No Future for Crips

Disorderly Conduct in the New World Order; or, Disability Studies on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown

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Although the title of this essay invokes disorder, it is ultimately quite skeptical – or perhaps even agnostic – about the work of disorder or the place of 'disorders' in disability studies. I would argue, in fact, for ambivalence about disorder and disorderly conduct as both impossible *and* necessary. This paper ultimately offers what we might call a critically disordered position: a position *critical of* hegemonic deployments of 'disorder' but imagining, through the seduction and transgression of 'disorderly conduct,' understandings of disorder that might be *critically useful or even necessary*.

Critically Disordered

My main source for this analysis is Pedro Almodóvar's film *La Mala Educación* (2004), released in English as *Bad Education*. The essay will use *Bad Education* as a vehicle for reflecting on neoliberalism, tolerance, inclusion, and abjection. Before approaching Almodóvar's film, however, I want to lay out three theoretical points or theses that are behind my analysis of it.

First, whether rejecting or embracing discourses of 'disorder,' there is no purity, no innocence. Consider how the rejection of 'disorder,' by any group, whether lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) activists, disability activists, or anyone else, has functioned. 'We're not disordered' is always a dangerous statement given the degree to which it depends upon conjuring up a 'real' or 'essential' disorder located and embodied somewhere else. Disability studies scholars such as David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder or Douglas Baynton have made similar points, drawing attention to the ways in which various groups have claimed rights and identities based on the proud assertion 'we're not disabled!' (instead, we're gay, we're lesbian, we're women, and so forth). These

scholars are really talking about discourses of disorder or pathology that are disavowed, however, not 'disability' in all its senses; in other words, the proud assertion 'we're not disabled!' has essentially meant 'don't understand us as disordered or pathologized.' When practices of disavowal are conceptualized or specified in this way, it is important to recognize that some disability activists have at times done the same thing – that is, they have distanced themselves from other groups that are then rhetorically associated with a 'real' disorder. Although perhaps less prevalent than in the past, there have likewise been disability activist assertions such as 'we're not perverse' or 'we're not sick!' (we are, instead, disabled, out and proud). The rejection of rhetorics of disorder, then, is never innocent of the very processes of stigmatization that speakers or thinkers are trying to renounce. The same can be said (no purity, no innocence) for the *embrace* of discourses of disorder. The current rejection by some of 'intersex' in favor of 'Disorders of Sexual Development' (DSD), for example, attempts to access a certain innocence, arguing that the embrace of 'disorder' is simply strategic: 'we know it's problematic language,' these activists are essentially saying, 'but we're going to use it for a different, unproblematic, goal – access to care for individuals with DSD.' This innocence, however, does not seem attuned to the dangers of redoubled stigmatization, whether of queers (and there have been claims that disorders of sexual development is preferred because most intersex people feel they are 'normal heterosexuals') or of non-Western (or even non-North American) peoples, some of whom feel a redoubled stigmatization because they had so little input into this new North American rhetoric of 'disorder'.[1] For these reasons, it is important to stress that there is no purity, no innocence, whether one rejects or embraces disorder.

Second, there may be other ways of embracing disorder, but they are *openly non-innocent* (or even – to gesture forward toward my reading of Almodóvar's film – a bit 'bad,' or evil, as in the seductive, desirable, disorderly conduct of my title) and, in some ways, anti-futural. My second point is about futurity because the rhetorics of beauty and order as we have inherited them from the nineteenth century, and as they have been packaged anew by neoliberal capitalism, are always necessarily about a normative future. Embracing disorder in non-innocent ways, then, entails engaging in some way with anti-futural thinking, even if – as I hope will be clear – I am disidentifying with the universalizing and psychoanalytic thought of Lee Edelman in favor of a materialist, crip anti-futurity.[2] Edelman, whom I will discuss more below, is the queer theorist most

1 | For an excellent overview of these controversies, see Alyson K. Spurgas's article "(Un)Queering Identity: The Biosocial Production of Intersex/DSD." See also my own "Afterword: The Future of Critical Intersex."

