

UC Riverside

UC Riverside Previously Published Works

Title

Between Friends

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55j8m3zw>

ISBN

9781405113298

Author

Doyle, Jennifer

Publication Date

2007-08-24

DOI

10.1002/9780470690864.ch17

Peer reviewed

Advisory editor: David Theo Goldberg, University of California, Irvine

This series provides theoretically ambitious but accessible volumes devoted to the major fields and subfields within cultural studies, whether as single disciplines (film studies) inspired and reconfigured by interventionist cultural studies approaches, or from broad interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives (gender studies, race and ethnic studies, postcolonial studies). Each volume sets out to ground and orientate the student through a broad range of specially commissioned articles and also to provide the more experienced scholar and teacher with a convenient and comprehensive overview of the latest trends and critical directions. An overarching *Companion to Cultural Studies* will map the territory as a whole.

- 1 A Companion to Film Theory
Edited by Toby Miller and Robert Stam
- 2 A Companion to Postcolonial Studies
Edited by Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray
- 3 A Companion to Cultural Studies
Edited by Toby Miller
- 4 A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies
Edited by David Theo Goldberg and John Solomos
- 5 A Companion to Art Theory
Edited by Paul Smith and Carolyn Wilde
- 6 A Companion to Media Studies
Edited by Angharad Valdivia
- 7 A Companion to Literature and Film
Edited by Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo
- 8 A Companion to Gender Studies
Edited by Philomena Essed, David Theo Goldberg, and Audrey Kobayashi
- 9 A Companion to Asian American Studies
Edited by Kent A. Ono
- 10 A Companion to Television
Edited by Janet Wasko
- 11 A Companion to African American Studies
Edited by Lewis R. Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon
- 12 A Companion to Museum Studies
Edited by Sharon Macdonald
- 13 A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies
Edited by George E. Haggerty and Molly McGarry

Forthcoming

- 14 A Companion to Latina/o Studies
Edited by Juan Flores and Renato Rosaldo

A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies

*Edited by George E. Haggerty and
Molly McGarry*

A C
Le:
Bis
Tra
Qu
Edit
and

A C
Tra:
first
disc
dev

The
sch
Rec
of
ess
sch
ecr
of
fur
se:
dc
di
di
pr

**A Companion
Lesbian
Bisexual
Transgender
Queer**

Edited by **George E. Haggerty
and Molly McGarry**

*A Companion
Transgender, a
first single-volume
discussions taking
developing are*

The *Companion* scholarship on
Recognizing the
of the field, the
essays by established
scholars, address
economics, history
of sexuality. The
futures of queer
sexuality stands
does, and how
discussions in various
disciplines as well
politics.

© 2007 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd

BLACKWELL PUBLISHING
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK
550 Swanston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

The right of George E. Haggerty and Molly McGarry to be identified as the Authors of the Editorial Material in this Work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

First published 2007 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd

1 2007

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A companion to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer studies / edited by George E. Haggerty and Molly McGarry.

p. cm. — (Blackwell companions in cultural studies)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4051-1329-8 (hardcover: alk. paper) 1. Gay and lesbian studies. 2. Sexual minorities. I. Haggerty, George E. II. McGarry, Molly.

HQ75.15.C66 2007
306.76'6—dc22

2007010756

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Set in 10.5 on 12.5 pt Ehrhardt and Frutiger
by The Running Head Limited, Cambridge, www.therunninghead.com
Printed and bound in Singapore
by Markono Print Media Pte Ltd

The publisher's policy is to use permanent paper from mills that operate a sustainable forestry policy, and which has been manufactured from pulp processed using acid-free and elementary chlorine-free practices. Furthermore, the publisher ensures that the text paper and cover board used have met acceptable environmental accreditation standards.

For further information on
Blackwell Publishing, visit our website:
www.blackwellpublishing.com

Contents

List of Illustrations	ix
List of Contributors	xi
Acknowledgments	xvii

Introduction	1
<i>Molly McGarry and George E. Haggerty</i>	

PART I	QUEER POLITICS IN THE TIME OF WAR AND SHOPPING OR WHY SEX? WHY NOW?	15
--------	--	----

1 Sex, Secularism, and the "War on Terrorism": The Role of Sexuality in Multi-Issue Organizing	17
<i>Janet R. Jakobsen</i>	
2 Freedom and the Racialization of Intimacy: <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> and the Emergence of Queer Liberalism	38
<i>David L. Eng</i>	
3 "No Atheists in the Fox Hole": Toward a Radical Queer Politics in a Post-9/11 World	60
<i>Sharon P. Holland</i>	
4 Queer Love in the Time of War and Shopping	77
<i>Martin F. Manalansan IV</i>	
5 Who Needs Civil Liberties?	87
<i>Richard Meyer</i>	

A
L
B
T
Q
Ed
an

A
Tra
firs
dis
dev

The
sch
Rec
of
essi
sch
eco
of s
futt
sex
doe
disc
disc
polit

Contents

PART II HISTORIES, GENEALOGIES, AND FUTURITIES

- 6 The Relevance of Race for the Study of Sexuality
Roderick A. Ferguson 107
- 7 The Present Future of Lesbian Historiography
Valerie Traub 109
- 8 Deviant Teaching
David M. Halperin 124
- 9 After Sontag: Future Notes on Camp
Ann Pellegrini 146
- 10 Queer Spectrality: Haunting the Past
Carla Freccero 168

PART III DESIRE FOR GENDER

- 11 The Desire for Gender
Robyn Wiegman 194
- 12 Methodologies of Trans Resistance
Dean Spade 215
- 13 The History of Aphallia and the Intersexual Challenge to Sex/Gender
Vernon A. Rosario 217
- 14 Gesture and Utterance: Fragments from a Butch-Femme Archive
Juana María Rodríguez 237

PART IV QUEER BELONGINGS

- 15 Queer Belongings: Kinship Theory and Queer Theory
Elizabeth Freeman 262
- 16 Forgetting Family: Queer Alternatives to Oedipal Relations
Judith Halberstam 282
- 17 Between Friends
Jennifer Doyle 293

- 18 Queer Regions: Locating Lesbians in *Sancharram*
Gayatri Gopinath 341
- 19 The Light That Never Goes Out: Butch Intimacies and Sub-Urban Sociabilities in "Lesser Los Angeles"
Karen Tongson 355

