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The photography of the Argentine Marcos López has attracted enormous international attention. Working in sometimes garish colors (his prints routinely include hand coloring), López mixes a parody of postmodern commercial advertising with an acerbic critique of the kitschy detritus of contemporary globalized daily life, especially in its urban Argentine version (for general characterizations of López's photography, see Foster, “El kitsch argentino”; Casatellote; González; Panera Cuevas). Whether focusing on specific commercial products, often ones that are icons of modern living like Coca-Cola, or on patriotic and quasi-patriotic symbols (the Argentine flag, Che Guevara, respectively), López relies on his audience to understand the clever, surprising, and often jolting utilization of pop-art and kitsch as an artistic strategy for critiquing the morass of conflicting ideologies and their motifs that engulf—attacks—our visual perception of the world. López’s employment of forms of hyperrealism as found in one range of glossy advertising transforms the ideal/idealized universes of the latter into outrageous interventions in common domestic spaces of staged parodies of the quotidien, whether the latter is a common object, like the Coca-Cola bottle, or customarily trivialized motifs like those of religion, sociopolitical commitments, routine cultural values, and the like: the "stuff" of our systems of identity and understanding.
One of López’s most recognized images is *Asado criollo* (fig. 1), [1] which is a recasting of Da Vincis *The Last Supper*. In the place of the sacred Last Supper of Jesus Christ and the Twelve Apostles, the founding event figured in the Holy Mass of the Catholic Church as a commemoration of Christ’s sacrifice for the salvation of mankind, we have the virtually sacramental ritual of the Argentine barbecue, where the blood-bathed sacrifice of edible beef is the privileged figure of Argentine communal identity. If wherever Catholics assemble they will celebrate Christ’s sacrifice for the salvation of mankind, wherever Argentines assemble they will celebrate the sacrifice of beef for the affirmation of “Argentinity.” [2] This is all a pretty hilarious and irreverent network of associations, part of whose resonance is the way in which so many Argentines are not particularly overtly religious, on either a formal or folkloric level—not, at least, in the way in which one associates popular Christianity as so essentially part of the fabric of everyday life in a society like Mexico, for example.

Images like *Asado criollo* (*Carnaval criollo* is another) have contributed to López’s growing reputation, and, in addition to Argentina, his work has been shown in Spain, Mexico, and elsewhere in Latin America, and most recently in New York, in a show February 25-March 14, 2005 at the White Box gallery (www.whiteboxny.org) called *Al sur del realismo/South of Realism.* [3]

Although I have examined elsewhere López’s use of kitsch in order to critique globalized values
through parody (Foster, "El kitsch argentino"), I would like here to address issues of homosocialism, homoeroticism, and their interrelationship in López's images, particularly in those that appear in a small portfolio, *López Marcos*, published in Mexico City in 2004.

Let us first define our terms. By "homosocialism" (one could also invest here in the term "homosociality"), one understands the strong and exclusivizing bond between members of the same sex. Such a definition, and its implied or overt sanction—and implied or overt disapproval—by various intersecting social institutions, is predicated on a conception of stable sex identity, such that there is a clear-cut separation between male and female. This is a stability that is maintained, in the main, by both transgenering (the movement from one sex to another) and by transexuality (the anatomical reconfiguration of a body in order for it to migrate from one sex to another); homosocialism becomes problematical wherever queer theory destabilizes binary sexual identity. In Sedgwick's famous formulation, which originally applied only to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British literature, but which has been extensively adapted to a wide array of societies by masculinity studies (see Connell for one early survey; Gutman for pertinent research in Latin America), homosocialism is the pact, the so-called gentleman's agreement, whereby power is circulated between men, who are bonded together by a number of social networks and practices: marriage, business, fraternal association, guilds, societies, shared initiations and acculturations, and the like. Women are both excluded but used by homosocialism as a token or shifter of masculine power. Two typical narratives are the accession to the realm of the boss by marrying his daughter or the use of the sexuality of women as a way of displaying to other men one’s legitimating heterosexuality. Such narratives depend on an interaction with women to demonstrate the male's appropriate participation in the hegemonic codes of a male-dominated society.

