

“What Lips These Lips Have Kissed”: Refiguring the Politics of Queer Public Kissing

Charles E. Morris III & John M. Sloop

In this essay, we argue that man-on-man kissing, and its representations, have been insufficiently mobilized within apolitical, incremental, and assimilationist pro-gay logics of visibility. In response, we call for a perspective that understands man-on-man kissing as a political imperative and kairotic. After a critical analysis of man-on-man kissing’s relation to such politics, we discuss how it can be utilized as a juggernaut in a broader project of queer world making, and investigate ideological, political, and economic barriers to the creation of this queer kissing “visual mass.” We conclude with relevant implications regarding same-sex kissing and the politics of visible pleasure.

Keywords: Same-Sex Kissing; Queer Politics; Public Sex; Gay Representation

In general, one may pronounce kissing dangerous. A spark of fire has often been struck out of the collision of lips that has blown up the whole magazine of virtue.—Anonymous, 1803¹

Kissing, in certain figurations, has lost none of its hot promise since our epigraph was penned two centuries ago. Its ongoing transformative combustion may be witnessed in two extraordinarily divergent perspectives on its cultural representation and political implications. In 2001, queer filmmaker Bruce LaBruce offered in Toronto’s *Eye Weekly* a noteworthy rave of the sophomoric buddy film *Dude, Where’s My Car?* One scene in particular inspired LaBruce, in which we find our stoned protagonists Jesse (Ashton Kutcher) and Chester (Seann William Scott) idling at a stoplight next to superhunk Fabio and his equally alluring female passenger.

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Adolescent male jockeying ensues: “Fabio looks over contemptuously and revs his engine; Kutcher, behind the wheel, does the same. Fabio responds by putting his arm around his vixen; Kutcher rises to the challenge by placing his arm emphatically around Scott. Fabio then leans over and gives his girl a long, deep tongue kiss.” What happens next, in LaBruce’s exuberant judgment, is nothing short of revolutionary:

The movie could have gone in infinite directions at this point, but amazingly Kutcher leans over and, gently and convincingly, delivers the lingering tongue to Scott. The actors neither overplay nor underplay the moment and show no visible trace of disgust or regret afterward. I was almost in tears. This one scene does more to advance the cause of homosexuality than 25 years of gay activism.²

By stark contrast, Robert Knight, director of the rightwing Culture and Family Institute, responded in typical jeremiadic thunder to the Abu Ghraib scandal by warning of the “‘Perfect Storm’ of American cultural depravity,” rooted in homosexuality and “advanced in the name of progress and amplified by a sensation-hungry media,” that provides ample inducement for proliferating terrorism. According to his apocalyptic assessment:

Imagine how those images of men kissing outside San Francisco City Hall after being “married” play in the Muslim world. We couldn’t offer the mullahs a more perfect picture of American decadence. This puts Americans at risk all over the world, especially Christian missionaries who are trying to bring the Gospel to people trapped in darkness for millennia.³

What might appear as striking incommensurability between teen film and jihad is belied, in our judgment, by a shared focus on same-sex (specifically male) kissing that anchors and animates these consequential rhetorical visions. For obviously different reasons, both LaBruce and Knight conclude that from the collision of queer lips is sparked a conflagration sufficient to scorch the heteronormative order in US public culture.⁴ The perils and potentialities of such a project are the subject of our critical engagement, by means of which we emphasize the significance and urgency of same-sex kissing as at once cultural representation and a *political* imperative.

The sight of a similarly aged heterosexual couple kissing publicly might not be noticed at all or, if registered, would merely signify a largely sanctioned expression of mutual pleasure, affection, love. A gesture at once banal and iconic, the public kiss by members of the opposite sex represents metonymically the shared cultural embrace of heteronormative values and behavior. That same kiss between two men, however, constitutes a “marked” and threatening act, a performance instantly understood as contrary to hegemonic assumptions about public behavior, and the public good, because it invites certain judgments about the men’s *deviant sexual behavior* and its imagined encroachments, violations and contagions, judgments that inevitably exceed the mere fact of their having a mutually affirming encounter.⁵

Public kissing between men remains crucially problematic, we claim, despite current mainstream gay visibility, despite Frank Rich’s claim in the *New York Times*, after witnessing the celebratory kiss between Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman at the 2003 Tony Awards, that “Now the speed of both political and cultural change is

accelerating, so much so that politicians who are flummoxed by homosexuality . . . are on a collision course with history.”⁶ We find it significant that this act can be simultaneously measured as readily for its daunting portents. As Otis Stuart concluded,

Kissing is an act everybody knows, the sight everyone recognizes from personal experience. Onscreen and onstage, it’s guaranteed common ground that goes to the gut of homophobia with a bloodcurdling message: *that* makes them human. Sexualizing and humanizing homosexuality, kissing could well be the last hinge in the closet door.⁷

We take a premise embedded in these varied judgments, namely kissing as a *queer juggernaut*, as the basis of our analysis. In doing so, we press beyond the basic acknowledgment that public kissing is an act rife with cultural meaning, a nodal point around which the commonsense understandings of sexuality can be understood and interrogated. We argue that man-on-man public kissing constitutes a paramount political performance, not sufficiently recognized as such in ongoing discussion and debate of gay visibility within GLBTQ communities, but understood accordingly by those who see it as a chief threat to heteronormativity and seek its discipline. We believe it vital to conceive of same-sex kissing as central to the prospects of a queer world and to reconsider the timing of its requisite escalating performance.

In this essay, we first highlight the specific act of man-on-man kissing as insufficiently mobilized within pro-gay logics of apolitical, incremental, and assimilationist visibility. By contrast, in the second section, we consider the deployment of this kiss for its significance as a juggernaut in a broader project of queer world making, which requires an emphasis on visibility as cultural *and* political, as well as heightened attention to *kairos* in relation to critical visual mass. In the third section, we focus on ideological and political barriers to the creation of this kissing visual mass. Here, we examine homophobic discourses that seemingly treat all gay representation as political, disciplinary responses that dangerously undermine the queer ascendancy currently, perhaps prematurely, heralded. Finally, we conclude with relevant implications regarding same-sex kissing, the politics of visible pleasure, and their queer prospects.

When a Kiss is Not a Kiss

Although we are generally, but not always, unaware of it during the embrace, each shared kiss is a “performative act,” as Judith Butler would have it, an often unreflective performance which does not draw scrutiny because it “makes sense” within the ideology of contemporary US culture.⁸ Each public kiss between a man and woman serves as a reiteration and reaffirmation of heteronormativity.⁹ It is, as Butler theorizes, an act of repetition, a ritualized product “under and through the force of prohibition and taboo,” in which people are encouraged to reiterate expected social/sexual dynamics, steer away from unexpected or unwelcome social/sexual dynamics, and punish those who participate in such acts through social ostracism

and other disciplinary means.¹⁰ In short, most heterosexual kisses escape scrutiny not only because of their ubiquity but also because of their heteronormative reiteration. As Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner argue, “A complex cluster of sexual practices gets confused, in heterosexual culture, with the love plot of intimacy and familialism that signifies belonging to society in a deep and normal way. Community is imagined through scenes of intimacy, coupling, and kinship.”¹¹

It is important to emphasize that this complex cluster of meanings is historical and cultural rather than essential: public kissing could *mean* otherwise. Curiously, the performativity and contingency of kissing is repeatedly acknowledged in public discussion,¹² yet cultural practices continue to maintain its heteronormative meanings. That is, although a database search of the words “public kiss” yields hundreds of popular press articles, including numerous histories of kissing—or its absence—in this and other cultures, most operate as if opposite-sex public kissing is not only normal but natural. We notice most heterosexual kisses no more than we do handshakes (of course, a *handshake* between a husband and wife might be noticeable). Although the meaning of the public kiss is historical and cultural, its rhetorical force, reiterated multiple times each day, materially grounds the assumption that it is a natural reaffirmation of proper gender behavior. By contrast, the sight of two men kissing necessarily disrupts visual and emotional, moral and political, fields of heteronormative expectation; same-sex kisses are therefore immediately marked, immediately suspect, and immediately susceptible to discipline because they are understood, often viscerally, as an unnatural and dangerous erotic expression—as exigent representation.

