[7] efforts to broadcast Israeli gay-friendliness have taken to the internet; and narratives have surfaced arguing that Israel is the only place of sexual equality in the Middle East. Reactionary fringe groups have formed in

response, both coining the term pinkwashing and protesting what they call Israeli terrorism and Israeli apartheid.

Taking pinkwashing to be a transnational phenomenon, I aim to interrogate how it is informed by homonationalism and the erotics of global capitalism. Homonationalism here, defined by Jasbir Puar, refers to emergent politics of modernity in which tolerating queerness allows nations to be seen as moral and united. Puar argues that homonationalism is an unavoidable frame when it comes to neoliberal politics, and its effects spill over in how nations are compared and contrasted based on sexual rights and morality.[8] The tensions and disparities of tolerance and gay-friendliness within Israel's borders also hinge upon global economies, transnational desires, and the commodification of queer bodies and queer cities. Indeed, by 'showing [a] (gay) face abroad,' one commodifies an intimate desire, and in the process Israel is marked as a queer space. Such processes involve a liberal language of rights in which tolerating queerness is seen as part and parcel of a moral nation.[9]

Queer tourism, the byproduct and ultimate goal of gay-friendly marketing, leads to the valuation of queer identities through their global economic efficacies.[10] Such affects of branding identities have linked cities and nations based on this language of rights and subsequently repositioned local economies in relation to an imagined etic queerness. Such conceptualizations of a *shared* queerness are complicated and enmeshed in heterogeneous assemblages of what many would argue constitute their identities, desires, comforts, acceptances, affectations, and emotions. Such an etic queerness must be examined through a transnational critique of queer tourism—a lens through which this chapter constructs its focus.[11] How do 'shared' queer identities create commensurate valuations of sexuality? How are local conceptualizations and institutions oriented towards this etic and erotic identity? As M. Jacqui Alexander writes in her critical exploration of gay tourism in the Bahamas: 'If we invoke a common experience of (sexual) queerness as the ground on which to establish *global* solidarity communities, where is [the] queer 'native' to fit?'[12] To rephrase Alexander's question in my own terms, how can we make sense between the differences of queernesses in difference cultures when the media disseminates image of the etic queer consumer?

2. Commodifying the Queer Experience

Lauren Berlant argues that queer citizenship is 'itself a collection of 'local' affinity groups [that] has produced images, occupied public spaces of consumption, like bars and malls, and refunctioned the culture of the trademark.'[13] Specifically, 'marketing cities as 'gay-friendly' destinations is one way in which municipal authorities have taken control of the meanings of gay space through its representation.'[14] Representations of queerness thus become not only indices of sociosexual climates in nations (pinkwashing purports to index a homogenized gay-friendly Israel), but they also commodify queer bodies.

The interactions between global and local economies have resulted in a shift towards commodifying these queer spaces and bodies. In this way, cities and nations are able to accrue not only fiscal capital, but also a certain type of ideological queer capital, one that aligns with political liberalism and political affects of homonationalism.[15] In turn, many cities have 'made urban cultural landscapes central to strategies of capital accumulation.'[16] The result of these commodity phenomena is the emergence of queer world cities and, in turn, other surrounding nations are criticized for being savage, intolerant, and homophobic. Mediascapes and technological intervention have become the battleground for these global cities to make known their queer spaces and bodies and fight for sexual relevance. Indeed, this has become a fight for first place, as many blog and newspaper articles demonstrate: 'Tel Aviv trumps New York to be named world's best gay city;'[17] 'Tel Aviv 'best gay city destination' of 2011';[18] 'Tel Aviv voted best gay city in the world.'[19]

The Brand Israel campaign and other Israeli governmental projects have been influential in the creation of Israel as a 'queer' nation. In March of 2011, the Israel Ministry of Tourism funded a Tel Aviv Gay Vibe promotion at the Berlin International Tourism Trade Show, with its advertisements displaying muscular, barely clothed men on Israeli land. Liad Kantorowicz, an Israeli performer and anti-occupation activist, attended the show to hand out flyers revealing what she called 'the truth' about Israeli gay tourism, to problematize the idealist image of depoliticized queerness. This 'truth,' as her flyers suggest, lay in how queer tourism in Israel funds inequalities and helps to continue the occupation of Palestine.[20] The original flyer, one used by the Israel Ministry of Tourism, is depoliticized, placing four men in skimpy swimsuits on a peaceful, welcoming beach front with the Tel Aviv skyline in the background. Kantorowicz's flyer is citational, placing a security barrier over the Tel Aviv skyline and purposefully introducing the politics of occupation and ethnicity within a photograph that was originally depoliticized in its simple portrayal of queer recreation.

Kantorowicz's flyer is extremely sarcastic in tone, jokingly implying that Israel is a safe travel destination only because the 'hostile-minded Arabs' are separated from the general Israeli population:

> Is travel in Israel dangerous?
>
> Totally and not at all! Israel is one of the most progressive countries of our time, if talking about equality for the LGBTQ community. We enjoy increasing visibility and acceptance. On the other hand, this small Jewish country is populated by hostile-minded Arabs, a number of whom live in Israel. But we are certain that you will not come into contact with them. They

> remain in their cities and towns with help from the modern high tech security system that, for example, has a barrier along the wall and countless military controlled checkpoints. Additionally, there are always thousands of very attractive armed soldiers patrolling the streets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, so that you can always be certain of being pleasantly aroused.[21]

The depoliticized environment in Tel Aviv Gay Vibe's original flyer is a present trope within global queer campaigns. One similarly depoliticized piece of media has been downloaded across the world and has acted as a uniquely queer ambassador for the nation. In July of 2009, the gay pornographic company Lucas Entertainment, headquartered in New York City, released the first all-Israeli gay 'adult production' to be marketed solely in America (and online), *Men of Israel*. After being released, the pornography's popularity immediately skyrocketed and it received growing attention in blogs across the globe. Moreover, the pornography and its individual scenes have since gained popularity and been uploaded to many video-sharing websites. Although there is a clear undercurrent of ethnic exoticization here, the film also contains a nearly explicit endorsement of Israeli gay tourism and of the country's gay-friendly climate. Lucas Entertainment's official website describes the film:

> ISRAEL is a country of sun drenched beaches, breathtaking vistas, and the world's hottest men. Lucas Entertainment's MEN OF ISRAEL features a fine selection of tanned and chiseled muscle hunks, showing of their gorgeous bodies and sexual prowess.