It is significant to note that, while homosociality may be sustained by an undercurrent of (weak) homoerotic desire, as in the simple comfort of being with other men in all-male sphere, strong homoerotic desire and the acting upon that desire through the staging of a number of specifically genital and orgasmic scripts, are taboo and would disrupt the homosocial pact. [4] But there is unquestioningly a segue between homosocialism as the approved assembling of men and homoeroticism as what might happen among assembled men under the "right" conditions, such as having had

too much to drink or sharing traumatic experiences. [5] To be sure, another dimension of this issue is exactly what constitutes homoeroticism: that is, exactly when is it present and how might we detect it (beyond manifest signs such as penile tumescence or specific acts we can agree to call homoerotic)? This is the problem of what to make of fraternity initiations, especially where practices like spanking are involved (see Mattoso's extensive analysis of these phenomena in German, American, and Brazilian university societies), or of the hugging and butt-slapping of team sports, not to mention the display of the male buttocks promoted by tight-fitting uniforms, as in American baseball, and the fetishizing of the legs of soccer players (Manrique); also legendary is the display of the male body in bullfighting (see Afanador's photography, and Foster's study of it, "Toreros de moda") and the way in which the all-male world of bullfighting has always involved a dimension of homoeroticism, as Lorca so eloquently captures it in his famous "Llanto por Ignacio Sanchez Mejía" (see other references in my study of Afanador's photography).

Thus, if we reserve the term "homoeroticism" for a series of acts and their accompanying narratives that confirm the possibility of the fulfillment of sexual desire between same-sex partners, it is, nevertheless, evident that the homosocialism that cements the personal relationships between men in the exercise of patriarchal authority may often (perhaps always?) contain an undercurrent of the physical, but customarily tabooed and therefore unfulfilled, attraction between male bodies. [6] Such weak homoeroticism can rarely be the subject of overt social discourse, although one does occasionally hear calls for the boys to cut down a bit on the butt-slapping, while Homosocialism— "getting together with the fellows"—is an accepted and promoted intercultural norm of modern society. [7]

There is, then, an interesting vein of male homosocial imagery in recent work of López which has unmistakable homoerotic overtones, even if it is only a weak homoeroticism that the viewer can "strengthen," so to speak, in an attentive contemplation of the insinuations of and the insertions into real-world experience which López images critique through parody.

Certainly, the homosocial is an issue in López's by now rather legendary Asado criollo composition. In the first place, it evokes the founding or grounding homosociality of Leonardo Da Vinci's depiction
of the Last Supper of Christ with his disciples. Leaving aside the question of whether or not there is a feminine presence in the painting in the person of Mary Magdalene, as touted by Dan Brown in his controversial and transgressive 2003 best selling novel, *The Da Vinci Code* (which also expounds on Mary Magdalene as the wife of Christ), the assemblage of the thirteen men of Da Vinci’s painting and the endless reproduction of it which the concept of kitsch helps us to understand confirm a monumental paradigm of homosocialism in Western culture. Now, it is important to stress that López does not simply plug in substitutions for the arrangement, clothes, gestures, and interactions of the participants in the Da Vinci painting; this would be rather facile and the essence of noncritical or unreflective kitsch. Rather, he retains the six-against-six balance of the men on each side of the central figure, but has them more in the postures of the consumption of food and drink than in the case of the Da Vinci original. Moreover, while the latter is encased in an idealized Renaissance banquet room, López’s denizens surround an improvised open-air table, with the unmistakable humid Pampas landscape of central Argentina in the background: that is, where Da Vinci’s image is stylized and dehistoricized, López’s photograph evokes a specific sociohistorical reality, that of the gritty texture of the Argentine barbecue.

I use the word "gritty" here advisedly, because the texture of the carefully staged image is that of a casual, real-life weekend convocation of men to eat, drink, and enjoy each other’s company. They are all dressed casually, some so casually as to project an offensive image to other more formal social arbiters, especially given the sacred context evoked by the image. Both the man we can call the Jesus stand-in and two of his "apostles" appear shirtless, one other wears a sleeveless undershirt, while two others wear shirts open to reveal more chest than some would consider decorous. One man, who bleeds off the left margin of the image, appears to be wearing a short-sleeved undershirt, leaving six men whose torso is respectably clothed. Undoubtedly, a major Argentine cultural referent here are the humorous drawings *Buenos Aires en camiseta*, drawn by Alejandro del Prado (Calé) for Guillermo Divito’s popular magazine *Rico tipo* in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Calé, in satirizing broadly the tics of the Argentine petit-bourgeois male, also captured the way in which his habits veered from the rigorous standards of the sartorially perfect English gentleman the national upper middle-class and oligarchy aspired to emulate. Too, Da Vinci’s painting represents Jesus and the apostles as impeccably clothed or robed, and López’s image subverts as much the decorum of the Renaissance

work as it evokes an alleged Argentine careless vulgarity.