The Queer Media Celebration

Some might argue that blossoming gay visibility would seem to render such a perspective increasingly anachronistic. With the proliferation and sustained popularity of mediated gay depiction, there appears to be a growing consensus that homosexuality has become normal, that heteronormativity is yielding to the queer. As an issue of *Entertainment Weekly*, with the cast of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* on its cover, proclaimed, “So along with the Supreme Court’s landmark Lawrence v. Texas ruling, the return of Elle Woods, and the emancipation of Ms. Liza Minnelli, it seems the nation may finally be ready to appreciate the finer delights of foie-gras mousse and pre-shave oil.”¹³ Television critic Carina Chocano has provocatively concluded, “*Queer Eye* is glastnost.”¹⁴

The same-sex kiss, too, it seems, has come a long way since the “gay 1990s,” a decade of occasioned but occluded kissing that was treated, as Larry Gross observes, “with all the delicacy and attention required for high-risk medical procedures.”¹⁵ It was, despite demonstrable gains, a decade in which Otis Stuart could note: “There’s one thing you still don’t see. If the current New York theater is a mirror held up to homosexuality, queers don’t kiss. . . . Kissing is clearly gay theater’s last taboo.”¹⁶ In the films *Philadelphia* and *Six Degrees of Separation*, Tom Hanks and Will Smith, both playing gay characters, refused to kiss their partners on screen. Smith

purportedly heeded the advice of Denzel Washington, who admonished, "Don't you be kissing no man."¹⁷ Although the producers of *Melrose Place* planned to feature a gay romantic kiss, network censors forced the camera to fade at the moment it occurred, a kiss implied but never shown.¹⁸ The *New York Times* reported in 1996 that gay computer programmer Jacques Servin was fired after creating an Easter Egg that allowed players to see male characters kissing so as to expose the absence of homosexuality in video games.¹⁹ In 1997, USA network's "Breaking the Surface" graphically depicted Olympic diver Greg Louganis' traumatic rape, but omitted any same-sex kissing.²⁰ One encountered that same year GLAAD's news alert service heralding as momentous a kiss shared by Tom Selleck and Kevin Kline in the problematic film *In and Out*.²¹

Without question, particularly in the past half-decade, representations of same-sex kissing have manifested in multiple cultural locations. Adam Sandler, in his 1999 teen film *Big Daddy*, prominently featured a gay couple as the best friends of straight protagonist Sonny Koufax, in one scene depicting them sharing a goodbye kiss; a friend's homophobic reaction to the couple's intimacy compelled Koufax's response, "That's what gay guys do, they kiss."²² By 2000, the *Los Angeles Times* argued that the lack of public discussion about a kiss shared by Will and Jack on *Will & Grace* suggested that there was no longer anything shocking about gay public-ity.²³ The rash of same-sex kissing on mainstream television shows such as *Spin City*, *That '70s Show*, *The Simpsons*, *Friends*, *It's All Relative*, and *Saturday Night Live* appears to substantiate such a claim. *Dawson's Creek* aired an episode in 2000 entitled "True Love," featuring Jack McPhee (Kerr Smith) engaged in the "first romantic kiss between two men"; Jack did so again in the 2003 series finale, projected five years into the future, in which he tells an elderly couple who witnesses his kiss on the beach, "I'm just kissing my boyfriend!" to which the woman responds, "That's nice."²⁴

MTV, long forward in its sexual representation, has unabashedly portrayed same-sex kissing on various seasons of *The Real World*, in its soap operas *Undressed* and *Spyder Games*, and in its public service campaigns "Do You Speak MTV" (2000) and "Fight For Your Rights: Take a Stand Against Discrimination" (2001). On Showtime's *Queer As Folk* and HBO's *Six Feet Under*, man-on-man kissing is but one of the recurrent displays of desire and affection that occur at home, on the street, in the local diner, and everywhere else. Pop singer Christina Aguilera was honored at the 2003 GLAAD Media Awards for depicting a romantic queer kiss in the video for her hit song "Beautiful." In Las Vegas, twice nightly, Cirque du Soleil's *Zumanity* features a "ferocious, lusty, lingering kiss, the explosive culmination and combination of all the varied emotions expressed in the movements that come before." Gay couples marrying in San Francisco and New York in 2004 found clips of their jubilant kisses broadcast on the nightly news.²⁵

With such multiple representations in mind, we might triumphantly predict with Frank Rich that "the day when homosexuality threatens most heterosexuals seems to be passing in America."²⁶ The final acceptance of queer affectionate and erotic public display seems but an episode away. Such optimism, certainly worth savoring and nurturing, must be tempered and recast, however, by difficult questions related to

sexuality, gender, and visibility that are presently obfuscated by ebullient punditry, undermining an activist orientation that understands public kissing *as tactically central and kairotic* rather than merely progressive.

Politics of Visibility

Our critically reflexive caution begins with Steven Seidman's perspective, which, in our judgment, remains apt despite the multiplication of queer kissing representations:

My sense is that, despite some dissent and conflict, there is a dominant culture that associates normal sexuality with sex that is exclusively between adults, that conforms to dichotomous gender norms, that is private, tender, caring, genitally centered, and linked to love, marriage, and monogamy. There is then a wide range of consensual adult practices that are potentially vulnerable to stigma and social punishment. . . . Individuals who engage in some of these acts will be scandalized as "bad citizens"; demands will be heard to use repressive or therapeutic interventions to protect good citizens from contamination—that is, being seduced, molested, or infected by disease-carrying sexual deviants.²⁷

Crucial here is the *political* inflection given to an account of those who wish to defend and preserve heteronormativity. As we will demonstrate later, disciplinary responses to man-on-man kissing extend from a firm assumption that culture and politics are inextricably bound. The language employed by Richard Goldstein in his *Village Voice* article is telling: "Rather than reflecting a shift in acceptance, the new queer visibility may be fueling resentment. . . . To guys under duress, the glut of gay shows is yet another insurrection—and gay marriage is a fucking *coup d'état*. . . . It's crucial not to confuse a pop trend with a juggernaut."²⁸

It is less clear whether those reveling in the ever-increasing mediated images of gays and lesbians, perhaps especially of same-sex kissing, sufficiently understand them within a context of "dissent and conflict," or rather are "confus[ing] a pop trend with a juggernaut," if the politics implied by the term juggernaut registers at all. The danger, as Suzanna Walters has argued, is that "we all carry with us a belief in a sort of causal connection between cultural visibility and political change, but I am convinced that, more often than not, there is actually a radical *disconnect* between the two."²⁹ This disconnect is articulated clearly in an interview Jeffrey Epstein conducted with seven of Hollywood's influential and openly gay executives. Paris Barclay claimed that there is not "anything more powerful" than television as, in Epstein's words, "the ultimate tool for social change." However, Bryan Fuller conceived of this tool as "mak[ing] them [mainstream audiences] comfortable with likeable gay characters in their living room—so they're not offensive and they don't make out on primetime—and little by little, you get leeway." In response to Craig Zadan's reference to the "outrage" about the Shaiman/Wittman kiss at the 2003 Tony Awards, Ilene Chaiken observed, "It was before the really seismic shift that we're in the midst of right now."³⁰

Queer visibility by these accounts is discernibly apolitical, without tactical vision, and its incrementalism obscures an understanding of *kairos* as a rhetorical imperative within this “seismic shift” of representation. With the exception of those portrayals on more exclusive outlets like MTV, Showtime or Cirque du Soleil, *mainstream* images of man-on-man kissing, unquestionably muscular in queer potential, are variously domesticated (comic displacement, quaint romantic but non-sexual plotting), shortcircuited by assimilationist logic in which lips and tongues are not allowed to exert the same thrust as, say, impeccable grooming or wedding bands. Paul Rudnick’s 1995 film *Jeffrey* astutely embodies the ongoing dilemma. In a gym-drenched, erotically charged exchange, sex-phobic protagonist Jeffrey (Stephen Weber) is tortured by the advances of the gorgeous Steve (Michael T. Weiss), who punctuates the moment with a question: “What would happen if I kissed you, right now?” Jeffrey resists then succumbs to Steve’s passionate embrace. Subsequently, we witness another answer to the same question. Two young straight couples in a theater watching the movie react to the kiss, the women with longing sighs, their boyfriends with stunned expressions and sputterings of “Oh man, gross, disgusting.” Jeffrey himself follows with a resounding “No!” and flees the gym. Rudnick, despite his insight, rather missed the point. He told the *Los Angeles Times*, “Actually, there is plenty of kissing between men within the first five seconds of the movie. We wanted to get it out of the way so that the audience would realize that ‘Jeffrey’ is not about some kind of shocking revelation.”³¹

The politics of visibility are always a matter of great concern as marginalized and disciplined subjectivities gain representation through mass mediated texts and, as a result, larger access to a culture’s dominant exchange of symbols. Is it better to be “marked” publicly as a way to alter perceptions about one’s subjectivity in a positive manner, or are there more benefits to remaining “unmarked,” outside of the strongest disciplinary gazes?³² Is being publicly represented or marked necessarily a sign of progress, a cause for celebration? Moreover, once marked, how can the necessarily limited images be reshaped, rethought publicly? How does one engage in such a struggle?

In a sense, asking about the relative merits of being marked or unmarked is a moot question: there is no doubt that this is a high tide for queer representation. Rather than mull over the question of whether representation is desirable, we critically focus instead on the forms this visibility might take. As Walters persuasively argues, “There must be an invigorated concern with changes not only in the *quantity* of representation but in the *quality* as well. . . . It is the *quality* of this visibility that matters. More *Basic Instincts* or avoided prime-time kisses do not a social transformation make. The complexity and diversity of the gay and lesbian community needs to be *represented*, not promoted as simply heterosexuality with a twist.”³³

Cultural critics have repeatedly observed that, because advertisers want their commercial products to appeal to large numbers, mediated images and themes must necessarily be “comfortable” ones, reflecting commonsense expectations and shared ideological meanings. In the case of television, for example, images must fit visually

and behaviorally within the acceptable expectations of most viewers. Fiske and Hartley refer to this as ideological clawback (i.e., the commercial nature of television encourages all potential changes in meaning to be “clawed back” toward the center); Celeste Condit simply notes that “television, or any mass medium, can do oppressive work solely by addressing the dominant audience that also constitutes the public.”³⁴ In terms of our interests, we stress that current mass-mediated representations reflect predictable and comfortable understandings of gays and lesbians. It is neither the case that consumers have no control over meanings nor that mass-mediated representations are particularly regressive, rather that the needs of commercialism tend toward stability, to hold normative meanings in place.