Raz Yosef and Boaz Hagin note that although *Men of Israel*, like many other Israeli films, is 'not always aimed at expanding tourism explicitly, [it] nonetheless cater[s] to the viewpoints and expectations of non-Israelis implicitly.'[22]

The film opens with four chiseled men in Speedos standing in the ocean, slowly making suggestive eye contact with the camera and the viewer alike. Afterwards, there are numerous shots of men standing closely in historic Jerusalem streets staring at the camera, or two men half naked on a balcony overlooking Tel Aviv. The come-hitherly aspects of desire and sex here transcend the bedroom and enter into a dialogue with national spaces and transnational intimacy. The film endorses the 'mélange of Israel as an orientalist paradise for tourism and an allegedly progressive Western haven in the Middle East,' yet at the same time the film fixates on images of homosexual utopianism.[23] The gay pornography, like many others, depoliticizes queer identity, yet when combined with the tourism-centric aspects of the film's description and settings, *Men of Israel* endorses a uniquely erotic Israeli sexual exceptionalism.

In fact, the pornographic film is all about discovering nationality and unveiling what Michael Lucas, the CEO of Lucas Entertainment and an actor in many of his pornographic films, would call the true essence of Israel:

> In Men of Israel, Lucas makes every effort—including on-location shooting from Haifa to the Dead Sea and interviews with the cast on the splendors of gay life in Tel Aviv—to spit-shine the country's image. 'They need me,' he brags. 'The reality is that Israel has only one face to people on the street, and that's the West Bank and Gaza. All people see in the media is a country of disaster. They get images of a blown-up bus.'[24]

The plot of *Men of Israel*, like Lucas' other films, is a self-reflexive journey: the company's Russian-Jewish gay founder, Lucas himself, travels to Israel in order 'to make a triple-X film starring local talent and, in the process, helps gay Israelis discover their own country.'[25] The concerted efforts to advertise *Men of Israel* as shot entirely on location in Israel, as portraying the 'real hunks' of Israel, and as getting to the core of Israel's truly inherent sexual politics and lust attempt to suggest that Israel may really be homosexually utopian. Nationalism in the film *becomes* queer desire, and when combined with the dogging tropes of tourism and belonging, *Men of Israel* purports to expose the true exceptionalism of Israel. By divorcing Israeli sexuality from politics in any way, *Men of Israel* depoliticizes Israeli sexuality and becomes an idealist symbol of belonging, both in terms of tourism and returning to the homeland. It also becomes a means for nationalisms to fall into intimate alignments; those who buy the film commodify the bodies of queer Israeli men while also slipping into an intimate relationship with Israel itself.

3. What Makes a Nation Sexy?

Through the transnational linkages created by events like the Berlin International Tourism Trade Show and media such as *Men of Israel*, larger questions arise about the nation, its conflicts, and its moralities. Jasbir Puar, quoting M. Jacqui Alexander,[26] provides us with a means to examine the relationship between queerness, consumption, and nationalisms:

> So, what might a transnational analysis of queer consumption address? What would a mapping of the neoliberal queer consumer look like?...A reentrenchment of reheterosexualizing cultural nationalism happens in response to globalization, yet (exploitative) tourist ventures are allowed to permeate the nation's boundaries.[27]

In this way, queerness directly becomes commodity: it is marketed as a material experience—an experience of enjoyment and inclusion—but it is not actually folded into the fabric of the nation. Tel Aviv Gay Vibe's original flyer and *Men of Israel* seek to represent Israel's true sexual equality, a tactic inextricably tied to tourism and homonationalism. Yet it is these representational politics—of muscular, masculine, pale-skinned men sitting on beaches—that reify a heterosexualized queer body as the accepted queer body of the nation.[28] This simultaneously excludes queer men—not to mention women—of many non-normative identities, and the skin tones of the men in these examples reinforce *Israeli* national queerness as acceptable and Arab queerness as some other, unrepresented, un-national entity. Indeed, this cannot be seen as unrelated to the public discourse in the Western world focused on the savage homophobia of Arab nations.

Queer bodies are emerging more and more as depoliticized entities: bodies that are presented as unproblematically able to intermingle with politics, nationalisms, publics, and democracies. Such representational ideals of belonging and tolerance, however, act as if 'queering the nation' and 'queering politics' are simple and smooth processes. The violence involved in representational politics 'abstract[s] the notion of the public from the language of ethics, history, and democratic community.'[29] Queernesses can thus become national tools, central to political issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and sexualities can become tied up in cases of security and exception. Yet the contemporary representations of queerness within Israel and within the Brand Israel campaign depoliticize this queerness and thus enact a violence of concealment. These depoliticizations seek to underwrite heterosexism—as homophobia is, after all, 'temporarily positioned as a threat to profits'—leading to public conceptualizations that states and politics have effectively been queered.[30] Yet queer subjectivity, in Israel and elsewhere within a global economy, is not so easily assimilated.

The work and analyses presented within this chapter are perpetually in motion; yet the tensions involved in pinkwashing and in global economies of intimacy present us with complex questions about queer identities and violence that many take for granted. Anna Tsing's articulation that global capitalism is 'messy' and that it creates 'chains…made up of uneven and awkward links' illuminates the global frictions involved in queer globalization and queer representation that must be questioned.[31] Interrogating these frictions can help us understand how and why sexualized bodies affect and are affected by both global flows and the commodifications of desire. Teasing apart such frictions is key in understanding the erotics of nations and how queerness is relational, how it is representational, and how—most importantly—it is so personal.