Of special note is the way in which the Jesus stand-in does specifically evoke the Savior in ways in which his companions do not merely replicate the apostles (beyond their balanced six-by-six distribution). The stand-in, who towers imposingly over his companions, has both the long hair and the beard of the Jesus original, just the sort of hirsuteness that (paradoxically, given the accompanying allegation of femininity) the Argentine neofascist guardians of public morals in the late 1960s and again in the 1970s considered a sign of homosexuality. Da Vinci's Jesus is seated, with his hands outstretched in the sign of the first offering of his sacrifice, but López's counterimage is masterfully wielding the knife in the central ritual of the asado, the cutting and distribution of the cooked meat. Not only is the latter shirtless, but his cutting action emphasizes pectoral muscles, which are complemented by what for some might be the erotic nature of a fleshy belly button and pants that ride just low enough to be right at the nevertheless concealed pubic line. While there is little here that one can call (homo)erotic beyond the possibilities inherent in the unkempt display of the body of the guests at this table and the physicality of dedicated eating and drinking that is crucial to a good asado, this assertedly homosocial gathering reminds one that the ur-homosocial drinking and eating party is Plato's Convivium, where one of the crucial topics of conversation is human sexuality, including Plato's Diotima's intriguing account of the bases and the defense of what we have come to call Greek homosexuality. These convivial Argentines might well discuss the women, the minas, but never at the expense of the ritualized shared physicality of their meal. [8]

One detail of the cultural horizons of Da Vinci's Last Supper, so pregnant with meaning as to the founding event of Christian homosociality, is Da Vinci's own homosexuality, a detail that the Vatican, and popular art history, would choose emphatically to ignore. Yet no serious art historian can overlook this dimension of the Italian Renaissance artist giant's biography and, therefore, its appearance, if only latently in his work. [9] Therefore, it would be rather risky, if not outrageous, to suggest that there is a hidden homosexuality about Da Vinci's painting, although viewers are always entitled to see what they (want to) see. Since no "protective veil of the sacred" envelops López's photography and since, indeed, one of the licenses of parody is to encourage outrageous meanings, one may feel more comfortable with teasing out the latent homoeroticism of what one might call
Asado criollo's "la gran comilona de los muchachos." Boy-men will be boy-men.

The homoerotic is more clearly evident in the cover image of Marcos López, where the same model is used for both the carefully groomed hospital aide and his long-haired severely injured patient (the image in turn has a definite intertextuality with Frida Kahlo's signature work Las dos Fridas, which need not necessarily evoke Kahlo's well known bisexuality/lesbianism [10]).

This image (titled Hospital [fig. 2]) would be relatively uninteresting—serving, perhaps at best, as a poster for a national nurses/hospital orderly association—if it weren't for the bonding between the two men that is underscored by their both being enacted by the same model: photography and cinema has a venerable tradition of dual (even multiple) parts being played by the same actor, often around the ages-old motif of the evil twin, as in Bette Davis's 1964 Dead Ringer (dir. Paul Henreid) or Jeremy Irons's 1988 reprise of the Davis film, Dead Ringers (dir. David Cronenberg). [11] Got up differently—the long-haired, partially nude patient; the soberly neat aid—they are also differentiated by the accompanying details of their role. The patient, of course, has the trappings of his treatment (bandages, the IV connection, the walker to support the traumatized right leg), and the aide his own typical equipment (the simple green cotton scrubs, the stethoscope worn around the neck, the IV drip). The pair is photographed in what appears to be one of the halls of an old hospital from the generation of the Rivadavia or the Ramos Mejía.

But where the expected is disrupted, wherein lies the Barthean punctum that hooks the attentive viewer's gaze, is the fact that the left forearm of the patient is bound to the right forearm of his aide by a tightly wrapped bandage of bloody gauze. There is no indication of why the patient should be wearing such a wrapping, since the patient's contusions appear to be confined to his left side, and it is left to the curious speculation of the viewer why the patient should be bound to the aide in this fashion. Of course, one could attribute an allegorical function to this detail: the patient needs the assistance of the aide in order to mend or even in order to survive. But that bond is already allegorized by the presence of the IV, which the aide holds (and will subsequently hang from the appropriate suspension apparatus) for the patient, insuring the continued administration of whatever the bag contains. Again, there is nothing directly erotic about this image, except to the handsomeness.
of the actor, part of whose body is minimally revealed in the enactment of the patient: much more suggestive would have been an image of the aide dangling an enema bag whose hose is inserted into the patient's rectum, although this would be an unlikely occurrence in the sort of transfer from one place to another that might be the "real-life" circumstance of the event captured by the photo.