Hence, a number of contemporary media scholars have detailed the ways in which contemporary GLBTQ representations have been constrained and recentered in the heteronormative imaginary. Helene A. Shugart has convincingly argued that mediated depictions of gay men have gained popularity only by virtue of being desexualized, depoliticized, and, indeed, heterosexualized, i.e., endowed with “decidedly conventional heterosexual signifiers.”³⁵ Hemal Jhaveri observes that, despite their seemingly ubiquitous presence, “the representations of gay men have been disconcertingly one-dimensional. . . . Unfortunately, by only reinforcing perceptions that viewers are already comfortable with, a vast majority of these shows preserve the status quo rather than challenge it.”³⁶

The problem, then, is thinking beyond the idea that queer representation as an economic market is equivalent to political progress. Eric Clarke, while recognizing that there can be no “authentic” representation of gays and lesbians, asks that we think hard about “the terms on which this visibility will be offered, *and* the terms on which lesbians and gay men themselves attempt to achieve it” (emphasis ours).³⁷ Clarke’s concern, which we share, is that “commercial publicity has nevertheless come to function as if it were a form of political representation that democratically recognizes and equitably circulates a constituency’s civic value.”³⁸

Clarke observes that organizations like GLAAD and publications like *Out* and *The Advocate* congratulate the mass media industry for “positive” representations which are too often severely limited in the diversity of GLBTQ “types” one encounters, confined to that which is heteronormatively appealing.³⁹ How do we celebrate the existence of queers on television because of their value as a market group, if even a behavior so seemingly simple as a kiss is left unmarked? Or put differently, absent substantive representations of the kiss, do queers really exist? Again, as Clarke observes, “By viewing commercial value as if it were an appropriate principle for distributing equity, visibility politics aids in the culture industry’s partial and distorted delivery of social enfranchisement.”⁴⁰

If “we” celebrate GLBTQ representation in mass-mediated texts as it currently exists, we misunderstand the importance of the kiss. To do so risks ceding the politics of representation substantially to those who prefer heteronormativity, those who perceive all such representation as “an agenda making homosexuality appear first normal, and then desirable.”⁴¹ That is, many gay progressives may not think of the man-on-man kiss as important tactically or temporally, and deliberately avoid it as

overly confrontational, whereas anti-gay spokespersons most definitely grasp, with political inflection, its centrality to queer representation. Thinking solely in terms of visibility/invisibility, marked/unmarked or affirmative/regressive “restricts the kind of imaginative reach anti-homophobic efforts should have.”⁴²

The Gender Politics of Queer Kissing

Our emphasis on man-on-man kissing as the specifically requisite form of visibility raises equally complex and vexing issues regarding gender. Although gender bifurcation is obviously problematic, especially within a queer critique, we again underscore tactic and timing in claiming such kissing as a political “wedge” that is part of a larger project of queer world making. This perspective is grounded in Lisa Rosen’s observation that, among proliferating same-sex display of affection, kissing women, long a staple in straight male erotic fantasy, are much more readily tolerated than kissing men, demonstrating “the different standards for women and men on TV . . . even straight women are more comfortable kissing than straight men are.”⁴³

We are not arguing that same-sex kisses between women are normalized. Indeed, the tumult created by women’s kisses in Dodger Stadium and at a Boulder high school is indication enough that Rosen’s generalization should be qualified. In both cases, discipline of same-sex kissing occurred despite the concurrent, unmarked practice of opposite-sex kissing several rows away and in the pages of the same yearbook.⁴⁴ But we would argue that representations of man-on-man kissing suffer stigma more severely and are perceived as a greater threat to heteronormativity. In part, we attribute this to the sexism that underwrites appropriations of women kissing. For example, the spectacle of Madonna kissing Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera at the 2003 MTV Music Awards suggests that a “lesbian” kiss fits comfortably, if contingently, within the heterosexual male gaze often containing it.⁴⁵

Whereas depictions of women kissing borders on the cliché, argues Paul Rudnick, “When you see two guys kissing, it pretty much demonstrates they’re not kidding. . . . It’s seen as much more of a disruption of the world as we know it.”⁴⁶ Conflating male and female gender representation dangerously misreads the depth of homophobia and sexism that lurks beneath the cultural surface of such “tolerance” and miscalculates the ferocity of the power struggle inherent to the queer world making that same-sex kissing might achieve.

In the following sections, we demonstrate how and why man-on-man kissing, far from having been normalized, constitutes a final front in the battle for a queer world, offering Gran Fury’s “Read My Lips” campaign as one meaningful example of its productive mobilization. Because “Read My Lips” engages the anti-homophobic imaginary differently than so many contemporary accounts, we read it for its potential as a disruptive counterperformance. Finally, for the purposes of resisting “clawbacked” understandings of man-on-man kissing, we reveal the vigorous disciplining currently segregating and sanitizing matching lips.

Read My Lips: The Importance of Being Kissed

As our survey of cultural representations suggests, the meaning of same-sex public kissing remains fraught with ideological conflict while being construed as virtually normalized. Consequently, one might question our aggressive call for its deeper politicization. Could one not reasonably argue that as long as sexual difference is legally sanctioned in private, and its intimate representation progressively populating the media, why insist on an activist stance? We respond by arguing for the significance of the man-on-man public kiss, deployed and read resistively, mobilized with a heightened sense of *kairos*,⁴⁷ because it effects a powerful affirmation for queer communities, functions as a “critical visual mass” more striking by saturation than accumulation, and could potentially queer the meaning of all public kissing, with potentially profound material and symbolic implications for the constitution of sexuality.⁴⁸

Affirmation is, in our minds, the clearest immediate benefit for queer communities offered by the deeper politicization of same-sex kissing. Alfred Kielwasser and Michelle Wolf have revealed the endangerment resulting from a lack of representation in mainstream mediated texts: gay adolescents, without a model of what it is like to “come of age,” often precariously understand themselves as aberrations.⁴⁹ For all queers, Pat Califia argues, the stakes are high: “Isolation begets invisibility, which perpetuates isolation and gives these variations [in sexual difference] a furtive and unattractive appearance to prospective members.”⁵⁰

Although our essay does not concern “public sex” as it has come to be understood, arguments about its rhetorical benefits and disciplinary costs have some applicability when paralleled with man-on-man public kissing. In William Leap’s collection, *Public Sex/Gay Space*, a similar theme emerges: public (homo)sex has appeal, beyond the excitement possible exposure brings, precisely because it fulfills a deep need for self-affirmation of one’s sexual identity.⁵¹ For instance, Ira Tattelman notes of the appeal of bathhouses: “To make a sexual choice in front of others, who by their presence . . . applauded the ability to make these kinds of decisions, became an impetus for self-sufficiency, a redefinition of who the gay man is.”⁵² Califia argues that these bathhouses “taught gay men to see themselves as members of a common tribe with similar interests and needs.”⁵³

Similar claims have been made repeatedly regarding same-sex public kissing. Richard Meyer argues that such representations constitute “the power of queer desire . . . insisting that lesbians and gay men fight the efforts of the larger culture to render their sexuality—their desiring bodies—invisible.”⁵⁴ The impetus for such representations, therefore, lies in its ability to signify unfettered, undiluted non-normative sexuality. As Frank Bruni observes, “Seeing a same-sex couple kiss makes it impossible for an observer to think about homosexuality only as an abstraction or to interpret warm interaction between two men or two women as something else—something less disturbing.”⁵⁵

Consider, for example, the 1988 image *Read My Lips* (Figure 1), wheat-pasted across Manhattan and then worn on T-shirts by countless queers throughout the

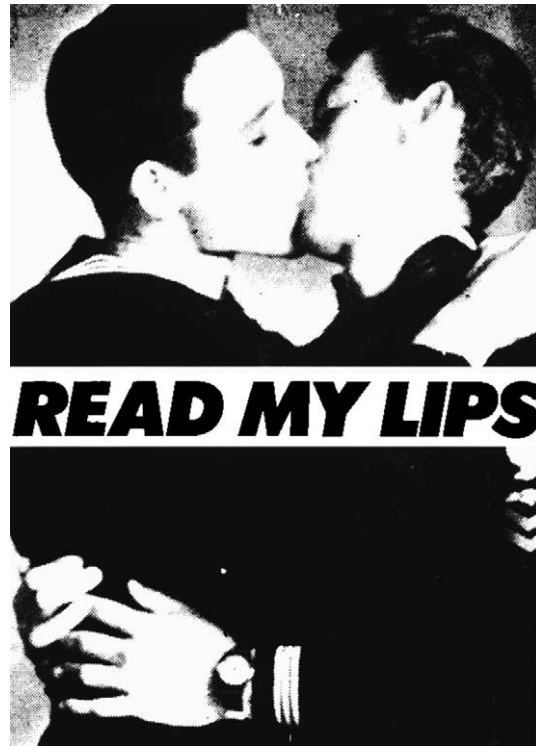


Figure 1.

successive decade. Created by Gran Fury, the New York collective comprised of ten artist members of ACT UP, *Read My Lips* announced ACT UP's kiss-in at 6th Avenue & 8th Street on April 29—the first of the “9 days of protest” coordinated nationally by a network of AIDS activist groups called AIDS Coalition to Network, Organize, and Win (ACT NOW)—to protest a variety of issues central to the epidemic.⁵⁶

A black and white photograph depicts two uniformed sailor boys; hands clasped behind a partner's waist, around the other boy's neck—they could be slow dancing at the USO. Who they are is irrelevant, and what they wear serves only to punctuate the significance of their kiss: with heads cocked and eyes closed, prominent profiles display their concerted embrace, perhaps the ecstasy of a lover's emotional return from war. Absent an enlivened background, the sailors' kiss appears a studio pose, but provenance is not necessary to convey, nor does the contrivance of portraiture belie, what passionate lips say for themselves. Culture and politics are fused in this unyielding performance, represented and reiterated by those kissing on city streets with this image emblazoned on their chests, a beacon and battle plan for a queer world.