2 | For a related effort to analyze a crip anti-futurity, specifically through the work of disabled performer Greg Walloch, see my "Fuck the Disabled: The Prequel."

associated with a certain strand of 'anti-futural' thinking in the field. In his book *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, he argues that the future is generally associated with heterosexuality, reproduction, and idealized notions of children and then positions queerness, via Lacanian psychoanalytic thought, as a negative force that continuously undermines this idealization. I will be recognizing the value of a theory critiquing an idealized future, but will not ground my own critique in the universalizing language of psychoanalysis.

Third, to make a point very similar to an earlier thesis in my book *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*: Given the political and cultural economy we currently inhabit, if we live long enough, we will *all* (eventually, repeatedly) reject or disavow disorder (see 198). The disability movement of course often says that if we live long enough, we will all become disabled, but my point is that the forces of normativity, of compulsory heterosexuality and compulsory able-bodiedness, encourage a sometimes-problematic rejection of disorder or disorders that is bigger than any individual and that is caught up in contemporary neoliberal biopolitics. My third point, then, is about the specific world, of neoliberal normativity, that we inhabit right now (and as Edelman consistently fails in *No Future* to attend to that specific world, it is here that the anti-futurity of this essay departs most directly from his). A fourth and final theoretical point, about *identity* and disorder, undergirds this essay, but will emerge organically over the course of it: I will be attending to the ways in which identity itself can be deployed in disciplining ways that attempt to disavow disorder.

La Mala Educación

I begin this section with a very specific figure who has no future. Although this essay is largely a theoretical reflection on the disability movement or disability studies in a moment of danger (our own), my primary text is not always clearly, on the surface, a disability film. *Bad Education*, moreover, is notoriously difficult to summarize, although I will do so, as concisely as possible. Remember as I do, however, that it is the figure in the film with no future that I want you to keep in mind as you read: a heroin-addicted, preoperative transsexual with pallid skin and dirty blonde, unkempt hair who dies of an overdose near the end of the film, as she is typing a letter to her childhood love. Of course, placing this figure in readers' minds paradoxically carries her (this figure with no future) into the future. Nonetheless, I hope to demonstrate just how difficult – well-nigh impossible – the conveyance of the drug-addicted tranny into the future is. Remember her if you can.

The plot of *Bad Education* interweaves three distinct periods: 1964, 1977, and 1980. In 1980, an actor claiming to be Ignacio Rodríguez (Gael García Bernal), but now going by the stage name of Ángel Andrade, arrives at the

office of gay filmmaker Enrique Goded (Fele Martínez) to sell him on a script called "La Visita." It turns out that Ángel's script (which comes to life on screen as Enrique reads it) fictionalizes Enrique and Ignacio's experiences as boys together in Catholic school in 1964: their pre-adolescent love and sexual play; the discovery of their affair by their literature teacher, Father Manolo; Enrique's expulsion from the school; and Ignacio's sacrifice for his boyhood love by acquiescing to the predatory advances of Father Manolo in an attempt to keep the full details of their affair and sexual experimentation from emerging. The 1977 section of the story (continuing the script) has the adult Ignacio returning to the school in rural Valencia to blackmail Father Manolo. Now working as the transgender performer Zahara, and living as a woman, Ignacio demands money that will enable her to pay for sex-reassignment surgery. In return, she will remain silent about the abuse she survived as a boy.