Yet, the disruption of the everyday occurrence of a transfer from one place to the next in the modern hospital that comes with the detail of the shared bandage provokes speculation as to the figured relationship between the two. The hospital is the setting for frequent (homo)erotic fantasies, and playing nurse/doctor is one of the ways in which children first discover each other's bodies: nurses and doctors are customarily the first nonparental authority figures who manipulate and invade our body in what can be later resemanticized in erotic terms (see the topic of rape by medical instrument as it is developed in the Irons film mentioned above). The intimacy with the body of the patient required in many routine medical procedures, in turn, is one of the reasons, even before the threat of STDs, why some medical personal is uncomfortable with treating patients they know or suspect to engage in same-sex acts; for others, this will be part of the pleasure of the other's body.

[12] Even when the body of the patient is neither manipulated nor invaded (unquestionably where the vagina or the rectum is involved, or metaphorically—the insertion of an IV or even an ear
examination), the proximity between the two bodies, the one ministering and the one being ministered to, can be suggestive. [13] The fact that such a proximity is sealed here, one might say, by the bloody bandage cannot, therefore, be dismissed as a quirky disruption of naturally occurring circumstances.

Two other images in the volume equally allow for the displacement from naturally occurring circumstances to the homoerotic. It is questionable to what degree the homosocial is involved in the hospital scene, except for a general policy whereby male patients are tended to by male aides and female patients by female aides. However, one of the most homosocial spaces in modern society is the locker room, which is closely associated with other athletic and gymnasium spaces like the shower, the steam room, the jacuzzi, the massage room, and the infirmary. The bath house/sauna was, before AIDS, one of the great meeting places for gay men, and the fancy gym is, for today's guppy, one major site for same-sex cruising (American university sports centers are notorious in this regard). [14] The homoerotic dimensions of sports has long been maintained (Prongher), and it is difficult to forget that the original Olympics were performed in the nude; homoerotic overtones have also long been associated with European soccer, and Bazán recalls the 1995 controversy surrounding the Argentine national team (433-34). The sociologist Juan José Sebreli first broached the subject in print in a book from 1981, Fútbol y masas, but develops it as a major theme in his 1998 La era del fútbol (see also his "Historia secreta").

In López's image—titled El vestuario (fig. 3),—one is particularly struck by the fact that none of the seven men (athletes and trainers) whose faces can be seen (there is an eighth man stretched out on a massage table, his face hidden by one of the other players) looks anywhere else but directly at the camera: no one peeks out of the closet here at the body of another man… Moreover, all of the men visible are hypermasculine, confident in their pose before the camera, with marked secondary sexual characteristics well in evidence, such as hairy chest and legs, heavy beard, mustaches, muscular torso and legs, with appropriate tertiary accoutrements such as athletic wear, soccer ball, the ankle bandage and what appears to be a tube or container of ointment that are metonyms of strenuous physical activity. The file of identical lockers against the back wall iconicizes the continuity between these men where the sameness of their macho presence guarantees the easy circulation of the norms of
homosociality without any trace of the discrepancy from these norms that would signal the contramasculine, the effeminate, the threat of homosexuality. True, one of the men, to the left of the image, somewhat older than the others, is fleshier than one associates with a sustained athletic life, while, in the right-hand background there is a frankly paunchy individual with long hair (he is, nevertheless, properly uniformed for athletic play). But these are, if they are discordant notes, minor ones that only serve to affirm the overall conventional hypermasculinity of the men we see in the foreground. [15] In short, this is a world of men and for men, and if resolute homosociality were ever to segue into homoeroticism, it is not likely to include any sign of the feminine. It is precisely the homoerotic undertones of the hypermasculine universe of soccer that both Bazán and Sebreli speak of, and, while Archetti underscores the way in which soccer—like many all-male sports—transculturally serve to assimilate young men to the codes of masculine homosociality, there is no way of categorically specifying when the frisson of the homoerotic will occur. [16]