Notes

[1] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 1.
[2] Many scholars have attempted to theorize queerness, to interrogate its ontology and its affect in society.
[3] Calev Ben-David, 'Showing our Best (Gay) Face Abroad,' *The Jerusalem Post*, 8 October 8 2003, 13.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Nathaniel Popper, 'Israel Aims to Improve Its Public Image.' *The Jewish Daily Forward,* October 14, 2005. Accessed 3 September 2012. http://www.forward.com/articles/2070/israel-aims-to- improve-its-public-image/.
[6] The Brand Israel Campaign's first efforts in 2006, 2007, and 2008 targeted young heterosexual men by featuring spreads of attractive Israeli women in Maxim, photographed, like most Maxim spreads, in suggestive poses and barely any clothing. These spreads frequently militarized these women by referencing the Israeli Defense Forces, weaponry, and dressing the women in warlike garb. This photo spread captures what the Brand Israel campaign initially set out to do: turn on younger Americans and Europeans by spotlighting the sexy subjects of Israel.
[7] See *Yossi and Jagger* (2002), *The Bubble* (2006), and *Bittersweet* (2007), among others.
[8] Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 10.
[9] See Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 11, for a larger discussion of how political liberalism indexes [Western] moralities. Under the umbrella of homonationalism, the discourse of tolerance and liberalism aligns certain countries with the dominant nations of the world that hold capital, market power, and what are perceived as democratic freedoms. As Brown writes: 'Within secular liberal democratic states it is safe to say that tolerance functions politically and socially, but not legally, to propagate understandings and practices regarding how people within a nation, or regimes within an international system, can and ought to cohabit.'
[10] Telling is the opening line from one of the most famous contemporary 'guides' to marketing gay and lesbian tourism, Jeff Guarancino, *Gay and Lesbian Tourism: The Essential Guide for Marketing* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2007), xvii. 'Congratulations. You are about to learn about the world of gay and lesbian tourism, a $53 billion industry in the United States...The Travel Industry of America estimates that 85 percent of gay and lesbians take annual vacations compared to the national average of 64 percent', xvii. Personhood in this context

depends on financial value, and clearly in the economic and professional discourse, gays and lesbians are lumped into a more profitable group.

[11] Jasbir Puar is one of the only scholars to ponder this critique. See her 2002 article Jasbir Puar, 'A Transnational Feminist Critique of Queer Tourism,' *Antipode* 24(5) (2002): 942.

[12] M. Jacqui Alexander, 'Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonialization: An Anatomy of Feminist and State Practice,' in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, eds. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty (New York: Routledge, 1997), 68.

[13] Lauren Berlant, 'Queer Nationality (written with Elizabeth Freeman),' in *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*, ed. Lauren Berlant (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 148.

[14] Waitt, Gordon and Kevin Markwell. *Gay Tourism: Culture and Context* (New York: Haworth Hospitality Press, 2006), 220.

[15] By 'capital,' I mean to suggest that gay cities and nations not only build themselves up to attract business and collect money, but that such spaces are affectively intimate for sexual bodies to imagine, organize, and cohabit.

[16] Dereka Rushbrook, 'Cities, Queer Space, and the Cosmopolitan Tourist,' *GLQ: A Journal for Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8(1-2) (2002): 198.

[17] Graham Smith, 'Tel Aviv Trumps New York to be Named World's Best Gay City,' *Daily Mail*, January 24, 2012. Accessed 3 September 2012. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2088319/Tel-Aviv-trumps-New-York-named-worlds-best-gay-city.html.

[18] Stephen Gray, 'Tel Aviv 'Best Gay City Destination' of 2011.' *PinkNews*, January 12, 2012. Viewed 3 September 2012. http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2012/01/12/tel-aviv-best-gay-destination-of-2011/.

[19] Matthew Jenkin, 'Tel Aviv voted best gay city in the world.' *GayStarNews*, January 12, 2012. Viewed 3 September 2120. http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/tel-aviv-voted-best-gay-city-world.

[20] Kantorowicz also produced a YouTube video with another anti-occupationist activist, Inna Michaeli, 'Welcome to Tel Aviv Gay Vibe,' YouTube video originally posted by user *runrosarun* on August 2, 2011. 6 August 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzW5Tf4SaWo.

[21] Kantorowicz's flyers were translated from German. The connotation for arousal in German in this quotation is sexual arousal. Translated by Kurt Wheeler.

[22] Boaz Hagin and Raz Yosef, 'Festival Exoticism: The Israeli Queer Film in a Global Context,' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18(1) (2011): 162.

[23] Ibid., 162.

[24] Cavitch, Max. 'Michael Lucas and the Pornography of Migration.' *Senses of Cinema* (2011): 55. Accessed September, 3 2012. http://www.sensesofcinema.com/2010/feature-articles/michael-lucas-and-the-pornography-of-migration-2/, 2010.
[25] Ibid.
[26] M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 71.
[27] Jasbir Puar, Introduction,' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8(1-2) (2002): 112–113.
[28] M. Jacqui Alexander points to this emergent exclusion phenomenon in gay tourism. As she argues, the imagined gay tourist 'is almost always…a white, able-bodied, and upwardly mobile man who lives in the West…This travelling agent assumes his rightful place in the competition between two segments of capital. He is the same agent/citizen that white heterosexual capital has produced as the quintessential gay consumer, possessing a perennially changing set of needs and desires that only capitalism can satisfy' (2005:71). Her analysis aligns with my own research in Israel in which I rarely came across any representations of ethnic, female, or lower-class queer bodies.
[29] Henry Giroux, 'Consuming Social Change: The 'United Colors of Benetton,'' *Cultural Critique* 26 (1994): 8.
[30] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*, 75.
[31] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 4.

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Being Gay in Mexico in the 21st Century: Relationship Styles of Gay Men Belonging to Three Different Generations Living in Mexico

Edgar Rodríguez Sánchez and Julio A. Valencia Maldonado

Abstract
In the 17th and 18th centuries, sexual relationships among men were believed to be sins against the family unit. Homosexual acts existed but they were performed by individuals who did not have a specific term to define them. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the term 'homosexual' was coined and understood as we know it today, but it was condemned as a mental illness. In 1973 homosexuality was removed from the DSM-II's list of psychiatric disorders; an event that the gay community embraced and some countries applauded. This applause did not extend to Latin American cultures, which continued to be dictated by tradition and conservativism. After almost four decades, Mexico stepped forward into the era of sexual liberalism by introducing same-sex marriage in 2009, producing major change in the socio-political structure. To observe how this event has impacted gay men living in Mexico, specifically how increased social tolerance has changed the way in which gay male relationships are established, this research examines information obtained from 60 gay men in an age range between the late teens to late fifties on how they conceptualise, experience, and live their relationships. This qualitative study was produced through a series of focus groups starting in 2003 and finishing in 2011. The evolution of gay male relationships, from mature gay men born when homosexuality was only recently conceived of as an identity to young gay men who have always seen homosexuality as a valid lifestyle choice, is outlined in this paper, illuminating the subject of gay male relationships in Mexico in the 21st century.