PART V PERFORMING THEORY OR THEORY IN MEDIAS RES

- 20 "Serious Innovation": An Interview with Judith Butler
Jordana Rosenberg 377
- 21 Materiality, Pedagogy, and the Limits of Queer Visibility
Amy Villarejo 379
- 22 *Melos, Telos, and Me*: Transpositions of Identity in the Rock Musical
James Tobias 389
- 23 Promising Complicities: On the Sex, Race, and Globalization Project
Miranda Joseph and David Rubin 404
- 24 Queerness as Horizon: Utopian Hermeneutics in the Face of Gay Pragmatism
José Esteban Muñoz 430
- Index 465

- 2 See for example Roger Ebert, "March of the Penguins," *Chicago Sun-Times*, July 8, 2005; and Stephen Holden, "The Lives and Loves (Perhaps) of Emperor Penguins," *The New York Times*, June 24, 2005. Holden writes: "Although 'March of the Penguins' stops mercifully short of trying to make us identify with the hardships overcome by a single penguin family, it conveys an intimate sense of the life of the emperor penguin. But love? I don't think so."
- 3 For an article that details the response of the Christian Right to the film, see David Smith, "How the Penguins' Life Story Inspired the US Religious Right," *The Observer* (Sunday, September 18, 2005).
- 4 Lisa Duggan and Richard Kim, "Beyond Gay Marriage," *The Nation*, July 18, 2005, 25.
- 5 See Esther Newton, "My Best Informant's Dress" in *Out in the Field: Reflections of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists*, eds. Ellen Lewin and Bill Leap (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996): 212–35; Kath Weston, "Forever Is a Long Time: Romancing the Real in Gay Kinship Ideologies," in *Long Slow Burn: Sexuality and Social Science* (New York: Routledge, 1998): 57–82; Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975): 157–210; David Eng, "Transnational Adoption and Queer Diasporas," *Social Text* 21: 3 76 (Fall 2003): 1–37; Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
- 6 Kera Bolonik, "Not Your Mother's Lesbians," *New York Magazine*, January 12, 2004, online edition: http://nymag.com/nymetro/news/features/n_9708: p. 1
- 7 Ariel Levy, "Where the Bois Are," *New York Magazine*, January 12, 2004, 24–8.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Influential new work on queer temporality includes Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Elizabeth Freeman, "Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations," *NLH* 31/4:6 (2000): 727–44; and the essays in Robyn Wiegman, ed. *Women's Studies on Its Own: A Next Wave Reader on Institutional Change* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).
- 11 Eve Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading, Reparative Reading," in *Touching, Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003): 147.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 J. K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (London: Blackwell, 1996).
- 14 Roderick Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Towards a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).
- 15 Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).
- 16 This film is just one of a whole slew of "forgetting" films like *Memento* (dir. Christopher Nolan, 2000) and *The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (dir. Michel Gondry, 2004). But the earnest "forgetful films are too quick to make forgetting into the loss the individuality." I am interested in what forgetting enables not what it blocks.
- 17 Noe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004): 3.
- 18 J. K. Gibson-Graham, "Strategies," from *The End of Capitalism (as we knew it): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996): 1–23.
- 19 Joan Roughgarden, *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender and Sexuality in Nature and People* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

Between Friends

Jennifer Doyle

"Let us cease speaking of friendship, of the *eidos* of friendship," Derrida writes, "let us speak of friends."¹ Writing friendship as a category with specific attributes, he implies, works against the recognition of particular friends – thinking categorically irons out the texture of friendships themselves. The philosophical discourse that Derrida explores in *The Politics of Friendship* often deploys friendship to shore up borders between an "us" and a "them" and is furthermore constricted by the tenacious opposition of "eros and philia."² The effect of these oppositions on our thinking about intimacy is at the heart of my subject here: queer friendships between men and women as a form of attachment that can disturb both the presumption of an "us" and a "them" and the opposition of desire and friendship. Interestingly, in the work of the philosophers explored by Derrida, women are the others against whom friends take shape. Thus, he writes, philosophical writing on friendship is carved out against the "double exclusion of the feminine, the exclusion of friendship between a man and a woman and the exclusion of friendship *between* women."³ These two exclusions from friendship have their stories – but these two stories are linked by the problem of the feminine.⁴ Traditional philosophy dismisses the second sex as incapable of friendship for their subordination to love. Friendships with women, Montaigne explains, are theoretically possible, but "the ordinary capacity of women is inadequate for that communion and fellowship which is the nurse of that sacred bond; nor does their soul seem firm enough to endure the strain of so tight and durable a knot."⁵ "She is at once tyrant and slave," Derrida writes (paraphrasing Nietzsche's Zarathustra), "and that is why she (still) remains incapable of friendship. She knows only love."⁶ Friendship with women is impossible, it seems, because women want not friends, but lovers. Love here is understood as a feverish erotic attachment, as fundamentally hierarchical (in the overestimation of the love object, for example) and is therefore set in opposition to the more egalitarian model of brotherhood – which provides friendship's background. Derrida ruminates on what it might mean to think outside of these phallogocentric structures of belonging – implicitly, for him, it means to find more "brothers" in the world. He writes, "I have more than one 'brother' of more than one sex, and I love having more than one, each time unique, of whom and to whom, in more than one language, across quite a few boundaries, I am bound by a conjuration and so many unuttered oaths."⁷

One might counter that there is already a world out there of “sisters” – in important ways, the distinction between *eros* and *philia* more powerfully structures homosocial discourse about men’s relationships to each other. Discourse on women, desire, and friendship is differently articulated. The term “sister,” as a term of endearment, a mode of address, has long been unmoored from gender in gay circles. We might even find a silver lining to the overdetermined association of women with love in the history of sexuality, in which categories like “companions,” “roommates,” “friends,” and “lovers” expand and bleed into one another to shape what Adrienne Rich once imagined as a “lesbian continuum.”⁸ Certainly Rich’s gesture in her writing at that time marks a powerful instance by which the distinction between filiation and erotic attachment has been deliberately refused to a political, and feminist, end.