Fig. 3

One of López’s most outrageous compositions is Tomando sol en la terraza (fig. 4), which was used for the invitation and publicity for the exhibit for the early 2005 show of his work at the White Box. Unlike the images I have discussed up until now, this image and the next one to be discussed involve a single male model; hence, there is no immediate homosocial context. Yet, by contrast, the two images both more readily evoke the homoerotic, which is located here in the display of the partially naked

male body. Indeed, the lack of an explicit homosocial context would indicate, precisely, that sunbathing (or, below, being a masculine mermaid) is not routine masculine behavior. [17] And although the image of the partially naked male body is legitimated in certain contexts, such as that of the athletic locker room, it does not customarily involve the privileged exposure of the penis.

*Tomando sol* is constructed around the common occurrence of sunbathing, which in an apartment-dwelling metropolis like Buenos Aires often means stretching out on a towel on the rooftop of one's high-rise building. Certainly, the majority of sunbathers are women, and sports and other physically active undertakings are the most appropriate way for the male body to gain whatever are considered the beneficial aspects of direct exposure to the sun; concomitantly, to lie inert in the sun is a female/womanlike activity. True, López's male sunbather is surrounded by the details of a masculine world: various bottles of beer and a bottle opener, along with a half-consumed glass of brew. There is an ashtray with the butts of two consumed cigarettes, a carton of Malboros (unquestionably a real man's tobacco of choice [18]), and there is a stack of magazines at hand, the top one of which appears to be a sports magazine, as its cover carries a routine soccer image. One rather whimsical detail is the garden hose (often laughingly referred to as a penis substitute), which runs alongside the reclining man and loops its way around one of the beer bottles, as though it were a sunning serpent; its two tones of green partially match the colors of the blanket on which the man lies sunning.
The model here is, in all regards, one of López's by-now familiar hypermasculine bodies: trim and muscular, with firm and hairy legs and a nicely matted chest; his strong facial characteristics are manly in every regard: in sum, a man's man. What is jarring, however, is the way he is dressed and what that dress leaves exposed. Nude sunbathing on a private rooftop may be preferred by some men, although heterosexual men are less likely than women (or homosexual men) to worry about tan lines: indeed, the tan line on a naked male body might be viewed by some as sexy, since it frames the now exposed but usually concealed genitals or buttocks. But the covering of the lower regions of the body means wearing a swimsuit; even underwear might be permissible. However, López's model is swathed in athletic bandages from his midriff to halfway down his thighs, something like an improvised locker-room version of surfing shorts, although tighter and neutral in color, as opposed to the often colorful and baggy original. Moreover, the athletic bandage around the model's middle picks up on the more reasonable presence of the wrapping around both his ankles and instep, such as one might find on an athlete's foot to prevent or remedy a sprain from action in sports.

But what is specifically transgressive about Tomando sol is the way in which the model's penis is exposed. The athletic bandage is wrapped around the man's waist, buttocks, and upper thighs in such a way that, although some minor glimpses of skin are allowed, his genitals are exposed, with his penis (notably uncircumcised from the point of view of a North American viewer) resting on the edge of a strip of the bandage. One does not normally sunbathe the penis without the rest of the lower body being exposed, and, aside from the medical inadvisability of such exposure, one is unaware of any known fetish of the sunbathed (or sunburned) penis. López is known for his over-the-top whimsicalness, and it is amply evident in this composition, with its showcasing of the model's respectably sized penis and the echoes of the strongly masculine phallus in the beer bottles, the cigarettes, and the garden hose. The contemplation of the male body required by this composition, one that underscores the phallic, disrupts the heterosexist homosocial convention whereby the male body is masculine (a condition of the appropriate of the homosocial pact), but it is not erotic: the genitals are assumed to be there, and with acceptable potency, but they can never be the object of confirming scrutiny. Whenever the male body is the occasion for the spectacular gaze, as the female body routinely is, it is placed at the disposal of a homoerotic interest that is inadmissible within the

manly homosocial pact. [19]

I would like to close with what I think is López's most brilliant composition, the *Sireno del Río de la Plata* (fig. 5), a revision of one of the tritest motifs associated with the sea. The *sireno* of the title of the composition is the non-occurring (at least in terms of academic Spanish) masculine form of *sirena*, the siren of the sea or, in its more domesticated form, the mermaid. [20] If one may use a queer designation, López's masculine mermaid is very much of a parody of siren of the sea motif. [21]