Key words: Gay men, homosexuality, relationship styles, sexual liberalism, same-sex marriage legislation, Mexico.

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1. Introduction

The establishment of a love relationship is one of the events that usually takes place in a person's lifetime. It is an event expected by society, which even has a structure to support it – not only the family, but media, education, religion, and the State all promote love relationships. Formal education in schools teaches us to establish love relationships as a stage of human development, while religion and the State have institutionalised love relationships through religious and civic unions. All of this, however, is addressed towards the heterosexual couple. Society

prepares men and women for heterosexual love relationships, while maintaining silence on sexual orientations that differ from the heterosexual paradigm.

This does not mean that homosexual men are excluded from the process of establishing a love relationship, although Mexico remains far away from promoting sexual diversity in education. Nevertheless, homosexuality exists. Homosexual men continue to meet men who share the same sexual orientation and form a couple. It is of interest to observe how the homosexual couple is established, behaves, and develops, not only as individuals but as a whole even though they do not have access to the same information as a heterosexual couple.

Homosexual identity is, according to authors like Michel Foucault, a construct that has only recently emerged.[1] Before the late 19th century, those who practised homosexual acts did not consider themselves as estranged from society, nor did society itself. A radical sexual identity that acknowledged sexual differences did not exist in the ideology of those historical times. This changed in the modern era when homosexuality was criminalised in the United States and pathologised in the first version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association.

It was not until the 1960s when homosexuality was no longer a case of study in medicine and psychiatry, finally being removed from the 7th edition of the DSM-II in 1974. Nowadays, homosexuality is considered a valid sexual orientation. Moreover, a whole generation of homosexual men and women have adopted the flag of 'gay pride' as a result of homosexual liberation in the sixties, announcing to the world that they accept and celebrate the new denominated sexual orientation. Homosexuals, however, were historically – and continue to be – persecuted by society not only for their non-normative sexual orientation, but also because of differences in lifestyle choices.

There was a crucial moment in Mexico City following polemic turmoil among the State, church, and different sectors of civil society when the Law for Coexistence Partnerships was proposed – a law that would legalise civil unions to protect individuals who lived together and did not have legal protection. It was the first approach to what has now passed into law: same-sex civil unions.

This study is concerned with the types of relationships and characteristics of gay male couples, specifically, the ways in which gay men establish and conduct their relationships with other men.

2. The Present-day

Even though scientific thinking has changed, homosexuals continue to be persecuted and the situation remains critical. In Brazil, people are threatened for defending homosexual human rights; in Midwest countries, homosexuality is punished with torture; while in the USA, homosexual practices are illegal in 18 states, some of which punish homosexuality with fines or even prison sentences.

In *Homosexualidad y Psicología*, Rubén Ardila argues that homosexuality must be seen as a social role since the nature of sexual orientation is conditioned by society.[2] Ardila proposes two theories of homosexuality: on the one hand, the psychoanalytical theory which refers to a passive and distant father and a possessive and competitive mother, and on the other hand, the social learning theory which proposes that a human being learns their behaviour through the rewards or gratification received for homosexual behaviour. Homosexual behaviour is acquired or learned during adolescence in most cases. However, there is also a genetic theory of homosexuality which proposes that hormones and neuro-anatomical factors differ in homosexual and heterosexual people. According to data from diverse research, it is clear that homosexuality is a result of biological, psychological, and social factors.[3] Ardila, however, asserts that there is no natural law for love or sexuality. Neither masculinity nor femininity, love nor eroticism is natural – all of these concepts are cultural-historical constructs. The natural law of instinct and copulation is insufficient to explain the complexity of human sexuality, desire, eroticism, pleasure and their practices.

In *Virtual Equality*, Urvashi Vaid describes how gay organisations now seek access to powerful structures in order to attain benefits such as medical subsidies for HIV and AIDS treatment and further legal recognition.[4] Vaid explains that the rights that homosexuals have legally gained do not represent a social reality but a virtual reality. She claims that homosexuals are only superficially accepted by society. The gay rights movement's focus on legislative reforms and governmental actions means that gay rights depend on political vicissitudes, while profound problems, such as homophobia and societal prejudice, remain intact. Homosexuals are only accepted by society on the condition that they adopt heterosexual values, namely monogamy and the family. Vaid declares that the challenge for homosexuals is to redefine their position in relation to normative society by deciding which similarities and differences to assume.

Gay collectives believe that desire plays a central role in love relationships, reviving spontaneity in sexuality when freed from the sexual conventions of modern heterosexuality – for heterosexual couples have set rules to follow, which homosexuals do not. When a man and a woman marry, they are familiar with the rules of marriage and the life stages that married couples follow, namely, that they will have children and a home, as well as the support of their families and society. These societal expectations serve as a guide and above all provide heterosexual couples with goals to be attained. Homosexual couples, on the other hand, do not have a guide to how they should live. There are no set rules to follow or societal expectations for their homosexual relationship. Therefore, each homosexual relationship starts from scratch and has to establish its own rules.

3. Objectives

The general objective of this study is to analyse the relationship styles of gay male couples across three generations in Mexico City, by conducting longitudinal research over an eight year period. This research intends to obtain the following information about the participants:

a) How they select their partners, specifically, the characteristics they consider or find appealing in a prospective partners, such as physical appearance, personality, sexual practice, and economic matters.
b) How they establish relationships with specific reference to dating practices.
c) How they commit to relationships, specifically, the rules and promises they make about whether a relationship is open or monogamous.
d) How they set their relationship expectations and plan for the future.
e) Factors which threatened the stability of the relationship.
f) Factors which sustain the relationship.
g) The perceived benefits of the legalisation of same-sex marriage and other legislation.

4. Working Hypothesis

The relationship style between gay men is not something static; it is a process in constant change, which is reflected in diverse kinds of relationships. These differences are more notorious throughout the time, from generation to generation.