“A book on radical feminism that did not deal with love would be a political failure.” So writes Shulamith Firestone in *The Dialectic of Sex*. Love, she contends, “perhaps even more than childbearing, is the pivot of women’s oppression today.”⁹ This proposal runs against some of the intuitions of mainstream feminism and leads more toward the insights of queer scholarship on friendship, romantic intimacy, and the political importance of nurturing forms of relationality outside domestic and patriarchal structures. The problem, Firestone suggests, isn’t sex (as noun or verb), but everything that surrounds it.

This essay explores three friendships between men and women in order to ask how they push against the pressures of heteronormative ways of being; in order to ask, in other words, how they push us to consider not the importance and complexity of sex, but everything else that surrounds it. Belonging not quite to straight culture, not quite to gay and lesbian culture (although certainly more at home in the latter than the former), such friendships, at their best, indicate both the fragility and the tenacity of queer modes of being.

A Fictional Couple: Lily and Selden

Lily Bart’s demise can be traced back to an impulse. At the opening of Edith Wharton’s *The House of Mirth* (1905), the novel’s heroine runs into her friend Selden at Grand Central Station and decides to go back to his apartment for conversation and a cup of tea. His invitation at the least spares her the awkwardness of finding herself alone with two hours to kill waiting for her train. The sequence of events that, over the course of Wharton’s story, leads to Lily’s fall from social grace and to her suicidal collapse begins with her spontaneous acceptance of this invitation from a friend. Later, on her way out of his apartment, she runs into social climber Sim Rosedale, who happens to own the building. She snubs him (an anti-Semitic reflex) and in the process makes up a story explaining her presence at this building, lest he think she was up to anything as untoward as meeting a bachelor alone in his apartment. As she conjures up a fictional seamstress at that address, she realizes that he knows she is lying, and that she will have to pay for this – for the impulse, for the snub implied in the lie, for the failure to have grasped the pleasure Rosedale would have taken from being in her confidence, for her failure to calculate in advance what this meeting with Selden will cost her. “Why must a girl pay so dearly for her least escape from routine?” she

asks herself. “Why could one never do a natural thing without having to screen it behind a structure of artifice.”¹⁰ Nearly all the misfortune heaped upon her over the course of the novel can be traced back to this double mis-step: meeting Selden in his apartment alone, and then failing to recognize in Sim Rosedale not an enemy, but a potential ally. Rosedale will share his bit of gossip about Lily with Gus Trenor (husband to one of her friends). Trenor will, under the guise of investing a little of Lily’s money, put her in his debt with the expectation that she will pay him back not with dollars, but with sexual attention. As she attempts to navigate Trenor’s misreading of her character, he flings the following at her: “Gad, you go to men’s houses fast enough in broad daylight – strikes me you’re not always so deuced careful about appearances.” Mortified, Lily realizes that “Rosedale had spoken then – this was how men talked of her.”¹¹ She realizes that, in essence, she is little more than a salacious bit of gossip confirming friendship between the men who give and receive information about both her value and her virtue. Lily, who has been lured to the Trenors’ home at an awkward hour under false pretenses, manages her escape; Selden, however, catches sight of her as she makes her exit and, ironically, assumes the worst.

It is possible to read Wharton’s novel not as a melodrama about the failure of a romantic couple (Lily and Selden) to couple, but as a painful meditation on the restrictions that handicap friendships between men and women. Romantic expectations held in place by patriarchal convention dwarf such ties and contort what might have been complex and fleshy friendships into stunted forms of intimacy. Elaine Showalter suggests as much when she reads Selden as not quite the “New Man” he ought to be, and Lily as a similarly aborted version of the “New Woman.”¹² Both are unable to reconcile themselves with or free themselves from convention, and so their intimacy becomes frozen with ambivalence. The men and women of *The House of Mirth* fail each other most profoundly not as lovers but as friends. Lily herself says as much when she explains to Selden:

“Don’t you see . . . that there are men enough to say pleasant things to me, and that what I want is a friend who won’t be afraid to say disagreeable ones when I need them? Sometimes I have fancied that you might be that friend – I don’t know why, except that you are neither a prig nor a bounder, and that I shouldn’t have to pretend with you or be on my guard against you.” Her voice had dropped to a note of seriousness, and she gazed up at him with the troubled gravity of a child.

“You don’t know how much I need such a friend,” she said.¹³

If I could wish an alternative life for Lily and Selden, it would be one that might permit intimacy without the threat of marriage, a romance divorced from the imperative to reproduce. For at every moment in the novel in which these two characters come together in friendship, one or the other stumbles into a marital gesture from which both quickly retreat, and around which their friendship ultimately collapses. These proposals are particularly surprising given that Lily’s attraction to Selden is underwritten by his “detachment” from that very market, a detachment that in an only slightly different novel might make Selden read more clearly as “gay.”

Miss Bart was a keen reader of her own heart and she saw that her sudden preoccupation with Selden was due to the fact that his presence shed a new light on her surroundings

... He had preserved a certain social detachment, a happy air of viewing the show objectively, of having points of contact outside the great gilt cage in which they were all huddled for the mob to gape at. How alluring the world outside the cage appeared to Lily, as she heard its door clang on her! In reality, as she knew, the door never clanged: it stood always open; but most of the captives were like flies in a bottle, and having once flown in, could never regain their freedom. It was Selden's distinction that he had never forgotten the way out.¹⁴

What is that "cage" and "bottle" if not the trap of marital economy? One might read Lily and Selden's fondness for each other as particular to the attachments that form between some gay men and particular kinds of women – a coupling against the pressures of heteronormative structures in which mutual recognition converts not into a proposal, but into a lifeline. Within such a friendship one's sexual being is not merely acknowledged, but nourished in its full complexity.¹⁵ That said, their relationship never becomes quite *this*. With this novel, it is important to remember that Wharton never completely articulates for us the nature of their connection. When Selden appears at Lily's bedside at the novel's conclusion only to find that she has died of an overdose, he kneels over her and a word passes between them; but that word is unspoken: "He knelt by the bed and bent over her, draining their last moment to its lees; and in the silence there passed between them the word which made all clear." We might imagine that the word that passes between them is "love." Just before this melodramatic ending Selden finally takes in the full complexity of their relationship to each other, and Wharton explains,

It was this moment of love, this fleeting victory over themselves, which had kept them from atrophy and extinction; which, in her, had reached out to him in every struggle against the influence of her surroundings, and in him, had kept alive the faith that now drew him penitent and reconciled to her side.¹⁶

But, still, we can ask: What *kind* of love of this?