Standard images of the siren—the most commonly evoked is the sculpture that is the symbol of the city of Copenhagen—center on a series of ultrafeminine features: long blond hair, firm and full breasts (but without being bosomy), curvaceous figure, languid pose. But López's model is both a refutation of the feminine and an inscription of the hypermasculine. It might be a matter of taste as to whether this male model is grotesque in his masculinity or whether he is the male equivalent of female allure. The model is, without a doubt, as hard and trim as the conventional female figure is
delicately curved, and his hairy torso constitutes as definitive a display of sex characteristics as does
the former’s breasts. But his pose is anything but languid, as he strongly grips part of the stone shelf
on which he is seated, with an arm assertively akimbo. His jug-ears (the left ear appears larger than
the right one), unshaven face, almost scowling eyes, and unfriendly line of mouth may, in fact,
suggest the way in which the mythological mermaid was actually no friend to those who became
seduced by her fateful presence.

López’s sireno suggests the threat implicit in male sexual attraction, whether addressed to a woman or
to another man. The fact that the landscape of the masculine mermaid is a crumbling and garbage
strewn beach also undercuts whatever conventional artistry there is about Disneyesque depictions of
this version of idealized feminine beauty. The effect of coming upon this figure washed ashore is not
that of the sensuous swoon, but rather the shock of the radically disruptive of artistic conventions.
Of a whole with the men represented in images such as El vestuario, Tomando el sol en la terraza, and
Asado criollo—that is, the unquestionably rigorously masculine body, with nothing of the conventions
of the idealized bodies of gay pornographic visual art, such a Ruven Afanador’s previously
mentioned bullfighters—López’s sireno both mocks the motif of the mermaid, while offering in its
place an aggressively masculine token. But to whom is this sireno offered? With its tapering tail
replacing the sexual attributes of the lower male torso, the masculine mermaid calls out implicitly to
the conventional audience of the siren—men. And the extent to which this male body is not the
androgyne of so much of gay male art, [22] López is offering the (homo)erotic gaze of his spectator
exactly the sort of image that confirms the all-male universe of the homosocial pact.

Notes

[1] Also identified as Asado en Mendiolaça.

[2] The fact that Argentines may no longer so easily assemble to affirm their identity through the
ritual of the asado—beef has become too expensive for the twice daily consumption it once had, or
even the once-a-week-on-the-weekend blowout of more recent times—lends an aura of nostalgia to
Asado criollo. If, on the one hand, it is a clever framing of the importance of the barbecue for Argen-
tines, it is, on the other, a reminder that such rituals are no longer so easily had. Like a religious
persecution of the celebration of the mass, the consequences of neoliberalism and globalization

constitute something like the persecution of the celebration of the *asido*.

[3] "South" here unquestionably refers to López's Southern Hemisphere origins, but, in the context of his parodies of social and cultural icons, at least in English it evokes the phrase "to go south" = "become inferior in quality or substance." Thus, the "south of realism" = "the trivialization of realism."

[4] It is not completely clear why this should be so. In one sense, perhaps it is because homosociality relies on a hierarchy of power that is disrupted and restructured in the throes of passion. Perhaps it is because most versions of masculine heterosexism are grounded in the belief that sex always involves a domination and submission that would both counter the sociofinancial domination and submission of patriarchal society and produce irresolvably conflicting structurings of it: a man cannot both be the active master in a sociofinancial arrangement and the passive slave in an erotic one. Since women are, in patriarchal heterosexuality, always passive, the "feminization" of one of the men in the homoerotic coupling is radically destabilizing. The fact that such a narrative may not be true of all, many, or any homoerotic relationships is a problem of the imaginary of patriarchal heterosexuality, not of verisimilar functioning of those relationships. On another level, homoeroticism may involve the threat of a "truer" democracy of human relationships than is possible in patriarchal heterosexuality (Newfield). This is the Whitmanesque principle, although it is certainly at work in the feminist rejection of the deceits, as regards democracy and social equality, of the patriarchy and its economics of capitalism, as in, for example, ecofeminism. On the other hand, the so-called male homosexuality of ancient Greece (best synthesized by Halperin) is founded on a tight system of male homosociality, whereby the two are not incompatible.

Carrillo discusses "nonsexual homosociality" in the context of homosexual identities in Mexico (358-62).