Gran Fury recast in explicit political fashion the declaration enacted in this vintage photograph of same-sex kissing by appending a banner across the center of the image: “READ MY LIPS.” Reconfigured by the imperative voice, launched into public space, the photograph offered, in both word and deed, historically and presently, a direct

challenge to heteronormativity. Meyer observes, “In *Read My Lips* . . . the representation of same-sex desire becomes an act of defiance because it is projected, with style and activist bravado, into the public sphere.”⁵⁷ Its queer agenda, richly unfolding visually and epigrammatically before the gaze of a captivated, if not captive, spectator (who can resist the spectacle of the queer kiss?), was articulated by the fact-sheet handed out at the kiss-in, entitled “WHY WE KISS”:

- **We kiss** in an aggressive demonstration of affection.
- **We kiss** to protest the cruel and painful bigotry that affects the lives of lesbians and gay men.
- **We kiss** so that all who see us will be forced to confront their own homophobia.
- **We kiss** to challenge repressive conventions that prohibit displays of love between persons of the same sex.
- **We kiss** as an affirmation of our feelings, our desires, ourselves.⁵⁸

We might add another. Wheat-pasted as it was throughout the cityscape, with its emphatic banner both highlighting the patriotic and conscribing its audience, *Read My Lips* is a *queer recruitment poster*. It is not an entreaty—please take us—but rather an unequivocal declaration: we want you!

As *Read My Lips* exhibits, osculatory resistance ratchets up the intensity and stakes of “in your face” counterpolitics by its insistence on the centrality of the kiss, inscribing publicly the erotic abandon of mutual queer desire at the very moment matching lips touch. Shame, chief among the homophobic disciplinary arsenal, has been flouted, if not destroyed, by brazenly performing *flagrante delicto*. Shame, too long kindling in the foundation of the closet, now infused by defiant heat and a public airing, becomes the chief fuel in a symbolic inversion of blazing criminality. Foremost, this inversion is an undomesticated public enactment of one’s sexual difference, a declaration of the fundamental rightness of open erotic expression. There is no more visceral political manifesto.

In its transgressive occupation, violation of trenchant taboo, and inducement to expose erotophobia and homophobia, Kevin DeLuca argues, the queer kiss “turns the normalized terrain of heterosexuality into an alien landscape.”⁵⁹ The ideological Richter scale registers queer kissing’s tumultuous destabilization of the very grounding of the heteronormative order by making a spectacle of the invisible apparatus binding power, desire, and identity—displaying, in other words, “how thoroughly the local experience of the body is framed by laws, policies, and social customs regulating sexuality.”⁶⁰ Familiar gestures instantiating heteronormativity by means of “proper public expression, loyal self-censorship, and personal discipline” now threaten to turn akimbo.⁶¹ One’s own lips might not be trusted absent such reiterative assurance and libidinous constraint.

In envisioning the transference of this activist perspective into the mainstream, it is imperative to recognize with Berlant and Warner that “the heteronormativity of US culture is not something that can be easily rezoned or disavowed by individual acts of will, by a subversiveness imagined only as personal rather than as the basis of

public-formation.”⁶² Rather than simply hoping for a world in which all “private acts” between adults are allowed, or in which same-sex public kissing is merely more acceptable, we espouse, as do Berlant and Warner, a “world making project” in which mass-mediated representations articulate sexuality differently, queering readings of all forms of intimacy and their public connections. In order to achieve a queer world, a “critical visual mass” of same-sex public kissing must exist, a rhetorical project that influences the meanings articulated by those acts. This entails not the incidental or domesticated man-on-man kiss (dis)located within an assimilationist and incremental logic of gay cultural visibility, but a politically robust calculation of representation in queer measures, in queer time. Such a calculation is articulated not by Max Mutchnick, co-creator of *Will & Grace*, who argues that “these gay shows are a reflection of what everyone sees now in their jobs, in their families, in their schools,” but rather by Russell T. Davies, creator of the original *Queer as Folk* for British *public* television:

I recently got satellite television, and as I flicked through the 500 channels I was stopped by the image of Brian and Justin kissing on the American *Queer as Folk*. I thought, My God, that’s not just two men kissing. It’s two men I helped to create kissing. I was so pleased that it existed, because no matter how much we say there’s more gay representation than before, it’s still a wasteland. I hope the show runs and runs and runs.⁶³

It is this reiterated sexual disruption, understood tactically and kairotically, that makes “Read My Lips” an enormously powerful queer mantra.

Disciplining Queer Kisses

“Read My Lips” as a queer world-making project is currently hampered by the apolitical, incremental, and assimilationist perspective adopted by gay and lesbian cultural agents. More dangerously, representations of queer kissing typically cause moral panic, conceived and disseminated in political as well as cultural terms, providing instant rationales and motivation for disciplinary action deployed to protect heteronormativity. Phillip Brian Harper observes, “Given this potential of the same-sex kiss to bespeak a homosexual identity for the persons who engage in it—and the threat to social status that such an identity generally constitutes—it is not surprising that extensive cultural safeguards have been constructed to short-circuit that potential in the contexts where such a kiss is likely to occur.”⁶⁴

In his classic ideological analysis, Goren Therborn suggests that when public behavior runs counter to dominant expectations, practitioners of this behavior meet with a variety of ideological, physical, and economic forms of discipline.⁶⁵ For example, two men kissing in public have often suffered verbal or physical bashing, meted out by those who find such behavior threatening. Or, a film or advertiser may lose revenue as people decide to stay away from representations they deem offensive. Or, an actor obligated to kiss another man might disavow it, fearing damage to his professional future. Or queers, in a homophobic manifestation of realpolitik, police themselves to avoid any of these described scenarios.

One of the most common justifications for disciplinary practices is that same-sex kissing should be sequestered in order to protect children, implying that the kiss, especially performed by two men, is an affront to public morals, a prelude to molestation, or an act that persuasively “converts” or “recruits” children to homosexuality. For example, in a letter to the *L.A. Times* protesting a gay pride event, Cory Sheppard wrote, “It is up to all concerned heterosexuals to voice their opposition to the dangerously momentous surge of homosexual visibility. . . . It is only by keeping sexual perversities in the closet that our children have a chance at leading the kind of lives that we intend for them.”⁶⁶ Sheppard explicitly claimed “little Jimmy” will be induced to experiment “with the neighbor’s boy because he saw two men kissing in the park.”⁶⁷ Similarly, after the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* published a story about same-sex kissing on television, letters to the editor complained: “My kids get the paper first. Guess I’ll have to hide it from now on”; “Why should we have to screen the newspaper for our children?”; “We’re trying to get young people to read the paper. Isn’t it enough to have it on TV!”⁶⁸

In addition to panicked moral framing of the “sexual nature” of same-sex kissing as a threat to children, its representation is also disciplined through legislation and economics. In 1990, the Illinois State Legislature debated a bill that sought to prohibit all billboards that depicted same-sex kissing.⁶⁹ According to Meyer, the bill emerged after Gran Fury received permission to display posters labeled “Kissing Doesn’t Kill,” which included pictures of three kissing couples—two of them same-sex couples—accompanied by a text that discussed the politics of AIDS research. When amfAR (The American Foundation for AIDS Research) asked Gran Fury to remove the accompanying text, only the images with the words “Kissing Doesn’t Kill” were posted on buses and billboards in Chicago.⁷⁰ Without the accompanying texts, many people evidently read the ad as “advocacy” for homosexuality. Chicago City Aldermen argued that the posters had nothing to do with AIDS: “It has something to do with a particular lifestyle, and I don’t think that is what the CTA (Chicago Transit Authority) should be in the business of promoting.”⁷¹ The bill passed the Illinois State Senate and was only defeated after heavy lobbying in the House.