Perhaps Wharton's portrait of their connection has more in common with representations of queer literary couples than with representations of heterosexual romance. Geoffrey Sanborn, for example, in his essay on the friendship between Ishmael and Queequeg, writes that *Moby Dick* is

both an idealization of autonomy in friendship and an effort to use that perspective to rethink the nature of love. Rather than a warm, unifying force that makes us see our separateness as an accident or a mistake, love in *Moby Dick* is a shock that fades as rapidly as it comes, a thing that can never fully enter either our language or our identity. By stressing the reasonableness of friendship and the uncanniness of love, and by conceiving of a relationship that is an unpredictable compound of these elements, Melville points us toward a world in which human relationships neither emerge from nor justify the existing social order.¹⁷

Their friendship, writes Cesare Cesarino, "is open-ended as well as end-less: it is not oriented toward any pre-ordained *telos* and does not function according to any pre-determined rules."¹⁸ If, as Cesarino writes, Queequeg and Ishmael's friendship unfolds in the heterotopic space of the ship, a space apart from "wife" and "fireside"¹⁹ and an

open container of possibility, Lily and Selden's friendship is thwarted and, in fact, ruined, by the heterosocial space of New York, an empty "bottle" and a trap, in which a girl must "pay dearly for her least escape from routine." Over the course of the novel, Lily and Selden are increasingly alienated from one another. They never enjoy either the camaraderie or the intimacy that attends Ishmael and Queequeg's friendship. In the difference in the ecosystems of the two novels we see something of what is at stake in them – the basic conditions of possibility for friendship itself.

Joan Nestle and John Preston open a collaborative essay on friendships between lesbians and gay men with a 1964 letter written by a woman expressing gratitude for her friendship with the letter's recipient. The letter closes with the following lines: "As a person you are rare. I don't know if you realize it or not, but it is almost impossible for a girl to be a friend to a boy."²⁰ These particular friends share experiences of homophobia, of course, but her remark on how "impossible" it is to be friends with boys speaks to a larger problem, one that can alienate gay men from lesbians, just as it does men from women more generally. Received wisdom would have us imagine that friendships between men and women – and especially between gay men and straight women – are restricted by romantic burdens of expectation (in which one or both parties use the relationship to retreat from "real" romance, or in which one or both parties invests the relationship with unrealistic romantic hopes that stand in the way of friendship). It seems far more likely to me, however, that friendships between men and women (queer or not) are more often stunted by the absence of feminism than by the absence/presence of sexual desire. In fact, with a feminist ethic in place and a queer sensibility, the presence/absence of desire between friends seems less like a spoiler and more like a starting place.²¹ Nestle and Preston's essay closes with lines from a letter from the same woman to her friend Bob. Her words recall the intensity and eroticism of queer friendships: "Your magnificent letter! I kissed it and tried to think of how I could convey in words the love I feel for you. There is no way I can tell you how much I need you in my life – don't ever step out of it."²²

The "queerness" of queer friendship is surely composed of more than the sexual identities of its practitioners. As a number of people have observed, queer friendships between men and between women tend to disturb the mechanisms of homosocial cultures. Such friendships between men, for example, surface what Eve Sedgwick has described as the "coercive double bind" that structures the homosocial, in which "to be a man's man is separated only by an invisible, carefully blurred, always-already-crossed line from being 'interested in men.'"²³ In his interview "Friendship as a Way of Life," Michel Foucault furthermore considers how the experiences of marginalized (and often criminalized) sexual communities alter practices of friendship to extend an ethic of sexual generosity across one's practice of everyday life. Living outside the structuring apparatus of marriage, two men, for example,

face each other without terms of convenient words, with nothing to assure them about the meaning of the movement that carries them toward each other. They have to invent, from A to Z, a relationship that is still formless, which is friendship: that is to say, the sum of everything through which they can give each other pleasure.²⁴

In this interview, Foucault argues that homosexuality's threat to the dominant order has far less to do with the sodomitical sex act than it does with the queerness of the

forms of relationality which surround that act: "To imagine a sexual act that doesn't conform to law or nature is not what disturbs people. But that individuals are beginning to love one another – there's the problem."²⁵ This, he speculates, is why where heterosexuality is represented as a complex set of highly ritualized practices (romance, marriage, family, etc.), homosexuality is often reduced in representation to a single act (sodomy). He writes:

One of the concessions one makes to others is not to present homosexuality as anything but a kind of immediate pleasure, of two young men meeting in the street, seducing each other with a look, grabbing each other's asses and getting each other off in a quarter of an hour. There you have a kind of neat image of homosexuality without any possibility of generating unease . . . it cancels everything that can be troubling in affection, tenderness, friendship, fidelity, camaraderie, and companionship, things that our sanitized society can't allow a place for without fearing the formation of new alliances and the tying together of unforeseen lines of force. I think that's what makes homosexuality "disturbing": the homosexual mode of life, much more than the sexual act itself . . . These relations short-circuit [the institution] and introduce love where there's supposed to be only law, rule, or habit.²⁶

Foucault is speaking here of how expressions of affection and attachment between men trouble patriarchal ideology by unmasking the intense policing of intimacy between men in heteronormative culture. Threaded throughout the writings of a range of sex radicals are statements not unlike Foucault's – observations of the ways that patriarchal and heteronormative cultures shut down intimacy between men in particular and force a kind of sexual intelligence onto those whose desires are prohibited and managed out of existence by virtue of one's exile from the normal.²⁷

As the disaster of Lily and Selden's relationship indicates, queer friendships between men and women surface something else. This is in part because at first they appear as a "couple" and so rather than invent new forms of relationality, they often must first deconstruct the forms of relationality that are imposed upon them. The problem with Lily and Selden, then, is not only that they don't know how to be friends, but that they don't know how *not* to be a couple.