5. The Investigation

This study is based on longitudinal and qualitative research with descriptive data collected from local groups.

The categories of analysis include:

a) Generation.
b) Places where they contact their prospective partners.
c) Criteria which the participants use to select their partners.
d) The ways in which the participants initiate contact with prospective partners.
e) Relationship rules, such as how the couple operates and their activities.
f) Public life of the couple.
g) Private life of the couple.
h) Commitment.

i) Goals or expectations about their relationship and the ways in which they intend to reach them.

The participants fall into three focal groups:

a) Young gay men (aged 20 to +/- 2 years old)
b) Middle-aged gay men (aged 42 to +/- 2 years old)
c) Mature gay men (aged 54 to +/- 2 years old)

6) Evolution in Relationship Styles: The Results in Discussion

In the case of the group of mature men, most of them were without a partner. The most frequent reasons mentioned for their being single was that they cannot avoid making comparisons between their last relationship and new people, they do not feel physically desirable, and they seek relationships with much younger people, discarding people their own age. The mature men that have a partner support them economically. This trend of seeking much younger partners does not exclusively apply to gay men, however; according to Luis González de Alba, heterosexual men also tend to have relationships with much younger women.[5] In the group of middle-aged men, four out of seven had a partner. However, there were some similarities with the group of mature men as two men from the middle-aged group commented that they found it difficult to find a new partner because their last relationship was still significant to them.

In the case of the mature men, most participants are in the closet, meaning that they have not revealed their sexuality to their family and friends. This group of participants differed in how they defined "in the closet". Some participants considered themselves to be out of the closet if they had accepted their own sexuality; one participant considered himself to be out of the closet for revealing his sexuality to gay friends. This last case coincides with two middle-aged men, while one middle-aged man considered himself out of the closet although he admitted that he revealed his sexuality to his family and friends when under external pressure from someone who knew about his sexual orientation, rather than by his own conviction.

In *La experiencia homosexual*, Marina Castañeda observes that the times in which mature men have lived has determined the way they behave as gay men.[6] Before the 1970s, gay couples had yet to define their identity which led to them imitating certain characteristics from heterosexual couples. Things are different for the group of young men who consider the term 'couple' ('pareja' in Spanish) old-fashioned, much preferring the English term 'partner' to mark their difference from heterosexual couples. Young gay men believe a relationship is a way to share feelings, activities, and sexual acts, and their relationship objectives are to have fun and learn new things. Young gay men are not concerned with commitment, not even the idea of living with a partner in the short-term. The group of young gay

men are in relationships that lack commitment – there is no love, but they share sexual and non-sexual activities like sports and having fun. They use English terms such as 'free', 'sex-friend', and 'friends with benefits' ('amigos con derechos' in Spanish). By using English terms even though their mother tongue is Spanish, the participants are marking a distance between their relationship and the conventions of heterosexual relationships, whereby commitment becomes increasingly remote.

Men in the mature age group had longer lasting relationships than men in the other age groups, with their relationships lasting between 5-10 years and, in one case, 31 years. This tendency towards long-term relationships coincides with the relationship style of heterosexual couples. In the mature group, this kind of relationship significantly influenced how they perceived their love relationship. In the middle-aged group, there was a variety of relationship durations. Three men from the middle-aged group stated that their relationships lasted between 10-20 years, suggesting that, like the mature men, their relationships are influenced by heterosexual paradigms. Four participants' relationships lasted between 1-4 years, which the participants believe is significant based on how they established communication and the relationship itself. The group of young men had the shortest relationships, which in most cases lasted between 1-3 months. Only two participants from the young group mentioned longer relationships lasting between 1-2 years. This may be due to young people having more freedom and less responsibility as the men in the young age group focused on sharing feelings and activities, but did not mention anything more committed in regards to their relationships.

All participants in the group of young men cited physical traits as an important consideration when forming significant relationships. Physical attraction was a significant characteristic in potential partners, but they also mentioned having fun, being original, and having initiative as important too. One participant stated that his relationship was significant because it initiated him into the gay world and was his first experience of sex. Other participants considered their relationships significant because their partners were older and they felt they were learning from experienced gay men. In the group of middle-aged men, there were some similarities. Six out of seven participants stated that one of the aspects they consider when forming significant relationships is physical appearance. It is as important to them as to the young men to feel physically attracted to their partner because they believed that it is the key to having a closer relationship, both sexually and emotionally. Only two participants from the middle-aged group mentioned emotional aspects when forming a significant relationship, one participant cited intelligence as an important trait and the other participant seeks a partner who is affective and relaxing.

One participant in the group of middle-aged men, whose relationship lasted 28 years, explained that he and his partner were monogamous; however, they did not feel sexually satisfied and therefore modified their relationship to include

threesome sexual relationships. Another middle-aged man stated that he and his partner also have flexible arrangements, whereby they have sexual relationships with other men sporadically. Even though these flexible arrangements were a minority in this group, it can be concluded that some gay men modify their relationship agreements to encompass a more flexible approach so that they can maintain a satisfactory relationship where they are not dishonest or disloyal.

The group of young men were more flexible in their relationships by having open relationships, similar to that explained by Don Clark in *Loving Someone Gay*.[7] Some of the young men stated that they had issues when attempting to have monogamous relationships. They believe that this type of relationship leads to cheating and, as a consequence, do not follow this relationship model, favouring open relationships so there is no dishonesty. In the case of the young group of men, it is important to highlight that this tendency towards shorter relationships is a general characteristics not only of young gay men but also of young men and women of all sexual orientation. Factors such as globalisation and technological development may also influence the relationship styles of young gay men.

In the case of middle-aged men, what factors have influenced this group so that men of this age demonstrate such extreme relationship styles, with some men having long-lasting relationships and others extremely short? It is interesting to reflect on the fact that middle-aged men have experienced two significant events that may have influenced their behaviour. As Francis Mondimore states, on the one hand, the sexual liberation of the 1970s occurred mainly in the USA with Gay Pride demonstrations taking place in Chicago and California, which gradually became an influential movement in Mexico.[8] On the other hand, there was much gained from this stage of liberation: gay people were more visible in society and there were more public places for this group, while it also enabled gay people to meet other gay people and begin relationships. The sudden freedom to be able to meet lots of other gay men might have initiated the sexual impulse to experience a wide variety of men and take advantage of this new-found freedom, in contrast to pre-liberation repression.