Man-on-man kissing has also repeatedly met with economic discipline. Observing that one male actor left the cast of *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* rather than kiss another man, and that Harvey Fierstein had sought legal action against New Line Cinema when it attempted to cut a same-sex kiss from *Torch Song Trilogy* in order to sell it to television, Otis Stuart argued that “the problem, if not the reason, is the bottom line of a big-bucks industry.”⁷² Fox justified the erasure of the highly anticipated and controversial 1994 *Melrose Place* season finale male kiss by claiming, “We’re in a business. . . . We’d have lost up to a million dollars by airing that kiss.”⁷³ In 2004, the *Star Tribune* implicitly conveyed a similar motive when it refused to run an ad for Gay Pride that featured two men kissing, despite activists’ claims that the paper runs such images of opposite sex couples.⁷⁴

Even queer-friendly commercial media, cognizant of the limits of “tolerance” and the fragile link between projected public image and revenue, carefully police the type of sex that sells. Katherine Sender argues that

marketers (and others who seek “positive images” of lesbians and gays) are particularly invested in a desexualized image of gayness to compensate for the fact that both queer and commercial forms of sexuality occur outside the charmed circle. Since an openly homosexual identity already puts gay and lesbian people on the outer limits, conforming to the inner circle in other respects—practicing monogamous, coupled, noncommercial, at-home, private, same-generation, vanilla sex—may recoup some moral capital for them, potentially gaining them broader social acceptance, access to economic and other resources, and protection from harassment.⁷⁵

Most often, same-sex kissing, however “normative” we might think it to be, is out of bounds.

Miller Brewing, for instance, which has embraced the “gay market” with a variety of gay-themed ads running in both queer and mainstream commercial locations, demonstrated how narrowly such boundaries must be drawn. In its 2001 Miller Lite commercial “Switcheroo,” depicting flirtatious women sending a beer to a handsome man only to discover him holding hands with his boyfriend, an alternative ending with a man-on-man kiss was considered out of the question. Senior brand manager Tim McDougall claimed that, “In all of our ads, we’re trying to get attention. But we don’t want to shock people. One of our main messages is to be inclusive. We tested [Switcheroo] with all our consumers and felt no need to treat it special, or to bury or hide it. . . . We’ve gotten very positive feedback from people who like that the ad is not making judgments about gay people.” That success, McDougall made clear, is contingent upon certain proscriptions: “We thought the kiss ending overshadowed the message and became shocking and sensational. We wanted to show the men in as normal a light as possible.”⁷⁶ Sender’s analysis eliminates any presumption that such caution is exclusive to the straight community.⁷⁷

Where the dollar fails to curtail queer kissing, omission or disavowal constrains, distorts, or destroys such representation. Jeffrey Epstein wrote of the film *Murder By Numbers*, “Far more fascinating is the relationship between [Michael] Pitt’s and [Ryan] Gosling’s characters, which in several instances is so homoerotic, someone sitting next to me murmured, ‘Would they just kiss and get it over with.’”⁷⁸ But the kiss, however much anticipated, never came. In films daring enough to exhibit men kissing, extra-textual interviews often reveal the labor expended to assure the public that it was indeed “only an act.” Reflecting on his kiss with James Van Der Beek in *The Rules of Attraction*, Ian Somerhalder pronounced in *OUT*,

We knew that it [the kiss] was an opportunity to do something that was very different and fuck with people, frankly. . . . We totally talked about it before, and the first thing we said is no tongue—definitely no tongue. . . . I have this crazy newfound respect for women. I don’t ever plan on kissing a guy again, because it’s so fucking scratchy.⁷⁹

Similarly, in a *Los Angeles Times* article focusing on his kiss with Jonathan Walker in *Far from Heaven*, Dennis Quaid claimed that it could be screened because viewers knew that he was a committed heterosexual in his off-screen life. Although Quaid may not have meant to sound homophobic, he reasoned by analogy that his ability to

kiss a man on film is “like Nixon going to China. He was so staunchly anti-Communist he could go. I feel the same way. I’m a confirmed heterosexual.”⁸⁰

Finally, harassment, boycotts, and violence have also worked, if not to annihilate altogether same-sex kissing or discourses surrounding it, then to relegate it “elsewhere,” to render it invisible. In 1993, the *Seattle Times* reported that police had “harassed, searched and threatened with arrest” a gay couple who were kissing on a Capitol Hill Street. The October 1995 *Guitar* magazine cover photo depicting a kiss between Red Hot Chili Peppers Flea and Dave Navarro provoked multiple retailers to refuse to sell the issue. Dave Triller, owner of “The Only Guitar Shop,” told reporters that the photo “turned my stomach. I’m offended by two men kissing each other.”⁸¹ He added that when his son asked if the photo would be appropriate if it depicted a kiss shared by a man and a woman, he responded, “Sure, that’s normal.”⁸² In 2000, a Delta flight nearly staged an emergency landing because two men refused to cease their kissing in the back row of the plane.⁸³ An art teacher in Texas was fired in 2001 for defending a student work that depicted same-sex kissing.⁸⁴ In its worst form, prohibition is achieved through the material and symbolic effects of violence. Representation of gay bashing conveys just how little is required of queers to attract a clenched fist. HBO’s *Six Feet Under*, for instance, concluded its first season with the personal, familial, and communal paralysis (and death) that results from the savage disciplining of a hated gay kiss at an urban ATM.⁸⁵

As an extended illustration of the confluence of disciplinary impulses that are evoked by the queer kiss, we offer the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*’s “Point of View” from June 5, 2000. There, one observed a wedding photograph, much like any other in this visual genre except that it depicted gay men kissing at their reception (Figure 2).⁸⁶ Unlike other wedding photographs in the local paper, however, this innocuous nuptial embrace met with more than passing glances.

Over the next week, the *Post-Dispatch* received more than 100 letters and phone calls concerning the troublesome photograph, with a large majority critical of the paper’s decision to publish it. The reactions to the photograph reveal three predominant ideological perspectives/disciplinary strategies. First, readers framed the “general public” as both moral and heterosexual, hence, articulating gays as at once immoral and excluded from the “public interest.” Second, multiple readers argued that the picture should not have been published because the *Post-Dispatch* is accessible by children, once again constituting same-sex kissing as not only “adult material,” but also sexually persuasive. Third, the publication of a same-sex photo is repeatedly read as part of a political agenda, as opposed to the assumption that heterosexually framed photographs are natural rather than political.

A number of readers argued that the *Post-Dispatch* was working outside of “public interest” by publishing the photograph. M. Eliza Harris wrote, “I’m terribly saddened that this would be of public interest. . . . God is coming soon. I want to cry over this photograph and the idea of same-sex marriages and homosexuality.”⁸⁷ Gene Carton averred, “To show a photograph of two gay men kissing at their wedding reception exceeds the bounds of decency,”⁸⁸ and Frank Baxendale argued, “It is bad enough that the *Post-Dispatch* continues to promote such aberrant lifestyles, but two men kissing,



Figure 2.

‘wedding’ or not, is disgusting.”⁸⁹ Using dramatic imagery, Anthony Galuska concluded that “America and its morals are going to hell in a handbasket, and you are helping weave the basket. How dare you publish a picture like this. . . . God does not condone this kind of atrocity.”⁹⁰ Such comments not only align the “public interest” with heterosexuality (one could argue that such an articulation is the very definition of heteronormativity) but also articulate “public morality” with heterosexuality, leaving homosexuals, or, at the very least, homosexual acts, by definition outside of the public interest.

The editorial framing of this “wedding kiss” as an almost pornographic image, one from which children should be shielded, emerges repeatedly in letters that expressed fears that children can be, and have been, morally corrupted by this and similar representations. More than half of the nearly twenty letters published by the *Post-Dispatch* voiced concern for “children.” Bob Hawkins wrote, “Thank God, my children are too young to look at the paper,” while another reader similarly asked, “What about the example we are setting for the children?”⁹¹ Others expressed the same concern in a variety of ways: “It’s no wonder today’s kids . . . don’t know what is right and what is wrong”;⁹² “for the sake of our children, don’t make it appear that homosexuality is just another day at the office.”⁹³ Again, the panic discourse here strategically articulated the same-sex kiss as a siren call of immorality. It is not simply fear that children might see an offensive image; rather, there is a terror that such an image will beckon and corrupt the innocents.

Finally, although within the logic of “common sense” press photographs of heterosexual weddings are accepted and expected, inclusion of this photograph depicting two men kissing is not only marked as immoral but always already read as a political agenda on the part of the publisher, and a dangerous one at that. Carton argued that *Post-Dispatch* editors published the gay wedding kiss as a means of extending their “liberal politics,” and Baxendale asked, “Could not a less offensive picture have been chosen for your never-ending gay agenda?”⁹⁴ A caller to the paper protested, “I feel you are trying to force the public to accept this type of lifestyle.”⁹⁵ In each of these comments, the man-on-man kiss is “marked” as political precisely because it transgresses “common sense”: if such a photo is published, there must be a politics underwriting the marking of this aberrant wedding celebration.

In short, not only do *Post-Dispatch* readers understand or interpret the photograph as immoral, but they read homosexuality—or rather, they read a picture of two men kissing—as sexual temptation. We emphasize readers’ reactions to this photograph as a note of critical caution. Although we may read public images as texts with potential to rework articulations of sexuality, same-sex kissing, and the performance of heteronormativity, we also must remain aware that the materiality of discourse operates as a powerful disciplinary constraint on such transformations.

In each of these cases, we witness multiple ways in which ideological, economic, and physical forces function “automatically” and politically to discipline same-sex kissing, to make it absent when possible, and to punish those who make it visible. From altered scripts to financially ruined films, from harassed or beaten couples to censored images, disciplinary procedures work. Moreover, they work not only on those who offend but also on those who might think about such behavior in the future. Although examples of transgressive images of man-on-man kissing are available, we must pause from simple celebratory readings to remember that kisses “matter” differently—and evoke different responses—depending on what lips these lips have publicly kissed.