Poetry Lovers: Diane and Freddie

Poet Diane di Prima and dancer/choreographer Freddie Herko were famous friends. Steven Watson writes, "They had lived together, been neighbors, and shared a lover (Alan Marlow). They even staged a very private wedding, exchanging cheap silver rings before a Brancusi statue in the Museum of Modern Art."²⁸ Of their vows, di Prima remembers that "the feeling was that we would help each other out, try to take care of each other in the craziness of our lives. Wherever we went."²⁹ Di Prima published *The Freddie Poems* (1974) after Herko's death (horribly, famously, he leapt from a window in a methamphetamine-fueled jetée).³⁰ Written between 1957 and 1969, this volume tracks the shifting nature of their ties to each other. Sometimes they seem like lovers, sometimes siblings, sometimes friends. She writes, in 1959's "Poem for Roommate":

we're like an old couple
who have been married for years
most of the time I don't even dislike your lovers³¹

And, in the same year, in an untitled poem, she both distances their relationship from that of a married couple, and asserts the intensity of their romantic attachment to each other:

you do not do
what man
for woman does

you make
nothing more simple

but love
the desperate
childcourage
in your
face

grabs me like hooks
and holds me
to your side

Written before the last stage of Herko's addictions, which leave the poet worried and sounding like a mom ("yes, now you are 28, you are shooting A / you are getting evicted & there is another coldwave" ["Formal Birthday Poem: February 23, 1964"]), these poems luxuriate in that "impossible" connection between a man and woman – in which by circumventing "what man / for woman does," Herko makes love, for di Prima, "simple" and steadfast. As she hovers over this aspect of their friendship, di Prima flirts explicitly with the boundary between *eros* and *philia*:

So much of space between us two
We kiss the planets when we kiss
No closeness ever shuts this out
So much of space between us two

We kiss the planets when we kiss
And all the ether knows your hand
And dust from Saturn foils my tongue
So much black light caresses us

No closeness ever shuts this out
But mouth from shoulder, thigh from thigh
Explosive air unwinds our love
So distance holds, so love is safe (September, 1957)

If they "kiss the planets" when they kiss, the celestial space between them is in part generated by the difference of their desire – the eroticism that animates these poems is an excitement at their being not quite a couple. As she represents their mimicry of

coupling (wife and husband, mother and father, mother and son), di Prima underscores the “not quite-ness” of that mimicry – the play is in their approximation and not in the replication of coupledom.³²

A powerful wish for belonging writes itself across *The Freddie Poems* – for the poet to belong to Freddie, for Freddie to belong to the poet. As she works that wish over, di Prima invokes, dismantles, and rearticulates heterosexuality’s set-pieces: domesticity, marriage, reproduction.

Sex is often built up as intimacy’s destination, and, at the same time, friendship’s obstacle. The hyper-valuation of sex as the hallmark of intimacy and relational fulfillment, combined with the geometries of compulsory heterosexuality, produce a phobic mythology for these relationships in which women are represented as seeking out gay male friends as a “last resort” and as a poor substitute for the “real thing”³³ (thus the title to one poem, “To my husband, if it should come to that”).

In sketching the outlines of relationships between these particular friends, I have been stalling, putting off the term most often used to represent the women in these friendships: “fag hag.” As an already existing category, it places them conceptually within a model of parasitic friendship. The fag hag is an overdetermined figure, her relationship to gay culture is diagnosed as stunted, as a narcissistic refusal to submit herself to the competitive economy of heterosexual culture, as an expression of her incapacity for romantic intimacy. As a stereotype (the insecure straight woman who retreats into asexual friendships with similarly stunted homosexual men) the fag hag obscures the full range of relationships between women and gay men and, indeed, the complexity of queerness itself. She serves as a symbolic distraction – a flattened out caricature who stands in for all women, including lesbians, in queer bohemia. (The fag hag thus erases lesbian friends and lovers from the scene.) When women in gay spaces are identified as “fag hags,” their queerness may be contained and dismissed as a supplement to the “real” story: a story about the men in the scene and their relationships to each other, in which she figures merely as part of a sham romance. And so, even as I’ve on occasion turned to the term myself, as the handiest category representing the structure (if not the texture) of my relationships with gay men, I’ve done so with deep ambivalence.

Screen Partners: Viva and Warhol

The film *Blue Movie* (1968) complicates our sense of what relationships between women and men might look like in queer bohemia. It is one of the most mythologized of Andy Warhol’s films. In what is often heralded as “the first theatrical feature to actually depict intercourse,” Viva and Louis Waldron make love, talk, cook, and shower in a lazy portrait of lovers spending an afternoon “in.”³⁴ According to Viva, the idea for the film was hers. In talking with Warhol about a particularly euphoric romantic encounter, she suggested that he make a movie about it. Viva’s weekend lover refused to participate in the film – so Warhol suggested they use Louis Waldron instead. After some hesitation (about how “it wouldn’t be the same”), Viva agreed.³⁵ *Blue Movie* is the last film that Warhol ever made himself. The film was in limited commercial release during the summer of 1969, when it won acclaim and notoriety for its frank

and tender homage to sexual intimacy. That same year, the film was seized by the police and declared obscene by a panel of judges.³⁶ Warhol published a complete transcript of the four reels that make up the film, along with over one hundred stills.³⁷ Endorsed with statements from the *New York Post* like “Warhol has gall. He shows what the Swedes and Danes don’t or won’t or can’t,” *Blue Movie* (the book) is framed as a direct comment on and response to both porno culture and censorship.

The film shows both more and less than what one might expect, given its reputation. It shows “more” in that it is a fairly personal portrait of Viva and Louis Waldron, its stars. It shows “less,” in that it doesn’t actually read as pornographic. As Callie Angell notes, although the film

contains an act of intercourse, the film itself is almost a deconstruction of pornography, concentrating on the affectionate relationship between its stars and presenting what *Variety* called “the climactic scene-of-scenes” quite casually, in the middle of what is basically four long reels of talk.³⁸

Only a small fraction of the film is centered on sex – the overwhelming majority of the screen time is taken up by aimless banter, story-swapping, and a fairly lengthy discussion of politics and the war in Vietnam. (Warhol called the film his “war movie.”)³⁹ The film is surprising in its intimacy, in its attention to the delicacy of the scenario it explores – lovers spending an afternoon in, lovers who clearly know each other but aren’t really a couple. It is a strangely moving portrait of the banality of coupling (as an act, not as a destination) – and of the generosity that sometimes lies just underneath that banality. Between these friends-who-are-lovers, it is okay to be boring, lazy, and somewhat incoherent.