The mature men had the longest lasting relationships from 10-31 years. This follows heterosexual coupling patterns, especially when considering that this group is approximately three times older than the group of young gay men and they have reached economic stability. As for their regular relationships, it is interesting to observe that the mature men have fewer regular relationships in comparison to young men. This difference may be due to the fact that young men value all of their relationships as important regardless of how long they last, whereas mature and middle-aged men generally consider their partner and the time they spend with them as the most important. Young men value other relationships, for example, the group of young men spend more time with friends at school and in clubs, and with their family, whereas the men in the other age groups do not have the same opportunities.

In conclusion, the men's relationship expectations differ vastly between the three focus groups. The mature men expect monogamy and hold more conservative values, similar to that of heterosexual couples. The middle-aged men have more diverse attitudes; they expect professional competition, sexual attraction, and respect, while young men expect flexibility, openness, and social visibility in a relationship. It is clear that each group expects different things from relationships; however, there is one expectation that all the participants specified that unites them across the generations: they may not have the social presence or societal support they wished they had, but these men expect love in their relationships because love is not a heterosexual privilege.

Notes

[1] Michel Foucault, *Historia de la Sexualidad, la voluntad de saber* (México: Siglo XXI, 2007).
[2] Rubén Ardila, *Homosexualidad y Psicología* (Bogotá: Manual Moderno, 1998).
[3] Richard Isay, *Becoming Gay* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996).
[4] Urvashi Vaid, *Virtual Equality* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995).
[5] Luis González de Alba, *La orientación sexual* (México: Paidós, 2003).
[6] Marina Castañeda, *La experiencia homosexual* (México: Paidós, 2000).
[7] Don Clark, *Loving Someone Gay* (Berkeley: Celestialarts Publishing, 1997).
[8] Francis Mondimore, *Una Historia Natural de la Homosexualidad* (España: Paidos, 1998).

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The Sexual Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Yvette Wiid

Abstract
Many stigmas exist relating to the sexual rights of persons with disabilities. A number of attitudinal and social misconceptions abound in non-disabled society, which has led to the mistaken perspective that persons with disabilities do not have sexual urges and do not engage in sexual activity. In particular, persons with disabilities are often considered asexual and are consequently not expected to reproduce. The pregnant disabled woman is faced with many environmental and social obstacles and the pregnancy itself is considered distasteful. It is not often clear to non-disabled society that persons with disabilities experience the same sexual urges and have sexual relationships in spite of their disability. Non-disabled society at times condemns the engagement of persons with disabilities in sexual relationships as repugnant and unnatural, thereby stripping persons with disabilities of their inherent right to their own bodies. The appearance of erotic literature and photography of which persons with disabilities are the focus has highlighted the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in expressing their sexuality and sexual preferences, and has begun the process of eliminating the prejudice of non-disabled society against persons with disabilities who are open about their sexual practices and relationships. The chapter will examine examples of the denial of the latent sexuality of persons with disabilities and their right to express that sexuality in a number of media.

Key Words: Sexual rights, disability, prejudice, sexuality, media, equality, expression.

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> I want to show the world a 3-foot wheelchair vamp dwarf can be sexy. It not only helps my own self-confidence, but I get mail from adoring female fans thanking me for being a role model. I am strong, beautiful and sexy, with a motor to propel me. Love me or hate me, this job gets people with disabilities noticed as sexual beings, and that can only be a positive thing![1]
> - Kitten, Founder of *Gimps Gone Wild*

1.1 What are Sexual Rights?

The term 'fundamental human rights' is well known to most adults. However, when asked about the content of fundamental human rights, the answer given by most persons would be the rights to life, equality, and dignity. Fundamental human rights is not such a narrow concept, and extends to include rights such as freedom

of expression, the right to be free from exploitation, the right to privacy and the right to bodily autonomy.[2] Importantly, sexual rights are also recognised as one of the fundamental human rights, to be treated on a par with the rights to equality and dignity.[3]

'Sexual rights' is a broad term that includes, but is not limited to:

- Sex education
- The freedom to choose a partner for sexual activity
- Respect for bodily integrity
- Choosing whether to be sexually active or not
- Pursuing a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life.[4]

It is widely accepted that each person is entitled to the protection and free exercise of his / her fundamental rights.[5] This in turn means that each person is entitled to have their sexual rights protected and the assurance that they will be allowed to exercise those rights freely, if that exercise of rights remains legal.

1.2 Do Persons with Disabilities Have Sexual Rights?

In short: yes. Fundamental human rights, including sexual rights, are inherent to each human being, irrespective of age, race, gender, disability or any other characteristic.[6] It is therefore beyond question that persons with disabilities have sexual rights which are worthy of protection.

The fact of existence of inherent rights is entirely separate from the way in which those rights are exercised and the opinion of the general public thereon. It is indisputable that non-disabled persons have sexual urges and needs of varying degrees. It is also recognised that the personal preferences of persons with disabilities on sexual activities, partners and stimulating materials are varied, as are those of non-disabled persons. A non-disabled person is not shunned by society and is permitted to make a number of choices relating to their sexual activities without much interference by the outside world. Non-disabled persons accept that they have the right to choose when, where, how and with whom to give expression to their sexual needs and wants. This includes the right to choose to engage in heterosexual, homosexual, pornographic and group sexual activities, on condition that all parties involved consent thereto. Persons with disabilities, however, are not always extended the same courtesy.

The first and most glaring myth relating to the sexual activities of persons with disabilities is that these are non-existent.[7] It is assumed by a number of people that persons with disabilities do not have the same (or even any) sexual urges and needs.[8] When confronted with the notion that persons with disabilities participate in sexual activities, many non-disabled persons react with disgust and disbelief. Not only is this entirely untrue, it may even be correct to say that persons with

certain disabilities may even experience a heightened sexual desire as a consequence of their particular medical condition.[9]

It amounts to the denial of the sexual rights of persons with disabilities to restrict or prevent access to materials which may aid them in 'pursing a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life'. Since such materials play a significant role in the sexual life of most non-disabled persons, it is important to examine whether such materials are available for persons with disabilities. Further, it is necessary to examine the quality of such material where the content thereof is specific to persons with disabilities. The examination will not be confined to the use of such material, but also the opportunity to participate in the production thereof.