The actor Ángel in the 1980 segments of the film and the performer Zahara in the 1977 segments are absolutely seductive, partly by virtue of Bernal's amazing performance and mostly by virtue of their function in the narrative. I argue, in fact, that audiences are – in a sort of trademark Almodóvar move – encouraged to fall in love with these offbeat gay and transgender figures. I call them gay and transgender pointedly to comprehend them contingently in relation to those identity categories, even though one (Ángel) is an actor and that the other (Zahara) is a performer – they are, in other words, in the business of taking on and off identities. With some qualifications, however, I argue that audiences are, in fact, encouraged to receive them as gay, or as transgender – identities increasingly tolerated in the New Spain, whether we are talking about the 'hedonistic' post-dictatorship, post-Franco days of the late 1970s and early 1980s or (even more) the neoliberal present, when the film was released (see D'Lugo 122). Even if, as with any film noir, you are always aware that something is amiss, you are seduced by their performance and you fall in love.

It turns out, however, that Ángel is not the real Ignacio. Through a bit of detective work in 1980, Enrique – who begins an affair with Ángel after reading the script – learns that the *real* Ignacio died in 1977, and that his younger brother Juan (again, Gael García Bernal) has assumed Ignacio's identity and his story to jump-start his acting career. A man named Mr. Berenguer (Lluís Homar), who formerly had been the priest Father Manolo but is now a successful and married business executive, arrives at Enrique's office and eventually tells him the truth: the real Ignacio had been a heroin-addicted transsexual who had attempted to blackmail Berenguer for a million pesetas. In the remaining 1977 scenes, which unfold for audiences through a series of flashbacks as Berenguer tells the (real) story, the actual Ignacio (Francisco Boira) plans to use the blackmail money on drug rehab and reassignment surgery. In the process of delivering what Ignacio demands, however, Berenguer becomes erotically obsessed with Ignacio's brother Juan and, as the two begin an affair, they plot

to murder Ignacio and run off with the money Berenguer is acquiring from the bank. Juan and Berenguer provide the dosage of pure heroin that will lead to her death, and audiences watch as Ignacio overdoses at the typewriter, halfway through the first sentence of a letter: "Enrique, I think I have succeeded...."

In what follows, I read *Bad Education* as a crip film in and through what can be read as its critique of tolerance, identity, neoliberalism, and futurity. In preparation for that (concluding) argument, however, I turn first, in the next section, to a somewhat extended consideration of the antifutural or antisocial theses that I introduced above and that are, at this point, well-known in queer theory but that have not generally had a clear analogue in disability studies. Ultimately, even as I am critical of Edelman's version of anti-futurity in *No Future*, this essay – in the interest of *furthering* the critique of tolerance and neoliberalism legible in *Bad Education* and highlighting the problems neoliberalism has with disorderly conduct – provides some notes toward an antisocial thesis in disability studies or crip theory.[3] My subtitle for the essay, "Disability Studies on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown," nods toward yet another Almodóvar film that writes breakdowns into its very title; my subtitle also metaphorizes disability in ways that the field generally disciplines or teaches us to be wary of. The metaphorization, however, is intended to suggest that a crip push toward the antisocial always has the potential to undo disability studies as we think we know it, questioning or unraveling both the identity of the field and some of the most recognizable identities *in* the field: proud, visible disability identities seeking inclusion in society as it is currently constituted; that is, society in its late capitalist, neoliberal form.

No Future for Crips

In *No Future*, Edelman calls on us to fuck the future (see 29). In a complex analysis of the figure of what he calls "the Child" in contemporary politics, culture, and society (with the capital C signifying that it is a figuration or ideal), Edelman argues against what he calls "reproductive futurism" (2). According to Edelman, reproductive futurism, across the political spectrum (indeed, defining politics as such), compels us, over and over, to invest in the future for the sake of our children. Founding what Edelman describes as the only permissible or imaginable future and the only imaginable social order, reproductive futurism requires us to "kneel at the shrine of the sacred Child: the Child who might witness lewd or inappropriate intimate behavior; the Child who might find information about dangerous 'lifestyles' on the Internet; the Child who might

3 | Other theorists in the field considering these issues include Anna Mollow and Fiona Kumari Campbell. Campbell's piece "Re-cognising Disability" is explicitly in conversation with an earlier (unpublished) version of this essay.

choose a provocative book from the shelves of the public library" (Edelman 19 et seq.). If the adult is always (regretfully) implicated in desire, the Child is the figure for the future who is always unmarked by desire and in need of protection from it. Queerness, in turn, is for Edelman always that which disrupts this phantasmatic figuration of childhood and innocence; queers, he claims, are phobically figured or produced by the social order as the primary threat to reproductive futurism and, consequently, to the sacred Child (14).