The film’s mythological status in Warhol studies is partly a reflection of its inaccessibility. Even for those who work on Warhol’s films and who are in the habit of using the archives in which many of them are stored and managed, *Blue Movie* has been nearly impossible to see because Viva did not want the film to be screened.⁴⁰ Until 2005, Viva had, in fact, explicitly forbidden even archival study of the film.⁴¹ In general, while Warhol/Morrissey productions like *Trash* and *Heat* are in commercial release and can be legally rented at local stores, the rest of his output is not easy to access. Bootleg DVDs of *Bike Boy*, *Beauty # 2*, and other films pop up in flea markets and bookstores – but, in general, the circulation of his film output is tightly controlled. The restricted circulation of Warhol’s films remains one of the more interesting ironies around his work. In spite of his eye for mass reproduction and the art of publicity, in making his films Warhol ignored the formality of getting talent releases from the people who appeared in them. While this is hardly uncommon for underground filmmakers, because Warhol was such a celebrity and because the Factory entourage includes some very smart, complex, and unpredictable personalities, the distribution of many of the films is hesitant. Thus the medium most associated with manufacturing celebrity, the medium that produced the Warholian “Superstar,” becomes, within the arena of Warhol studies, the hardest to access; it becomes, in a way, the most underground and private. With the strong contrast between the film’s high-profile release and its dramatic evaporation from the public sphere, *Blue Movie* is perhaps the film most impacted by this strange confluence of facts.

The fact that so many of the people who animate Warhol’s films technically have

some right to control their circulation directly affirms the work of those scholars who argue the necessity of approaching Warhol's films as collaborations and complicates the portrait of Warhol as having simply exploited those in his circle who star in them (like Edie Sedgwick, Brigid Berlin, Ondine, Joe Dallesandro, and, of course, Viva). The collaborative nature of Warhol's films is easy to acknowledge but hard to write about. Warhol studies has generally been just that: scholarship about Warhol – about his homosexuality, his effeminacy, his genius, his affect – readings that revolve in essence around the production of increasingly complex portraits of the artist. Even the affirmations of his status as a “producer” rather than the “author” especially of his films seem to reinforce Warhol's status as *auteur* rather than open up the field to scholarly consideration of the performances especially of women like Viva.⁴²

Looking at this film in particular I am struck by how powerfully it works as a document of Warhol's relationships with his friends and their relationships to each other. In many of his works we might wonder at their cruelty. “What did they get out of this?” we ask as we watch people pick on and at each other in *Chelsea Girls*, *Beauty # 2*, *Bike Boy* and *I, A Man*. Bullying dominates these films, as men and women are pitted against each other to offer campy renditions of the battle of the sexes, in which the virago nearly always triumphs.

Blue Movie, however, is entirely different in tone. Here, the “battle between the sexes” is deployed flirtatiously, teasingly. Steven Watson writes “Both the pleasure and the battle between the sexes are evident from the outset, played out in the running issue of whether or not Viva will suck Louis' cock.”⁴³ Louis brings up the question of the blow job several times over the course of the film: he begins by commenting on the last time Viva gave him a blow job, it was only to stop after a minute or two to complain about how boring it was. Watching this interaction, I was struck by how much sense Viva's decisions made to me: to go down on him in this context would have subjected Viva to a different power dynamic than that which dominates the film; at the very least, she would not have been able to talk, and talk is really what Viva does best. (She makes no analogous demands on Louis.) So, Viva evades the topic deftly, eventually taking the subject over by offering to show Louis a new technique as they shower in the last reel.

Viva: Move back . . . because I'm going to kneel down to show you the new blow job technique . . . Oh, this water is getting me wet. [*Viva kneels down, takes Louis' cock in her hands, and blows on it as though inflating a balloon.*]

Louis: [*laughs*] That's a blow job?

Viva: Yes. Isn't it fabulous?

Louis: Yeah, but it hurts a little.⁴⁴

This moment distills for us both the jokey mood of their encounter and the thing that makes this film feel distinctly feminist: the visibility of Viva's agency throughout the work. In those reels in which Warhol is behind the camera, Viva makes frequent eye contact with him and seems to coordinate the action in a dialogue of gestures exchanged between herself and his off-screen presence. Their exchange of looks places us in conspiratorial relation with the action on screen – we are enlisted, along with Warhol, as Viva's collaborators. Furthermore, in the “sex” reel (when Warhol

positioned the camera on a tripod at the foot of the bed and left the room), it is clearly Viva who directs the action. As they negotiate how they should “do it,” Viva reminds Louis of a previous encounter:

Viva: Oh. Well, be like you were the first half of the first night . . . [*she whispers something to Louis; they laugh*] Hahaha . . . let me take off your pants.

Louis: Do you think I should?

Viva: Well, certainly not if you can't get a hard-on.

Louis: Yeah, but you're going to do that. You're going to make it hard. Because you know how.

Viva: No, I'm not. I'm going to take a sunbath.

Louis: A sunbath!

Viva: Mm-hmm . . . [*Louis removes his briefs*] OOOOoooo [*pointing at his cock*] how disgusting . . . ceOOOOOO.

Louis: You don't think it's disgusting.

Viva: Right in front of this – lens! How could you do that?

Louis: You can't see anything.

Viva: Turn over. Turn over. Turn OVER.

Louis: Which way? Oh, this way?

Viva: On your hip.

Louis: Like that?

Viva: You're so – you're such an exhibitionist.

Louis: Why? What's wrong?

Viva: We don't want to see your ugly cock and balls. We just want to see . . . smooth, pure skin.

Louis: Well, who's ‘we’?

Viva: “Us.”

Louis: Me and you?

Actually, “we” is *us*: Viva and Louis, but also Warhol, and the film's audience. Viva's direction moves their bodies across the bed and the screen – with the camera at the foot of the bed, fucking in the position Louis takes at first (missionary, with feet to the camera), would have presented the spectator with a murky shot of legs and genitals. Viva's plan gives us a prettier picture of their bodies horizontal across the screen.