2. Persons with Disabilities and Sexual Expression

From the outset it must be understood that persons with disabilities are not necessarily attracted only to other persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities may be interested in a variety of material featuring persons with and / without disabilities for sexual stimulation. It should also be evident that the type of material used by persons with disabilities to achieve sexual stimulation depends on the disability in question. For example, a person who is an amputee may use the exact material for sexual stimulation as a person who is not an amputee. A person who is blind will not be able to make use of visual media for sexual stimulation. In other words, the choice of erotic material for persons with disabilities is highly personal and individual – exactly the same as for persons without disabilities.

A. Availability of Material

It may be easy to determine what type of material persons with disabilities require in order to give their sexual urges an outlet, but acquiring such material is a separate (and problematic) issue. Certain forms of media are not accessible to persons with a particular disability (as mentioned above) and other forms may not be appealing to persons with disabilities. In the following paragraphs different forms of media in which sexual expression may occur will be examined more closely. Attention will be paid to the participation of persons with disabilities in the production of sexually stimulating material for other persons with disabilities.

B. Print Media

Print media includes magazines, books and the internet. It is immediately clear that blind persons and persons with visual impairments may not be able to use print media for their own sexual activities. However, that is not to say that visually impaired persons cannot contribute to print media with sexual stimulating content. That being said, it is not always obvious whether the writer of an item is disabled or not; one cannot simply assume that written content depicting persons with disabilities engaged in sexual conduct is written by a person with disabilities. Since disability may easily be concealed, it is more appropriate to determine whether

written material is available for persons with disabilities to make use of as a part of their sexual life.

A number of books, magazines and internet sites exist which cater to those persons who prefer to use print media to source erotic material. These stories exclusively feature non-disabled persons. A novel which has recently made international headlines is a good example: *50 Shades of Grey*. While the novel is certainly sexually stimulating, it does not feature persons with disabilities involved in any way with sexual conduct. That is not to say that persons with disabilities will not be stimulated by the novel, but for the person who wants to read about the sexual possibilities and activities of other persons with disabilities the novel is of no use. Similarly, there is no magazine currently in production which provides an equivalent to *Playboy* for persons with disabilities.[10]

The internet is a somewhat different beast. A number of sites exist that feature stories about the sexual activities of persons with disabilities. Accessibility of these sites is a huge obstacle. In contrast to sites featuring non-disabled sexual exploits which are freely available and free, the sites for persons with disabilities are few and far between and are either lacking in content or worse, accessible only on a paid membership basis. Effectively, this amounts to a denial of the right of persons with disabilities to access material that will complement their sexual lives. There is no justifiable reason for the restriction of sexually explicit material featuring persons with disabilities when the same nature of material featuring non-disabled persons is accessible for free in most instances.

C. Audio

Recorded erotic material is popular amongst persons with disabilities, particular those who have visual impairments or are unable to access other media as a result of their disability.[11] Persons with disabilities are also keen to be involved in the production of audio erotic material, since there is a measure of anonymity in participation: the only possible means for identification is the voice. Numerous erotic stories are available for purchase on websites such as iTunes for a small fee, payable by anyone wishing to access it. There are also a number of recordings available on iTunes which feature persons with disabilities. Audio media therefore seems to cater for persons with disabilities wishing to use some form of external sexual stimulation better than the print media industry.

If there is any criticism of the use of recordings, it is that recordings can be quite boring or monotonous in their delivery. Therefore, while attempts are being made to accommodate persons with disabilities in the field of sexual audio productions, these recordings can sometimes fail to provide the sexual stimulus required.

D. Visual Media

By far the most popular form of external sexual stimuli is the group of items making up visual media – pictures and videos depicting sexual activity abound on the internet and videos are widely available for purchase on various online shopping sites. Again, it is trite that the vast majority of visual media with sexual content features non-disabled persons. Persons with disabilities may indeed use this material irrespective of whether it features persons with disabilities or not. The main issue with visual media is whether there is an opportunity for persons with disabilities to feature in pictures and videos with erotic content, whether those items are aimed at persons with disabilities or not.

A small number of websites exist which offer content featuring persons with disabilities engaging in sexual activity. Even the briefest search on the internet yields two streams of result when entering search terms such related to the sexual activities of persons with disabilities. One stream comprises an outpouring of disgust and disbelief and condemns any visual material featuring persons with disabilities as well as any persons who may be interested in such material. The other comprises the work of persons such as 'Kitten', the founder of the erotic website *Gimps Gone Wild*.[12] *Gimps Gone Wild* is by far the largest single database aimed at and featuring persons with disabilities in a range of sexual activity. The nature of the material ranges from slightly suggestive to hardcore pornography, based on the preferences of the user. *Gimps Gone Wild* is certainly unique in its offerings and target audience: it encourages persons with disabilities not to hide their sexuality and sexual needs and wants. Indeed, it celebrates the sexuality of persons with disabilities and provides clear support for the fact that persons with disabilities are no different in their sexual urges and preferences than persons without disabilities. The website also highlights the fact that there is nothing perverted or wrong about a person with a disability wishing to express their sexual desires, irrespective of the form they take.

Most importantly, *Gimps Gone Wild* in no way exploits persons with disabilities since participation in the content of the website is by request of the model only, and the models are not sought out by the owner of the site.[13] Only models with physical disabilities are featured, since persons with mental disabilities may not have the capacity necessary to consent to participation in content of a sexual nature.[14] *Gimps Gone Wild* not only delivers sexual content featuring persons with disabilities, but also provides information on different types of disabilities with descriptions of each.

Gimps Gone Wild is unique in its conception, construction and content. No other website caters so well for the disabled community and its needs as a whole. Other sources of adult videos and pictures featuring persons with disabilities are few and far between. It is not uncommon for persons in search of such material to plead for assistance on a number of online communities. In many instances like this, these persons are met with the usual ignorance and stereotyping that persons

with disabilities are not supposed to be interested in sex.[15] Where material is sought randomly on the internet, there is also no guarantee that the persons featured in the material are doing so freely or whether they have the capacity to consent to the activity in which they are participating.