Blasphemously, Edelman calls on us *not* to resist or decry that phobic figuration, as – for example – normative movements for gay marriage, military service, or adoption invariably do, thereby jumping on the bandwagon of reproductive futurism and phobically shifting the burden of queerness to more abject others: don't worry, we're not like *that*, we're just like you, we're not your worst nightmare. Edelman, instead, wonders what it might mean to *acquiesce* to the charge that we are society's worst nightmare and to embrace our figuration as the negative force working against the social order: "without ceasing to refute the lies that pervade [...] familiar right-wing diatribes [about our capacity to destroy society], do we also have the courage to acknowledge, and even embrace, their correlative truths?" (22). In his most notorious (or nefarious) assertion, Edelman goes on to insist, "Fuck the social order and the Child in whose name we're collectively terrorized; fuck Annie; fuck the waif from *Les Mis*; fuck the poor, innocent kid on the Net; fuck Laws both with capital ls and with small; fuck the whole network of Symbolic relations and the future that serves as its prop" (29).

Although he does not say it directly in his litany of children being fucked, we might add, for our own purposes, following Anna Mollow, "fuck Tiny Tim" (Mollow 296), since earlier in his study, Edelman insists that pitiful and innocent literary characters such as Tiny Tim, from Charles Dickens's novel *A Christmas Carol*, are invariably endangered by evil, narcissistic (and, not incidentally, unmarried) men. Only when Ebenezer Scrooge renounces his queer, antisocial peculiarities and joins the community in an embrace of the figure of the Child is Tiny Tim ensured a future. Or, to again put it slightly differently for our purposes, through Scrooge's rehabilitation, the crip formerly known as Tiny Tim becomes the Child in whose name the only acceptable future can again be scripted. 'Fuck that,' Edelman implicitly says.

Edelman's argument in *No Future* is essentially exceptionalist (which, along with its psychoanalytic universalism, is my main critique of it). Edelman, in other words, sees queerness *in particular* as the (universalized) negative force that disrupts or destroys the social order and reproductive futurism. But as the location of the disabled Tiny Tim and other examples suggest (such as the first set of pictures in the book, which includes a still of Tom Hanks in an oxygen mask as his character is treated for HIV/AIDS in the 1993 film *Philadelphia*), *No Future* – and by extension, antifutural thinking in general – is saturated with

disability, and the sacred Child, the one projected into the future, is *always* able-bodied: 'Everybody,' after all, or so the saying goes, 'wants a healthy baby.' At the same time, despite this commonplace desire, the imagined future is actually inescapably inaccessible; no real, flesh-and-blood child can ever embody the innocence, health, and ability associated with the sacred Child. This universal inaccessibility, however, does not stop (and in fact propels) the production of both queers *and* crips as scapegoats – monstrous figures endangering the Child and blocking access to the future we supposedly all desire.

Given the related antifutural function played by queers and crips in or against the social order, it is somewhat puzzling that the antisocial thesis is only barely legible in contemporary disability studies (although it is perhaps, in my mind, *because of* the limited usefulness of psychoanalysis for disability studies). It becomes all the more puzzling when we consider the particular array of illegitimate figures currently populating queer theory: over and over again, the queer theory we seem to want these days – again, in opposition to the normative thrust of the mainstream LGBT movement – is concerned with the invalidated and the unthinkable; with figures that are sick, infected, disordered, deranged, addicted, scarred, wounded, or traumatized (McRuer and Mollow 26-27).