As the mechanics of filming sex is made visible to us, as we bear witness to the ongoing negotiations between the person behind the camera and the people in front of it, and between those people on the screen, we are invited into the film's visual and erotic scenario. Where commercial film erases the traces of its own production in the service of an abstract, objectifying, and unified gaze, Laura Marks argues that in independent and experimental films like *Blue Movie*,



Figure 17.1 “Between Friends,” Andy Warhol. Pictured: Viva (standing) and Louis Waldron (bent over the sink). Copyright 2006 The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh. All rights reserved.

a viewer’s identification with the look of the camera is more volatile, because it is more likely to be closely aligned with the look of the filmmaker, partly because many filmmakers are both director and cinematographer, but also because the entire project is more hands-on and more intimate than commercial cinema.⁴⁵

The result is “a sort of coalition” between audience, filmmaker and subject around a shared erotic identification.⁴⁶ In another reel, after they shower, Louis bends over the bathroom sink and washes his face. Viva stands behind him, pretends to fuck him from behind, and slaps his ass – turning to wink and laugh at Warhol behind the camera. Her overtly conspiratorial and flirtatious dialogue with the camera stands as an open invitation to the film’s audience to imagine ourselves as a part of the architecture of this scene, to imagine everyone on the screen as “in” on both her joke and her pleasure.

But I like *Blue Movie* for more than this. As I suggest above, I am taken in by its basic scenario: by the relaxing intimacy of coupling without coupling, by the idea of there having been a space and a time in which sex between men and women appears easy and fun. This version of heterosexual intimacy strikes me as particularly queer – as something that perhaps only a gay man might dream up in dialogue with a girlfriend.

We see something of the difference in the sexual possibilities for gay men and straight women in Samuel Delany’s account of a trip to Times Square porn theaters

with Ana, a curious friend. Delany describes how they wander a theater together, and then split up for a few minutes. When they reunite, he asks her what she thought of the experience. Delany writes:

The first thing she said was, “There really *were* guys giving other guys blowjobs downstairs in the orchestra! I thought you were kidding when you first told me that. I thought it was all going to be going on in dark corners . . . It was interesting . . . It was more relaxed that I thought it was going to be. I thought it would be more frenetic – people just grabbing each other and throwing them down in the shadows and having their way. But it was so easygoing. And you didn’t tell me . . .” She paused.

“Didn’t tell you what?”

“ – that so many people say ‘no.’ And that everybody pretty much goes along with it.”

“I guess,” I said, “when so many people say ‘yes,’ the ‘nos’ don’t seem so important.”⁴⁷

There is a poignancy to Ana’s surprise at the fact that “no” provoked disappointment, but not anger or violence. In her surprise I think I recognize the degree to which women feel, in everyday life, under a certain kind of pressure to say “yes” and haunted by the fear of a punishment for saying “no.” Furthermore, her presence, in this particular setting, was accepted. This, in and of itself, upends how straight culture tends to think of gay spaces (as rigorously exclusionary, as dark corners devoted to frenetic sex).

Ironically, given that her conversation with Delany is about “nos,” their exchange lets us imagine what a culture of sexual generosity might look like. Implied in this anecdote is a high level of trust between Delany and his friend: neither seems afraid of what the other might think. I can only imagine Delany bringing along a woman with whom *he* felt safe, as a gay man, to share his attachment to a space that very much defines him as a gay man. Similarly, not only does the Ana of this anecdote enjoy a momentary reprieve from the relentlessness of the daily routines of compulsory heterosexuality, she feels safe in Delany’s company, as a woman – not safe from men (this is how some women’s attachments to some gay men are often read), but safe from judgment.

This last anecdote points toward the place of sexual generosity in queer friendships, as an antidote to the stinginess of heteronormative ways of being. Delany opposes the lubricious and lazy generosity of queer public sex to “the system of artificial heterosexual scarcity” that structures much discourse on sex and sexuality.⁴⁸ In contrast to spaces like the old porn theaters in Times Square which fostered casual sexual contact between men, Delany asks us to imagine the sexual environment generated by a world in which “every encounter involves bringing someone back to your house.” In this case, he writes,

the general sexual activity [of that] city becomes anxiety filled, class-bound, and choosy. This is precisely *why* public rest rooms, peep shows, sex movies, bars with grope rooms, and parks with enough greenery are necessary for a relaxed and friendly sexual atmosphere in a democratic metropolis.⁴⁹

Of course, the stingy city he asks us to imagine here is one of heteronormative design – it is the city women are asked to inhabit. It’s Lily Bart’s city. As women like di Prima,

Viva, or Delany's friend Ana gravitate toward gay underground culture, they are drawn in no small part to the difference in the way that sex circulates within this other city – not as a scarcity, but, in fact, as a latent possibility strewn across the metropolis. With sex dispersed across such a landscape, uncoupled from the domestic, it becomes possible to imagine and pursue, indeed to organize one's life around other forms of intimacy.

Notes

- 1 Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (New York: Verso Press, 2005): 302.
- 2 Ibid., 290, 277.
- 3 Ibid., 282.
- 4 Philosophical writing on friendship often addresses erotic bonds between men, imagined within classical models as relations between older and younger men. As long as either this inequity in age and experience, or the frenzy of sexual desire are in play, a fraternal friendship is seen as impossible. See Montaigne's essay "Of Friendship," for example (cited below).
- 5 Michel de Montaigne, "Of Friendship," in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1965): 138.
- 6 Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 282.
- 7 Ibid., 305.
- 8 Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and the Lesbian Continuum" in *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose*, eds. Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albert Gelpi (New York: Norton, 1993): 203–24.
- 9 Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York: Morrow, 1970): 126.
- 10 Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth*, ed. Elizabeth Ammons (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990): 15.
- 11 Ibid., 114.
- 12 Elaine Showalter, "The Death of the Lady (Novelist)," in *The House of Mirth*, ed. Elizabeth Ammons (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990): 357–72, at pp. 359–60.
- 13 Wharton, *The House of Mirth*, 9.
- 14 Ibid., 45.
- 15 Lily also enjoys such a relationship with Gertie, a feminist and "old maid," but is so concentrated on her attachments to men that she both takes Gertie's affection for granted, and is unable to see in it a resource that might rescue her. We can see more clearly in the limits of her friendship with Gertie how Lily is undone by her attachment to heterosexuality. My point is that we may also extend this observation to include the failure of her friendship with Selden.
- 16 Wharton, *The House of Mirth*, 255–6.
- 17 Geoffrey Sanborn, "Whence Come You, Queequeg?" in *American Literature* 77:2 (June 2005): 227–57, at p. 231.
- 18 Cesare Cesarino, *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 151.
- 19 Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, eds., Hershel Parker and Harrison Hayford (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2001): 349.
- 20 Joan Nestle and John Preston, *Brother and Sister: Lesbians and Gay Men Write about Their Lives Together* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1994): 1.
- 21 In their own narratives about the history of their relationships with queer men and