Sealed with a Kiss

As with literary and cultural criticism, our field has witnessed recent discussion of “body rhetorics” through explorations of the embodied dimensions of persuasion—by means of sharper focus on the materiality of body, how it forms and influences discourse, or an enhanced perspective on the ways in which (gendered, raced) bodies are understood rhetorically through meanings circulating in culture.⁹⁶ Given our investigation of public kissing between men, we find particularly relevant Gerard Hauser’s work on the “body in pain.”⁹⁷ Through such examples as Bobby Sand’s starvation protest and women’s narratives of sexual violence, Hauser asks us to consider how the pained body functions rhetorically: “What of the power of a body in pain to form deep and powerful identification among an audience that feels empathy for the sufferer’s anguish? In addition to the utterly private and unshared physical experience of the body’s own pain, there also are rhetorical and political dimensions to pain.”⁹⁸ Indeed, not only does the body in pain influence the ways in

which the pained subject understands her world and communicates to others, but the visible body in pain also functions rhetorically for others. Moreover, Hauser demonstrates, such rhetoric is shaped by our reading of the purposes of the pain, the gender and race of the body in pain, and the culture in which it is consumed.

In this analysis, however, our question concerns pain's rhetorical reversal in the "body in pleasure." We are not focusing specifically on the experience of pleasure (i.e., we extend beyond *plaisir* or *jouissance* as experienced) but rather on the ways in which a particular pleasurable bodily experience functions rhetorically when made public. "The queer body," Berlant and Freeman observe, "as an agent of publicity, as a unit of self-defense, and finally as a spectacle of ecstasy—becomes the locus where mainstream culture's discipline of gay citizens is written and where the pain caused by this discipline is transformed into rage and pleasure."⁹⁹ Hence, in examining rhetorically those kisses shared and enjoyed by men, we offer an entry into a rhetoric of the body in pleasure. Although those visions of bodily pleasure operate for some viewers as affirmations of identity, for others, those same bodies—precisely because they are publicly in a state of pleasure—function as a bodily challenge to a culture of heteronormativity that dominates best when expressions of intimacy between men remain hidden and private, or are domesticated and disavowed in public.

The disruptive performances we have studied in this essay—these bodies in pleasure—constitute, therefore, what Berlant and Warner call "counterintimacy," the transmission of "the critical practical knowledge that allows such relations to count as intimate, to be not empty release or transgression but a common language of self-cultivation, shared knowledge, and the exchange of inwardness."¹⁰⁰ Inverting heteronormative intimacy in this manner enacts "parasitic and fugitive elaboration" such that exposing and resisting the "material and ideological conditions that divide intimacy from history, politics and publics" contributes to "queer world making." If the desire is not only to have queers on television but to affirm a wide variety of intimacies, then critics must continue to politicize dominant images and push for a visual critical mass of queer intimacy.

In the long view, we see this project as affirming Berlant and Warner's call for a queer criticism that does not simply "destigmatize those average intimacies, not just to give access to the sentimentality of the couple for persons of the same sex, and definitely not to certify as properly private the personal lives of gays and lesbians," but rather to "support forms of affective, erotic, and personal living that are public in the sense of accessible, available to memory, and sustained through collective activity."¹⁰¹ In pursuing counterintimacy and queer world making, the critic must not only highlight the rhetorical strategies involved in representing the man-on-man public kiss as a body in pleasure but also expose the disciplinary mechanisms that strive to erase these images. To draw upon Foucault, we must see the critical readings of queer kissing as not simply explanatory but activist: "Knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting."¹⁰²

Notes

- [1] Edna St. Vincent Millay, "What Lips My Lips Have Kissed," *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1923), 71; Anonymous, *Weekly Visitor or Ladies Miscellany*, April 1803, 203, <http://www.bartleby.com/66/98/3598.html> (accessed 9 June 2003).
- [2] Bruce LaBruce, "Dudes' Smooch Leads the Way," *Eye Weekly* [Toronto], 21 February 2001, www.eye.net/eye/issue_02.01.01/columns/feelings.html (accessed 15 July 2004). For an alternative reading of LaBruce's review, see Judith Halberstam, "Dude, Where's My Gender? or, Is There Life on Uranus?" *GLQ* 10.2 (2004): 308–12.
- [3] Robert Knight, "Iraq Scandal is 'Perfect Storm' of American Culture," *WorldNetDaily*, 12 May 2004, reprinted by Concerned Women for America, <http://www.cwfa.org/articles/5663/CWA/misc/index.htm> (accessed 15 July 2004).
- [4] For our purposes here, we understand "public culture" via those mass-mediated texts with the largest audiences; as such, texts—television, newspapers, film—must necessarily reflect the "common sense" understandings of large audiences. See Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration, and California's Proposition 187* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 1–25.
- [5] We recognize that the meaning of a public kiss is far more complex than hetero or homosexual. Change the age, race, physical attractiveness, type of kissing, or number of people involved, and of course the meaning of the kiss changes. Regardless of the combinations of people involved in "public kissing," however, it functions as a nodal point that illustrates the parameters of heteronormativity.
- [6] Frank Rich, "Gay Kiss: Business as Usual," *New York Times*, 22 June 2003, Section 2, p. 1.
- [7] Otis Stuart, "No Tongues, Please—We're Queer: The Same-Sex Kiss on the New York Stage," *The Village Voice* 2 February 1993, 90.
- [8] Butler's theses have become sufficiently widespread and familiar to most readers that we offer only a brief rehearsal here. For Butler, to say that gender is "performative" is to suggest that—regardless of the physicality of gender—it is understood, or has meaning, through discourse or culturally accepted practices, including appearance, manners of speaking, occupational roles, choices of sexual partners, and so forth. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 10th Anniversary Edition (New York: Routledge, 1999), 139. Moreover, given how heavily policed gender norms are in popular culture, Butler observes, bigender heterosexual behaviors become materialized, naturalized, as if they were essential rather than contingent. Performativity, then, cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms: "This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of production." Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 95.
- [9] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 139. Two points seem important here: first, to clarify that what we, and Butler, are discussing is the appearance of heterosexuality, not its essence. It does not matter if an "actual" male and female are kissing, as long as the kissing bodies appear to be a male and female. Second, we acknowledge that there are numerous male–female kisses that exist outside of normative expectations, that even within heteronormative culture there are marked and unmarked behaviors.
- [10] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 95.
- [11] Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," in *Intimacy*, ed. Laurent Berlant, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 318.
- [12] In searching for articles over the last decade on LexisNexis and other databases, we not only found hundreds of articles focusing on different types of public kisses, but encountered

numerous discussions of the history of kissing worldwide [e.g., Frank Whelan, “Historically Speaking, A Kiss in Not Just a Kiss,” *Los Angeles Times* 12 February 1989, 24, and “Did You Know?,” *Sunday Telegraph* 27 April 1997, Local 3], expectations about future alterations in the meaning of kisses [Peter Johnson, “When a Man Greets a Man with a Kiss,” *USA Today* 18 July 1989, 1D], the absence of public kissing in China [Anthony Blass, “Culture: Goodbye to Prudery,” *Far Eastern Economic Review* 6 May 1993, 34], and Japan [Tim Easton, “A Scandalous Trend,” *The Gazette* 2 October 1994, B5, T.R. Reid, “The Puckering Stops Here,” *Washington Post* 8 November 1994, A1, “Modest Japanese Begin Kissing Off Public Prudery,” *Toronto Star* 23 December 1994, B7, Miki Tanikawa, “Japanese Young Couples Discover the Kiss,” *New York Times* 28 May 1995, 139, Cameron W. Barr, “Japan Teens Pucker Up in Public Bowing’s Out,” *Christian Science Monitor* 17 February 1998, 1], the difference between public kissing in the US and in the UK [Candida Crewe, “Kissing in Public,” *The Times* 21 February 1998, Vicky Allan, “No Public Sex Please, We’re British,” *Scotland on Sunday* 9 April 2000, 19] or Mexico [“Kissing is a Very Public Sign of the Times in Mexico City,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 12 April 1998, D5]. For an historical overview of the meanings of kissing, see Adrienne Blue, *On Kissing: From the Metaphysical to the Erotic* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1996).