Judith Halberstam, for instance (to bring forward a less problematic 'antisocial' queer theorist working in a more materialist and less exceptionalist vein than Edelman – and openly shaping alternatives to his particular anti-futurity), argues for what she calls "queer time" as that which is non-productive, wasteful, and even toxic. As I quote from Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, note two things: first, how able-bodied the *dominant* life cycle she sketches is and, second, how the figure or exemplar she imagines as *outside* this life cycle – a figure who indeed might be read as queer – might as easily (or, really, *more* easily?) be read as 'disabled' or crip. Halberstam writes:

> "I try to use the concept of queer time to make clear how respectability, and notions of the normal on which it depends, may be upheld by a middle-class logic of reproductive temporality. And so, in Western cultures, we chart the emergence of the adult from the dangerous and unruly period of adolescence as a desired process of maturation; and we create longevity as the most desirable future, applaud the pursuit of long life (under any circumstances), and pathologize modes of living that show little or no concern for longevity. Within the life cycle of the Western human subject, long periods of stability are considered to be desirable, and people who live in rapid bursts (drug addicts, for example) are characterized as immature and even dangerous." (4-5)

Halberstam confirms here what I considered at the outset – how difficult it is to hang on to/convey into the future the figure of the drug-addicted tranny.

Following Halberstam, in fact, we might now read her as an *exemplary* figure against whom hegemonic, able-bodied notions of futurity are shaped. It is difficult to convey someone into the future if, by *definition*, the future is where and what she is not.

As I suggested, contemporary queer theory is full of exemplary figures, like Halberstam's drug addict, who are sick, infectious, obsessed, crazy, unstable, or deranged. It is fascinating to me both that we really do not question the queerness of such figures and that the more unusual academic argument is the crip theory argument I am making here, an argument that would read such figures, rather (or additionally), in relation to disability.

Ability Trouble; or, Disabled Liberalism

My critique in the previous section was, primarily, of elisions in queer theory, of an exceptionalism that makes it difficult to comprehend how disability is connected to our most central arguments. To excavate further why we have such trouble reading all the crips in contemporary queer theory in relation to disability, however, I turn now to some tentative, very qualified critiques of the disability movement. The absence of an antisocial thesis in disability studies, I argue, in part has to do with the dominance of liberalism in the field and movement. Although it is changing rapidly, it is still possible to say that, after other fields (feminism, critical race theory, queer theory) have sharply critiqued inclusion, tolerance, or multiculturalism, or have moved to more radical questions about the limits of tolerance or about figures who are always already excluded from, or sacrificed by, multiculturalism, the disability movement (in and out of the academy) at times remains a project largely indebted to liberalism.

One relatively famous example will have to suffice for my purposes, and poetically, the example will carry us back to 1977, the year of Ignacio's death. In April 1977, a month now often understood as a 'coming of age' moment for the disability movement in the United States (at least as the moment is narrated in disability studies), disabled activists demonstrated in Washington, D.C., at the home and at the offices of Secretary Joseph Califano of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). These activists were protesting the Carter Administration's failure to enforce section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibited discrimination against disabled people by any institution receiving federal funding.

Demonstrations for section 504 took place at several other regional offices; in California more than 120 activists occupied San Francisco City Hall for almost a month. Since many of the protesters did not have attendants with them, or other necessary services or equipment, their lives were literally on the line. Joseph P. Shapiro calls the occupation "their own disability city, a mini Woodstock" and details how other groups (the Black Panthers, and a gay group

called the Butterfly Brigade) expressed solidarity with the protestors and helped to facilitate the action (69).[4] For many of us (because I myself repeat what I am critiquing here, as I read, teach, or talk about the event), the City Hall take-over – with its emphasis on emerging disability identities and disability community – consolidated the disability movement for the future. Not only was section 504 successfully implemented (on April 28, 1977); so too was the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (later known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). This legislation had passed earlier in the decade (1975) but was never enforced. And, perhaps, the poetics of an investment in futurity again bringing us back to children should not be lost.