- women, Nestle and Preston acknowledge the importance of those moments when such friendships have drifted in and out of erotic intimacy as very much a part of the development of their self-understanding. For insight into the complexity of relationships between lesbians and gay men, one might also turn to the story of lesbian participation in ACT UP. See Ann Cvetkovich's *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), especially "AIDS Activism and Public Feelings: Documenting ACT UP's Lesbians," 156–204.
- 22 Nestle and Preston, *Brother and Sister*, 12. The language used in this letter recalls the sexual intimacy that animates some of the friendships described by this volume. Nestle begins the story of her queer friendships by recalling the night she slept with her friend Carl, and "talked, not about Brecht or Joseph McCarthy but about Carl's first sexual explorations with another man the night before and my own sexual explorations with women" (2). Preston describes his relationship with lesbian friend Cindy and her lover. Living with this couple, he found "an air of sexuality in our apartment. At first I thought it simply the passion these two women openly expressed for one another. Then I realized the passion included me" (5).
 - 23 See Craig Owens, "Outlaws: Gay Men in Feminism," in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture*, eds. Scott Bryson, Barbara Kruger, Lynne Tillman, and Jane Weinstock (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992): 218–35, esp. pp. 230–1. In this essay Owens gives an economical overview of scholarship by Michel Foucault and Eve Sedgwick on these dynamics. I am mining his discussion of Michel Foucault and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's work on this topic.
 - 24 Michel Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life," in *Michel Foucault: Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994): 136–7, at p. 136.
 - 25 Ibid., 137.
 - 26 Ibid., 136–7.
 - 27 See, for example, Michael Warner, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999).
 - 28 Steven Watson, *Factory Made: Warhol and the Sixties* (New York: Pantheon 2003): 57.
 - 29 Ibid., 57. See also Diane di Prima's autobiography, *Recollections of My Life as a Woman: The New York Years* (New York: Viking, 2001).
 - 30 If the unhappy accident of the frequency of suicide (Lily, Herko) in my theme says anything, it's that the stakes of these relationships are, at times, very high: for they can be "impossible" relationships that form between "impossible" people – friendships that feel, for better or for worse, like lifelines – that, as Wharton writes, "kept them from atrophy and extinction."
 - 31 Diane di Prima, *The Freddie Poems* (Point Reyes, CA: Eidolon Editions, 1974). All references to di Prima's poetry are from this volume.
 - 32 I am borrowing language on the "not quite-ness" of certain forms of mimicry from Homi Bhabha's essay "Of Mimicry and Man," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Verso, 1994): 85–92.
 - 33 This attitude toward friendships between gay men and women echo the anthropological bias, which treats homosexuality as a last resort to which men turn in the absence of women. See Craig Owens' overview of this bias in "Outlaws: Gay Men in Feminism," esp. pp. 227–8.
 - 34 "Warhol's "'Blue Movie' The Bluest of 'Em All, If and When Released," *Variety*, June 18, 1969. Cited by Callie Angell in *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1994): 37.
 - 35 Paul Morrissey (the Warhol collaborator who eventually took over Factory film production) didn't want to have anything to do with the concept, and refused to be in the same room while it was being shot. Conversation with Viva, Los Angeles, October 2006.

- 36 I rely upon Callie Angell's narrative about the film's production and circulation in *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II*, 36–7.
- 37 Andy Warhol, *Blue Movie: A Film by Andy Warhol* (New York: Grove Press, 1970).
- 38 Angell, *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II*, 37.
- 39 See back cover of Warhol, *Blue Movie*.
- 40 Viva furthermore explains that it was Morrissey who convinced her that the film was obscene and ought not be shown.
- 41 *Blue Movie* was screened at the New York Film Festival in 2005.
- 42 See, for example, "Andy Warhol: The Producer as Author," in David James, *Allegories of Cinema* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989): 77–9.
- 43 Watson, *Factory Made*, 393.
- 44 Warhol, *Blue Movie*, 110.
- 45 Laura Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 87.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 87.
- 47 Samuel Delany, *Times Square Red/Times Square Blue* (New York: New York University Press, 1999): 30.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 197.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 127.

Queer Regions

Locating Lesbians in Sancharram

Gayatri Gopinath

In the summer of 2005, I attended at San Francisco's Castro theater a sold-out screening of *Sancharram (The Journey)*, an independent feature film by the Chicago-based, South Asian diasporic filmmaker Ligy Pullappally. I had heard that *Sancharram* was a lesbian-themed film set in Kerala, a state which runs along the south-western edge of India, where my family is from and where I regularly visit. But nevertheless I felt an unexpected jolt of intense recognition as the lights dimmed and the first scene opened with a shot of an old *tharavad* (an ancestral, joint family household), its distinctive architecture of sloped tiled roofs and solid teak pillars looking remarkably like that of my own family. As the camera panned a landscape of lush forests and waterfalls, I was convinced that the film was set in precisely the same small town in central Kerala where my own *tharavad* is located; the final credits confirmed my suspicion. Watching this familial, familiar landscape, oddly defamiliarized in the context of viewing it translated onto the screen, at the Castro, surrounded by an appreciative queer San Francisco film festival audience, made me wonder about the ways in which representations of the regional (Kerala, in this case), and its particular logics of gender and sexuality, become intelligible within transnational circuits of reception and consumption.

This essay represents a preliminary attempt to explore this interface of regionalism and queerness in the context of globalization. A brief genealogy of the concept of regionalism may be useful here in order to situate what follows. Christopher Connery, in an influential 1996 article that theorizes the space of the Pacific Rim, helpfully traces the beginnings of "critical regional studies" to the late 1970s, when the term was initially used to identify newly emerging areas of economic growth (such as Silicon Valley). As such the term mapped what Connery calls "the materiality of capitalist space."¹ In keeping with this understanding of the region, the term has been deployed by economists and political scientists to identify new areas of capitalist expansion and free trade regimes. Such work defines the region as "territorially based subsystems of the international system" (such as the European Union) that coalesce around shared economic and geopolitical imperatives, as well as around a certain cultural coherence.² However, within the postmodern social theory that emerged in the 1980s, such as the work of Edward Soja and Kenneth Frampton, the notion of the region gained currency as a way of marking a disruption of precisely this logic