[5] Hence, the Mexican narrative of the two men who wake up in bed together, and one says to the other that he was so drunk last night that he can’t remember what happened (a version of this appears in Alfonso Cuaron's 2001 film *Y tú mamá también*) or the American war movie motif of soldiers dying in each other's arms. See the Argentine variant on this motif in José Hernández's *Martín Fierro* (Geirola) or the Brazilian one in Bruno Barreto's 1981 film *Beijo no asfalto* (Foster, *Gender and Society* 129-38).

[6] Military discipline—and certainly that of other quasimilitaristic organizations like religious orders—may require the weak homoeroticism of homosocialism; see the American motif of "two Marines and a six pack" and the phenomenon of "barracks buddies." The homoerotic pornography of strong homoeroticism is often built around such real-life circumstances. The Argentine sociologist Néstor Perlongher insisted on homoerotic—not just homosocial—bonding as a factor in the network of survival among the São Paulo male hustlers he studied.

[7] Homosociality among women, of course, works completely differently. While one form of it may be promoted to keep the women entertained—the practice of women assembling in the drawing room for coffee after a meal, while the men remain at table for a cigar and an after-dinner drink—strong female-female bonding is frowned upon as virtually the top of the slippery slope of men hating and lesbianism. On the other hand, female homosociality is often viewed as an important
strategic component, "sisterhood," of women united against male oppression (see the entry on "Homosociality" in Kowaleski-Wallace). Queer sociality would, therefore, have its own dimensions of solidarity, visibility, resistance, and social revindication: "happy together" (see "Homosexualismo" in Mira's encyclopedia in Spanish of queer culture).

[8] The importance of meat in Argentine culture and its relationship to violence, homosociality, and homosexual rape was understood as early as the 1830s by Esteban Echeverría, whose short story "El matadero" is a founding text of Argentine fiction (probably written in the late 1830s, but not published until 1871). Echeverría describes the violence surrounding the utilization of beef-eating as a political tool by the Rosas dictatorship, the male homosociality of spaces like the slaughterhouse and the relationship of its denizens to the violent politics of Rosas, and the use of homosexual rape, figured specifically in Echeverría's story but present elsewhere in the period through the use of the corncob (the mazorca) as an instrument of terror by the enforcers of the regime known as La Mazorca. In the relationship between the enforcers and their victim, there is a displaced homosexuality (a bull's pizzle is used in Echeverría's story), and, in their interpretation of the victim as "rapable," there is the understanding of his body as open to feminization or as already feminized—that is, as a male body available for sex at the hands of another (displaced) male body. For the relevance of "El matadero" to the history of homosexuality in Argentina, see Bazán (82-84); Piglia speaks of the violence in Echeverría's story (8-10), and his comments are accompanied by Enrique Breccia's intense graphic representation (10-18). Not all readers would agree that the bull's pizzle is used to penetrate the unfortunate unitaria, since specific reference is limited to whipping his bared buttocks. However, such same-sex discipline is customarily understood as a form of homoeroticism that may or may not involve subsequent penetration; Bazán clearly understands that rape is involved (82).

[9] Serge Bramly, one of Da Vinci's major biographers, includes a discussion of the latter's homosexuality, and Freud's comments on the subject are famous.

[10] One of the two major sequences of Paul Leduc's 1986 film Frida, naturaleza viva involves her nurse; one of the final memorable scenes of the film has the same nurse accompany Frida, who is on a stretcher, into Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes, for her first major exhibition. The nurse is holding aloft a serum bottle.

[11] In Peter Medak's 1981 Zorro, the Gay Blade George Hamilton gives a queer twist to the twin motif, when we discover that the supermacho Zorro has a gay twin, known as Bunny Wigglesworth.

[12] Historically, gynecology has involved men manipulating women's bodies, and the profession has always attempted to dispel the specter of medical rape in any of its stages by draping the woman so that her body is hidden, by having a female present, and by averring that the woman's body is no more than a medical specimen. Yet, a large number of women prefer today female gynecologists (although this does not address the lesbian potential); female proctologists with male patients, meanwhile, remain an essentially non-existent species.

[13] Of many possible cultural references, one can think immediately of the doctor/patient relationship in Peter Glenville's 1961 film Summer and Smoke, based on the drama of the same name.
by Tennessee Williams; there is very much of the gay parable about this work in both of its versions, despite the fact that the principal actors are a man and a woman. However, the fact that in the film the doctor is played by the gay British actor Laurence Harvey and his patient by Geraldine Page, who played women-who-might-really-be-gay-men in a number of plays and movies works (in 1962, she also starred in the film version of Williams’s Sweet Bird of Youth) cannot be overlooked: in a still-closeted Hollywood (and Broadway) such formulations were as close as one got to the circumstances of actual gay lives.