I want to be very clear: I would never want to argue that these 1977 events were not important; I would never want to argue that they were not good, or even great. They were, however (and given the compulsory, celebratory position we are meant to have on these events, even saying this seems blasphemous and diminishing), in some structural ways, liberal appeals, first, to the state for inclusion and, second, to society (increasingly understood as multicultural) for tolerance of difference. And thus, inescapably, the contradictions of liberalism are apparent in the wake of these events: liberal tolerance, inclusion, and community all have clear limits. Indeed, President Jimmy Carter and Joseph Califano, Shapiro tells us, "were afraid of the public outcry if alcoholics, drug addicts, and homosexuals were to claim protection under the law" (66). Would the crips and queers from the previous section be understood as part of the disability community I am bringing forward, a community entering in the late 1970s, to ironically call back the language Halberstam used, 'a desired process of maturation'? Officially, and again this is not to diminish the incredible 'success' of the City Hall take-over, the answer was an unequivocal 'no,' since the Department of Health Education and Welfare had already concluded that

4 | For a critique of what she calls the "gay liberalism" of the Butterfly Brigade, a group whose motivation was to serve as a neighborhood watch keeping the streets safe for gay people, see Christina Hanhardt's Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence (81-116). To my knowledge, the Butterfly Brigade's participation in alliance with disabled activists in the City Hall occupation has always been read positively, and I would not argue otherwise, although I think it is important (especially in the context of what I am attempting in this section) to read them in the stories we tell as an ambivalent sign rather than as an easy guarantor of solidarity, coalition, and multiculturalism. Hanhardt's study is an important reminder that gay politics of the 1970s was complex and multi-faceted and that some campaigns for autonomous and safe (and identity-based) space, including the campaigns spearheaded by the Butterfly Brigade, materialized (often racialized) others as 'disorderly' (and even dangerous) and in need of stricter policing (policing that was carried out in the name of protecting newly-identifiable, 'safe,' gay spaces).

indeed (disorderly) alcoholics, drug addicts, and homosexuals would not be eligible to claim protection based on these documents (see Shapiro 66).

We cannot, currently, do without actions such as the HEW protests or documents such as section 504 or – to move a decade into the future, when other queercrips (most notably transsexuals), were explicitly excluded from a different state document even as some more, those with HIV/AIDS, were included – the Americans with Disabilities Act.[5] I am, however, as I move back towards some final reflections on *Bad Education*, extending Walter Benjamin's famous assertion that "there has never been a document of *culture* which is not at one and the same time a document of barbarism" (Benjamin cited in Spivak 168). Documents in disability history (those generated by, or as a result of, the movement) have not, to my knowledge, been analyzed for their 'barbarism.' A literal reading of Benjamin's dictum, however, does not really allow for a free pass: *there has never been* a non-barbaric document of culture.[6] Were I to trace the operations of Benjaminian 'barbarism' in relation to section 504 and the City Hall take-over, then, I would note two things: *whether necessary or not*, the ready sacrifice of alcoholics, drug addicts, and homosexuals is barbaric, and – even more – the always-celebratory, post-1977 narration of the events as *unequivocal* achievements carrying us into the future – a narration that erases the sacrifice upon which the achievement is founded (and thereby redoubles the sacrifice) – is barbaric. Do not get me wrong, I am certainly not advocating now reading 1977 as a bleak year in disability history. I am arguing that we should read that history rigorously, understand its connection to liberalism, understand how liberalism and neoliberalism continue to shape or found disability studies and the other fields in which we work, and always grapple with the sacrifices and erasures liberalism demands. Benjamin would argue that there are no unequivocal achievements in modernity. And I would add that it is simply bad education to suggest otherwise.