In short, then, the internet offers some material featuring persons with disabilities engaging in some form of sexual activity. However, supply of adequate material is lacking and not always accessible. Persons in search of material which appeals to them face a difficult task, one which involves dealing with the preconceived notion that persons with disabilities have no need to seek out sexually stimulating visual material.

3. The Way Forward

From the aforementioned discussion, it is clear that persons with disabilities face a number of obstacles in the search for material which provides sexual stimulation. The first of these is that there is blatant denial of the fact that persons with disabilities are sexual beings. Related to this denial is the concept that persons with disabilities will not want to participate in or make use of any type of material which provides erotic content specifically aimed at persons with disabilities.

The second obstacle relates to access. Since there is an ingrained conviction that persons with disabilities do not have sexual needs, there is a consequent lack of opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate actively in the creation of appropriate adult content items. Once the barrier to participation is overcome, the focus must shift to the availability of the material to persons not involved in the creation thereof. While many existing pieces of erotic fiction, pictures, videos and audio recordings can (and are) used by persons with disabilities despite being aimed at the non-disabled market, it must be recognised that there is a need for material aimed specifically at persons with disabilities. Similarly, there are many publications in circulation which attempt to explain the fact that persons with disabilities do not have diminished sexual desires as a result of disability. It may be assumed that these publications are also aimed at the non-disabled society, since it is certain that persons with disabilities already know that they do not necessarily have diminished sexual urges!

These obstacles are not insurmountable. Attention needs to be paid to educating society as a whole that there is a need for erotic material featuring and meant for persons with disabilities. Once this is made clear and the taboos related to persons with disabilities engaging in sexual activities are negated, it is almost certain that more legitimate opportunities will present themselves for participation in the generation of erotic material for persons with disabilities.

Essentially the problems created by the lack of stimulating erotic material for persons with disabilities are based on a more complex issue than the denial of the sexual rights of persons with disabilities. The denial stems from a refusal to acknowledge the valid personhood of persons with disabilities, whether such

refusal is conscious or not.[16] Any attempts to combat these prejudices and promote the rights of persons with disabilities must be done in consultation with the disabled community. There can be no high-handed, arbitrary determination of what a person with a disability needs and wants without involving the person themselves in order to find out what works for them.

In conclusion, persons with disabilities will only be able to fully exercise their sexual rights once non-disabled persons become more accepting and accommodating thereof. Once the necessary barriers to full sexual enjoyment have been removed, persons with disabilities will be allowed to make choices in their sexual lives as freely as everyone else. It is in the interest of the promotion of fundamental human rights and in the interest of creating an equal society that persons with disabilities not be denied any fundamental rights,[17] including their rights to sexual freedom, pleasure and contentment.

Notes

[1] Tracie Egan Morrissey (2007) 'Handicapped Porno: Offensive or Inclusive?' http://jezebel.com/handicapped/ (accessed on 20/06/2012).
[2] See, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.
[3] International Planned Parenthood Foundation (2009) Sexual Rights: an IPPF declaration Preamble available at http://www.ippf.org/en/Resources/Statements/Sexual+rights+an+IPPF+declaration.htm (accessed on 20/06/2012).
[4] Palo Alto Medical Foundation 'Sexual Rights' http://www.pamf.org/teen/abc/sex/sexualrights.html (accessed 20/06/2012).
[5] Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.
[6] Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.
[7] Adolf Ratzka (1998) 'Sexuality and People with Disabilities: What Experts are Unaware Of.' (accessed on 21/06/2012) http://www.independentliving.org/docs5/Sexuality.html.
[8] Mary Jo Deegan (1985) *Women and Disability: The Double Handicap* (New Brunswick: Transaction), 96.
[9] A number of medical conditions and medications lead to an increased sexual desire. For example, certain drugs related to the treatment of depression may result in a marked increase in sexual desire – see Robert L Phillips and James R Slaughter (2000) Depression and Sexual Desire 62(4) *American Family Physician*, 782 – 786.
[10] A woman with a disability has posed for Playboy itself – Judith Cummings (1987) 'Disabled Model Defies Sexual Stereotypes,' (accessed on 20/09/2012). http://www.nytimes.com/1987/06/08/style/disabled-model-defies-sexual-stereotypes.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm
[11] Geoff Adams – Spink (2009) 'Dirty Talk for Blind People', (accessed on 18/06/2012). http://news.bbc.co.uk /2/hi/8144793.stm

[12] Gimps Gone Wild http://gimpsgonewild.com
[13] Gimps Gone Wild 'About Us' http://www.gimpsgonewild.com/about_us.htm (accessed on 20/06/2012).
[14] *Ibid*.
[15] For an example of a discussion of the perception of persons with disabilities in search of sexually stimulating material, see http://forums.plentyoffish.com/8789764datingPostpage2.aspx (accessed on 18/06/2012).
[16] Joey McFadden (2006) 'I have a great sex life. Does that shock you?' http://www.wwda.org.au/mcfadden1.pdf (accessed on 20/09/2012).
[17] Naomi Jacobs (2010) 'Disabled people have sex lives. Get over it.' http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/aug/23/disabled-people-sex-lives-equality (accessed on 20/09/2012).

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Rethinking the Erotic

EROTICISM

IN LITERATURE, FILM, ART AND SOCIETY

The erotic is a complex and highly problematic phenomenon that scholars have agonised over for centuries. Generally speaking, the erotic refers to sex and sexuality. However, it is a multifaceted term that holds multiple, meanings for different people. The erotic, on the one hand, is personal -- a collection of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and sensations shared with one's self or other people. On the other hand, it is explicitly public -- subject to censorship, scientific study, penalisation, political debate, and reproduction in art. It is also the basis of this volume, which includes chapters from 14 different authors who presented their ideas on eroticism at the 7th Global Conference: The Erotic (Exploring Critical Issues) at Mansfield College, Oxford in September 2012. This volume offers a broad perspective on issues of the erotic with the authors representing not only a wide variety of academic and non-academic disciplines but also a range of countries from across the globe.

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