[14] At least one major American gay play is built around the bath house, Terrence McNally’s The Ritz (1975); it is well known that gay-friendly Bette Midler got her start performing in gay men’s bath houses. The homosocial space of the bath house appears in the Mexican Jaime Humberto Hermosillo’s 1976 María de mi corazón (script by Gabriel García Márquez), and the bath house as homoerotic space appears in another Mexican film, Jorge Fons’s 1995 El Callejón de los Milagros.

[15] In fact, there is the neighborhood masculine type that would fall into the category of the groncho (=slob, bum), characterized by the look of the second of the two men referred to. In the realm of soccer, as opposed to the hypermasculine and often frankly pretty-boy player, the groncho relies for his appeal to his fans for his wild, animal magnetism. This is an image that the great superstar Diego Maradona has often exploited.

[16] One of the most significant analyses of homoeroticism within macho hypermasculinity for Latin America is Núñez Noriega’s study, devoted to northwestern Mexico.

[17] Readers familiar with Mexican photography will immediately recognize that Tomando sol en la terraza is a trope of Manuel Alvarez Bravo’s 1939 La buena fama durmiendo (see this image at http://www.getty.edu/bookstore/titles/postbravo.html).

[18] The Malboro Man ads have, for years, sold an image of hypermasculinity, undisturbed by the feminine or the effeminate. However, the death from AIDS of Tom McBride, one of the models for these ads, is a real-world remainder of the homoeroticism always already present in the hypermasculine. (One of the anonymous reader’s of this essay contributes the following quote: "It is a little known fact that Marlboro was marked as a ‘feminine’ cigarette (with lipstick-red-tipped filters) until the 1950s, when the Malboro Man made his first appearance" [Sturkin 30]). Yet it remains to be seen to what extent Malboro ads in Argentina exploit the appeal to the hypermasculine. Moreover, the carton this model has at hand is not the standard American soft pack, but rather the flat, elongated box associated with French cigarettes as Gauloises. Nevertheless, even if one could not sustain the argument of the masculine Malboro icon here, smoking itself is a mark of Argentine masculinity—men who do not smoke are suspect—and smoking, like drinking and discussing women, is paradigmatic of Western, if not global, homosociality in general.

[19] Other "penile" compositions authored by López include En el jardín botánico, where a parody of Fidel Castro-Che Guevara army-fatigued macho brandishes a plastic pistol that is somewhat flesh-colored rather than gun-metal gray (the famous photograph by the Cuban fashion photographer Alberto Díaz—aka Korda—of the stern Che Guevara is parodied in La Habana, where the lean revolutionary icon is juxtaposed to a fleshy (Argentine?) tour wearing a tank-top whose color and
design evokes the Cuban flag). The way in which Cuba was, throughout the 1990s until the Argentine economic bust of late 2001, a gay Mecca for Argentine tourists is ironic, given Guevara's notorious homophobia. Walter Salles in his 2003 film Motorcycle Diaries plays up Guevara's heterosexual persona by using the Mexican heartthrob Gael García Bernal to play the Argentine; see, on the other hand, the revision of the Korda image in the Che Gay poster from the early 1970s (reproduced in Kunzle 95; Kunzle claims that it is probably British in origin). Casatellote, in his excellent commentary on López's work, refers specifically to the parody of Che Guevara (Marcos López 13-14). With regard to García Bernal, it is important to note that the actor has upped the ante, so to speak, on his acting persona, play a gay/transvestite role in Pedro Almodóvar's La mala educación (2004).

See also Antena, where a rosy-pink French tickler arises in the foreground against the backdrop of the cactuses of the Argentine desert: the cylindrical botanical features of the natural landscape are disrupted by the (probably imported) sex toys of urban life.

[20] English does register "merman," although the concept belongs more to the realm of circus sideshow hoaxes than to a centuries-old poetic tradition.

[21] A motif that, according to Conner at al. (306), has a lesbian dimension; certainly, the siren that calls men to their death at sea is not a very comforting heterosexual formulation.

[22] The photographic and filmic record of which is examined by Waugh.

Works Cited


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