5 | The most important reading of these 1977 events is Susan Schweik's essay, which does in fact read beyond liberalism to what I would call excess, as she identifies the radical excess – the black power – undergirding the City Hall take-over. Schweik's analysis makes possible a key distinction between the specific goal (articulated through an appeal to the state) and excessive, unpredictable alliances and forms of solidarity that were made possible by the event.

6 | These points are adapted from Nicole Markotić's and my essay "Leading with Your Head" (167-168).

Volver; or, Almodóvar y los Minusválidos

My contention in the previous section was that the extent to which we have been defined by liberalism has largely precluded the development of an antisocial thesis in disability studies. In this final section, I return to *Bad Education* and the figure with no future in the Spain imagined by Almodóvar. Almodóvar himself articulates, as early as the late 1980s, some of the points about his films that are now foundational theses for those approaching his work: "[My films] represent more than others, I suppose, the New Spain, this kind of new mentality that appears in Spain after Franco dies, especially after 1977 till now. Stories about the New Spain have appeared in the mass media of every country. Everybody has heard that now everything is different in Spain [...]. I think in my films they see how Spain has changed" (cited in D'Lugo 131). Marvin D'Lugo underscores this assessment, not only in relation to the films of the immediate post-Franco period, but also in relation to more recent films, including *Bad Education*. The films *Bad Education* and *Live Flesh* (Spanish original: *Carne Trémula*), for instance, are examples for D'Lugo of Almodóvar wrestling with the ways in which "the demons of the past survive in new forms," and with "the problematic persistence of Old Spain in its varied disguises" (127 and 128). That the period between *Live Flesh* and *Bad Education* (1997-2004) is marked (like the period of this writing) by the dominance of the conservative Partido Popular suggests that Almodóvar continues to stand for some notion of an open and liberated "New Spain" as against what D'Lugo calls "the specters of Francoism" (127).[7]

While not disagreeing with D'Lugo (or Almodóvar himself, for that matter), I am uncomfortable, at this point, with the stark distinction between Old Spain and New Spain, particularly because that binary opposition fails to do justice to the new New Spain – to the ways, that is, in which neoliberalism has taken hold in Spain. The new New Spain is, at this point, one of the most gay-friendly locations in the world. Not only is an openly gay filmmaker one of the country's most recognizable, globally-disseminated commodities, but 70% of the population supported gay marriage at the time of its ratification in 2004 (when *Bad Education* premiered), representations of 'tolerance' or acceptance of homosexuality abound, and Madrid, Barcelona, Sitges, and other locations

7 | "Old Spain" would be the repressive fascist dictatorship of Francisco Franco, which lasted from 1939 until Franco's death in 1975. The period following the dictatorship was characterized both by a greater openness and also a wariness about the ways in which repression lingered on or took new forms. Spain has been dominated by two parties since the dictatorship, the conservative Partido Popular and the centrist Socialist Democrats. Almodóvar is making films in the "New Spain," but specters of repression linger on, regardless of the desire to move beyond the country's dark history.

are major gay tourist sites marketed to gay-identified consumers everywhere. The San Francisco gay travel magazine *Passport* announces, for instance, "Few cities in Europe boast the kind of frenetic fun people can experience in Madrid [...]. A few may be coy about their sexuality outside the gay quarters or at work, but once they get to Chuecea [Madrid's most famous gay neighborhood] – well, you'll have to see it with your own eyes" (cited in Giorgio 60). In this context, I argue, 'Old Spain,' even as it does persist in spectral forms, is at times a bit of a straw target. I also contend that neoliberal tolerance or even celebration of gay people is more complicated than it at first appears and that those complications are legible in a film like *Bad Education*.