- [13] Nicholas Fonseca, “They’re Here! They’re Queer! And They Don’t Like Your End Tables!” *Entertainment Weekly* 8 August 2003, 26.
- [14] Carina Chocano, “Sharper Image: Bravo’s Queer Eye Gives the Makeover-Show Genre an Edge,” *Entertainment Weekly* 8 August 2003, 62.
- [15] As Gross chronicles, there were unprecedented media representations of gays and lesbians during the 1990s, but displays of same-sex kissing were noteworthy in their absence, the camera angles that displaced and diminished them, and the contorted rationalizations offered by the executives forced to account for them. Larry Gross, *Up From Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 85–93. See also Suzanna Danuta Walters, *All the Rage: The Story of Gay Visibility in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Steven Capsuto, *Alternate Channels: The Uncensored Story of Gay and Lesbian Images on Radio and Television* (New York: Ballantine, 2000).
- [16] Stuart, “No Tongues, Please—We’re Queer,” 90.
- [17] Frank Bruni, “Culture Stays Screen-Shy of Showing the Gay Kiss,” *Detroit Free Press* 11 February 1994, reprinted in *The Columbia Reader on Lesbians & Gay Men in Media, Society, and Politics*, ed. Larry Gross & James D. Woods (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, 327; Lynn Smith, “More than Just a Kiss,” *Los Angeles Times* 10 November 2002, E1; Gary Morris, “When is a Kiss Not a Kiss?,” *Bright Lights Film Journal*, http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/20/20_queerkiss.html (accessed 11 June 2003); Gary Morris, “Billy’s Hollywood Screen Kiss,” *Bright Lights Film Journal* <http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/22/billyskiss.html> (accessed 11 June 2003).
- [18] “Fox . . . Censorship is Un-American,” GLAAD, 10 May 1994, http://www.glaad.org/publications/archive_detail.php?id=267& (accessed 9 June 2003); “Another Censored Kiss,” GLAAD, 16 May 1994, http://www.glaad.org/publications/archive_detail.php?id=265& (accessed 9 June 2003).
- [19] “Man is Dismissed Over a Game’s Gay Images,” *New York Times*, 8 December 1996, Sec. 1, 46. The game manufacturer who fired the programmer claimed to have done so due to the “insertion of unauthorized material” in the game rather than because of the content of that material. However, such “unauthorized content,” or Easter Eggs, are routinely inserted by programmers and expected by manufacturers.
- [20] Robert Bianco, “USA’s Gay ‘Tastes’ Run to Rape, But Not Kissing,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* 20 January 1997, D6.
- [21] “The Kiss that Rocked the World”, 10 October 1997, http://www.glaad.org/action/al_archive_detail.php?id=1977 (accessed 9 June 2003).

- [22] "Sandler's Big Daddy is Gay-Friendly," *GLAAD*, 17 June 1999, http://glaad.org/action/al_archive_detail.php?id=1535 (accessed 9 June 2003).
- [23] Paul Brownfield, "When a Kiss is Just a Kiss," *Los Angeles Times* 22 February 2000, F1.
- [24] Stephen Tropiano, "More Than Just a Kiss," *AlterNet.Org*, 3 June 2003, <http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=16075> (accessed 9 June 2003); Rich, "Gay Kiss."
- [25] Mike Wilke, "Commercial Closet: Gay Ads Promote MTV", 9 November 1999, <http://www.gfn.com/archives/story.phtml?sid=3621> (accessed 16 July 2003); "Language of Love," *Commercial Closet* (2000), <http://www.commercialcloset.org/cgi-bin/iowa/portrayals.html?record=474> (accessed 6 June 2003); Richard Tate, "MTV Takes a Stand," *Advocate* 9 October 2001, p. 16; Rodger Streitmatter, "Real World Depicts the Real Gay World," *Gay Today* (2002), <http://gaytoday.com/garchive/entertain/052002en.htm> (accessed 9 June 2003); Tropiano, "More Than Just a Kiss"; Lynn Elber, "Solid Crossover Appeal Bolsters 'Queer As Folk,'" *The Los Angeles Times*, 4 January 2002, F38; "Christina Aguilera to be Honored at 14th Annual GLAAD Media Awards," *GLAAD*, 28 February 2003, http://www.glaad.org/media/release_detail.php?id=3283 (accessed 9 June 2003); Steve Freiss, "Cirque du So Gay," *Advocate*, 11 November 2003, 49.
- [26] Rich, "Gay Kiss: Business as Usual," 2.
- [27] Steven Seidman, *Beyond the Closet: The Transformation of Gay and Lesbian Life* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 17.
- [28] Richard Goldstein, "Get Back! The Gathering Storm Over Gay Rights," *The Village Voice* 6–12 August 2003, <http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0332/Goldstein.php> (accessed 15 July 2004).
- [29] Walters, *All the Rage*, 15.
- [30] Jeffrey Epstein, "Gay Themes in Television," *The Hollywood Reporter* 26 March 2004, http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr/television/feature_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000473838 (accessed 15 July 2004).
- [31] Patrick Pacheco, "The Sound of Two Men Kissing Outlandish," *Los Angeles Times* 30 July 1995, 24.
- [32] For an argument concerning the benefits of remaining "unmarked," see Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
- [33] Walters, *All the Rage*, 24.
- [34] John Fiske and John Hartley, *Reading Television* (New York: Methuen, 1978); Celeste Michelle Condit, "The Rhetorical Limits of Polysemy," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (1989): 112.
- [35] Helene A. Shugart, "Reinventing Privilege: The New (Gay) Man in Contemporary Popular Media," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20 (March 2003): 67–91. For further discussion of heteronormative dilution, displacement, and distortion of queer mediated representation, see Kathleen Battles and Wendy Hilton-Morrow, "Gay Characters in Conventional Spaces: Will and Grace and the Situation Comedy Genre," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19 (2002): 87–105; Robert Alan Brookey and Robert Westerfelhaus, "Pistols and Petticoats, Piety and Purity: To Wong Foo, the Queering of the American Monomyth, and the Marginalizing Discourse of Deification," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18 (2001): 141–56; Bonnie J. Dow, "Ellen, television, and the Politics of Gay and Lesbian Visibility," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18 (2001): 123–40; John M. Sloop, *Disciplining Gender: Rhetorics of Sex Identity in Contemporary U.S. Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004).
- [36] Hemal Jhaveri, "Searching for a Real Gay Man," *PopPolitics* 22 October 2003, <http://www.poppolitics.com/articles/2003-10-22-gaytv.shtml> (accessed 15 July 2004).
- [37] Eric O. Clarke, *Virtuous Vice: Homoeroticism and the Public Sphere* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 29. Michael Wilke, executive director of Commercial Closet Association, similarly observes, "I call it the 'Coors Effect.' On top of everything, you have to consider the political concerns of the gay community, which historically has not only been

- ignored but a maligned group.” See Shelly Leachman, “Show Us the Love: Cable Company Ad’s Same-Sex Smooch Reflects a Trend Among Businesses Chasing the Pink Buck,” *Frontiers Newsmagazine* 19 July 2004, <http://www.frontiersnewsmagazine.com/page.cfm?typeofsite=article§ion=4&id=1149§ionid=4> (accessed 30 July 2004).
- [38] Clarke, *Virtuous Vice*, 31.
- [39] Clarke, *Virtuous Vice*, 49.
- [40] Clarke, *Virtuous Vice*, 59.
- [41] A. William Merrell, vice-president on the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, quoted in Bernard Weinraub and Jim Rutenberg, “Gay-Themed TV Gains a Wider Audience,” *New York Times* 29 July 2003, A1.
- [42] Clarke, *Virtuous Vice*, 59.
- [43] Rosen, “The Kiss That Isn’t Just a Kiss,” 28.
- [44] Terry McDermott, “All Smiles After the Kiss Commotion,” *The Los Angeles Times* 24 August 2000, B1; Monte Whaley, “Protesters Lock Lips at Boulder Kiss-In,” *The Denver Post* 24 May 2001, A1.
- [45] We emphasize that any imprimatur currently bestowed upon a kiss between women constitutes a patriarchal, sexist gesture that has nothing to do with the pleasure and desire they might experience. Such “tolerance” is, in this manifestation, perfectly compatible with homophobia and should not be misperceived as a sign of the deterioration of heteronormativity or embrace of queerness. Controversy surrounding an Atlanta radio station’s recent billboard advertisement depicting this kiss offers good evidence of our claim. See Sean Westmoreland, “From the Hub to Hollywood; Britney–Madonna Kiss Rocks VMA,” *The Boston Herald* 29 April 2003, 15; Jeanette Walls, “Atlanta Just Says No to ‘The Kiss,’” *MSNBC.Com* 20 October 2003, <http://www.msnbc.com/news/970601.asp?0cv=CB20> (accessed 15 July 2004).
- [46] Lynn Smith, “More Than Just a Kiss,” *The Los Angeles Times* 10 November 2002, E1.
- [47] For those unfamiliar with the term *kairos*, which refers to rhetorical—i.e., situationally contingent as well as strategically opportune and urgent—time and timing, see Phillip Sipiora and James S. Baumlin, ed., *Rhetoric and Kairos: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002).
- [48] Here, we extrapolate from arguments of Berlant and Warner. They suggest the importance of having geographic spaces—neighborhoods—with such a visible queer presence that a “critical mass” develops, hence giving the neighborhood a viable force as an economic and voting bloc. We are arguing that a “representational critical mass” of mediated scenes of man-on-man kissing would help provide similar argumentative force. Berlant and Warner, “Sex in Public,” 326. For earlier discussion of this issue, see Scott Tucker, “Our Right to the World: Beyond the Right to Privacy,” *Body Politic* (July/August 1982) in *The Columbia Reader on Lesbians & Gay Men in Media, Society, & Politics*, ed. Larry Gross & James D. Woods (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 575–83.
- [49] Alfred P. Kielwasser and Michelle A. Wolf, “Mainstream Television, Adolescent Homosexuality, and Significant Silence,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 9 (1992): 350–73.
- [50] Pat Califia, *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2000), 224.
- [51] William L. Leap, ed., *Public Sex/Gay Space* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
- [52] Ira Tattelman, “Speaking to the Gay Bathhouse: Communicating in Sexually Charged Spaces,” in *Public Sex/Gay Space*, ed. William L. Leap (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 73.
- [53] Califia, *Public Sex*, 7.
- [54] Richard Meyer, “This is to Enrage You: Gran Fury and the Graphics of AIDS Activism,” *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995): 51–83. For other discussions of “Kissing Doesn’t Kill,” see Paul Nonnekes, “Kiss-In at the Heterosexual Bar as Dialectical Image,” *Dianoia* (Spring 1992), 76–78; Kevin Michael Deluca, “Unruly

- Arguments: The Body Rhetoric of Earth First!, ACT UP, and Queer Nation,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* (1999): 9–21.
- [55] Bruni, “Culture Stays Screen-Shy,” 328.
- [56] Meyer, “This Is to Enrage You,” 66–69; Douglas Crimp and Adam Rolston, *AIDS Demo Graphics* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1990), 53–69.
- [57] Meyer, “This Is to Enrage You,” 68.
- [58] Crimp and Rolston, *AIDS Demo Graphics*, 55. Insofar as we focus broadly on representation of queer kissing, the distinction between the image “Read My Lips” and a local, performative spectacle of the kiss-in is negligible here. However, we would argue for the necessity of discursive and visual, ideographic and performative, national and local, circulation of the queer kiss.
- [59] DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments,” 18.
- [60] Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman, “Queer Nationality,” in *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 195.
- [61] Berlant and Freeman, “Queer Nationality,” 195.
- [62] Berlant and Warner, “Sex in Public,” 326.
- [63] Weinraub and Rutenberg, “Gay-Themed TV,” A1; Dennis Hensley, “Messiah Complex,” *The Advocate* 16 September 2003, 50. *Queer as Folk* in Britain offers a worthy model of the queer world-making project we describe. See Precious Williams, “MUM, I’VE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU . . .” *The Independent* 23 January 2000, 4; Libby Brooks, “Without Prejudice,” *The Guardian* 12 December 2003, 2. Whatever its shortcomings, the American version also fuses the cultural and political in largely unadulterated representation of non-normative sexuality. A key difference, of course, is that unlike with the British version, one must afford Showtime to encounter its man-on-man kissing. We also consider MTV noteworthy in this regard, invaluable in constituting queerness for a generation with its unflinching depictions of sexuality generally and kissing specifically. At the same time, we see it as reaching a limited audience, necessary but insufficient to achieve queer world making in its fullest sense.
- [64] Phillip Brian Harper, *Private Affairs: Critical Ventures in the Culture of Social Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 22.
- [65] Goran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?* (London: Verso, 1978), 174. We could of course discuss cultural discipline from a variety of perspectives. Utilizing the works of Michel Foucault or Judith Butler, for example, would have helped us provide a similar reading.
- [66] “Debate Over Gay Pride Event, Irvine Ordiance,” *Los Angeles Times* 28 May 1989, A11.
- [67] “Debate” A11.
- [68] Lou Gelfand, “For Some, Story on TV Kissing Crossed the Line,” *Star Tribune* 16 February 2003, 5A.
- [69] David Olson, “Read Their Lips,” *The Village Voice* 24 July 1990, 14.
- [70] We want to highlight that amfAR wanted the text removed because, as worded, it would hurt their corporate sponsorship. Hence, this very request was a form of “financial discipline.” The text read: “Corporate Greed, Government Inaction, and Public Indifference Make AIDS a Political Crisis.” Meyer, “This Is to Enrage You,” 52–53.
- [71] Meyer, “This Is to Enrage You,” 57.
- [72] Stuart, “No Tongues, Please,” 90.
- [73] Gross, *Up From Visibility*, 91. Economic pressures have long worked against representations of same-sex kisses on television. CBS did not show a gay couple kissing at their wedding ceremony on *Northern Exposure* due to such pressures. HBO cut a kissing scene between Ian McKellan and B. D. Wong in *And the Band Played On*. McKellan was told by an executive that “he personally had no problem with the kiss, but it was his responsibility to see to it that viewers . . . not be grossed out.” Craig Zadan has noted that “But today, you can’t make a drama on ABC, NBC (or) CBS with a story about a gay character in a TV movie—they won’t

- buy them.” “Northern Exposure to Air a Wedding Without a Kiss,” GLAAD, 29 April 1994, http://www.glaad.org/media/archive_detail.php?id=269& (accessed 9 June 2003). Gross, *Up From Visibility*, 192; Epstein, “Gay Themes in Television.”
- [74] “Newspaper Refuses to Run Ad of Two Men Kissing,” *The Advocate* 29 June 2004, http://www.advocate.com/new_news.asp?id=12930&sd=06/29/04 (accessed 15 July 2004).
- [75] Katherine Sender, “Sex Sells: Sex, Class, and Taste in Commercial Gay and Lesbian Media” *GLQ* 9.3 (2003): 355. Sender’s notion of the “charmed circle” of sex is derived from Rubin: “According to this system, sexuality is ‘good,’ ‘normal,’ and ‘natural’ should ideally be heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive, and non-commercial. It should be coupled, relational, within the same generation, and occur at home. It should not involve pornography, fetish objects, sex toys of any sort, or roles other than male or female. Any sex that violates these rules is ‘bad,’ ‘abnormal,’ or ‘unnatural.” Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality,” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 13–14.
- [76] Wilke and Applebaum, “Peering Out of the Closet.”
- [77] Sender concludes, “The dominant voices of gay and lesbian media argue that the fundamental goals of the gay rights movement should be fought within Rubin’s charmed circle. . . . Gay men and lesbians stepping outside that circle into the realm of dangerous, commercial, sleazy sexuality—whether in magazines, in stores, in theaters, or on the streets—are on their own, since the legitimate goals and principles of gay communities lie elsewhere.” Sender, “Sex Sells,” 359.
- [78] Jeffrey Epstein, “Review of Murder By Numbers,” *Out*, <http://www.out.com/filmreviews2.asp?ID=1192> (accessed 15 July 2004).
- [79] Peter Gehrke, “Physical Attraction,” *OUT*, September 2002, 83.
- [80] Lynn Smith, “More Than Just a Kiss,” E1.
- [81] Steve Hochman, “Peppers’ Peck Stirs Bushels of Controversy,” *Los Angeles Times* 7 September 1995, A1.
- [82] Hochman, “Peppers’ Peck,” A1.
- [83] Will O’Bryan, “The Plane Truth: Airlines Take Note of a Community,” *The Washington Blade* 31 (2000): 59–60.
- [84] Barbara Dozetos, “Teacher Sues Over Censorship of Gay Image,” *PlanetOut.Com* 10 July 2001, <http://www.planetout.com/news/article.html?2001/07/10/3> (accessed 16 September 2003).
- [85] As in each episode during the first season, an opening death scene shapes a theme or plot line. Some are absurd, this one wrenching: twenty-something boyfriends stand at a Los Angeles ATM at night, playfully bantering; one boy clasps his arms around Marcus Foster’s waist, sweetly kissing his neck. Loud music announces the arrival of car, out of which two similarly aged men leap and aggressively approach the couple. One of the men yells, “What the fuck is that shit?” The other screams, “Do you think you can do that kind of offensive shit like that in public?” Fearful apologies ensue, as does an attempt by the gay couple to escape the beating that has begun. Marcus Foster stumbles, falls, and is beaten to death in an empty lot. Throughout this and the following episode, Foster’s violent death haunts (bodily, in some scenes) his parents and especially protagonist David, for whom the very legitimacy of his sexuality is shaken to its core. “A Private Life” (Episode 12, 2001), *Six Feet Under*, http://www.hbo.com/sixfeetunder/episode/season1/sea1_eps12.shtml (accessed 15 July 2004).
- [86] The caption under the photograph explained the context.
- [87] M. Eliza Harris, “Letter to the Editor,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 7 June 2000, B6.
- [88] Gene Carton, “Letter to the Editor,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 7 June 2000, B6.
- [89] Frank Baxendale, “Letter to the Editor,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 7 June 2000, B6.
- [90] Anthony Galuska, “Letter to the Editor,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 10 June 2000, B5.

- [91] Bob Hawkins, "Letter to the Editor," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 7 June 2000, B6.
- [92] Galuska, "Letter to the Editor," B5.
- [93] Thomas V. Wright, "Letter to the Editor," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 7 June 2000, B5.
- [94] Hawkins, "Letter to the Editor," B6.
- [95] Cited in Carolyn Kingcade, "The Complete Picture Sometimes Can Be More Than Readers Want," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 11 June 2000, B4.
- [96] See, for example, Carole Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places," *Western Journal of Communication* 65 (2001): 271–94; Gerard A. Hauser, "Body Rhetoric: Conflicted Reporting of Bodies in Pain," in *Deliberation, Democracy, and the Media*, ed. Simone Chambers and Anne Costain (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 135–153; Raymie E. McKerrow, "Corporeality and Cultural Rhetoric: A Site for Rhetoric's Future," *Southern Communication Journal* 63 (1998): 315–29; Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley, ed., *Rhetorical Bodies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999).
- [97] Hauser, "Body Rhetoric," 135.
- [98] Hauser, "Body Rhetoric," 135.
- [99] Berlant and Freeman, "Queer Nationality," 205.
- [100] Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public," 325.
- [101] Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public," 326.
- [102] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 88.