Gabriel Giorgio, in his essay "Madrid *en Tránsito*: Travelers, Visibility, and Gay Identity," argues that "in a democracy that still needs to demonstrate its strength and its resemblance to the older, so-called advanced democracies of the United States and northern Europe, gay visibility [in Spain] stands out as a symbol, a token of social tolerance and achieved freedom" (61). To borrow a line from a courtroom scene in another Spanish film of 2004, Alejandro Amenábar's *Mar adentro* (*The Sea Inside*), where lawyers are attempting to make precisely this sharp distinction between a dark past and a bright present: "We are a civilized nation." If, in the New Spain gender and sexual difference marked 'freedom' and 'liberation' in opposition to the 'repression' of the fascist past, in the new New Spain, gay bodies now mark civilization and tolerance as opposed to barbarism and irrationality. Gay identity (indeed, identity in general) is, I argue, disciplined in this new, neoliberal formation. Giorgio insists that gayness "sets in motion a narrative that locates bodies in a geopolitical order, making them visible in some ways and determining their visibility under different conditions" (73). For Giorgio, a legible gay identity in Spain now marketed globally to gay and non-gay consumers (decidedly different conditions from the immediate post-Franco years) ghosts larger economic and cultural processes. For Giorgio in his essay, the new New Spain is 'open' and 'tolerant' in relation to gay identity, but this tolerance can mask other forms of exploitation, such as the exploitation of immigrant labor and immigrant bodies.

Bad Education, in my reading, can be interpreted as exposing or disordering this neoliberal pedagogy. Tellingly, Almodóvar gives us, in the film (this would be, in fact, a nutshell summary of the film), a gay filmmaker (Enrique) caught up in processes or histories much larger than himself. And, indeed, outside the film, Almodóvar likewise cannot fully control the uses to which his own body and identity are put – as one of Spain's most recognizable commodities, he is inescapably a character in the new gay-friendly story about a tolerant, civilized, cosmopolitan Spain. *Bad Education*, however, seduces you with gay and transgender identities that you learn to tolerate or even love, and then strikes *back* against that compulsory affect, pulling the rug out from under you and giving you a figure that is almost impossible to love, a figure that has

no future in the new social order, a disorderly and drug-addicted crip who fails spectacularly even as she types the unfinished sentence "Enrique, I think I have succeeded…" (and remember here what I said earlier about no unequivocal achievements or successes in modernity).

Since I invoked *The Sea Inside* a moment ago, one might conclude that disability in general functions somewhat differently from sex and gender in the new New Spain. *The Sea Inside* arguably puts forward quite negative views of disability, because it is a film about a quadriplegic, Ramón Sampedro (Javier Bardem), who feels his life has no value and who thus petitions the state for the right to end that life. The award-winning film (it won the Oscar for best foreign film in 2004) both represents the seemingly 'rational' desire of a quadriplegic to kill himself and schools you in how 'we' should respond (in an orderly fashion): "We are a civilized nation," Ramón Sampedro's lawyers argue in court as they advocate for his death. One might conclude from the invocation of *The Sea Inside*, in other words, that even as some gay bodies are now tolerated or 'included,' disabled bodies are still 'excluded' in expected ways and that a disabled life is necessarily perceived as intolerable. Yet as I said at the beginning, my concern is the disability movement in a moment of danger (our own, neoliberal moment) and – as Michel Foucault famously recognized, arguing "not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous" (231-232) – moments of danger always present a range of possible responses or outcomes. As it narrates for itself a story of civilization and tolerance, then, the new New Spain can, without question, in a very familiar (although I would call it residual) move, position recognizably disabled bodies like Sampedro's as expendable. But recognizably disabled bodies can *also* be disciplined in ways not unlike recognizably gay bodies, and this, I would say, represents a more emergent neoliberal discourse in Spain (and elsewhere) today, a discourse again organized around identity and again ghosting much larger and exploitative cultural and economic processes: As Jesús Hernández, accessibility director of Spain's ONCE Foundation (Spain's largest disability organization) insists, in relation to the new disabled tourism, "No te preocupes de mis derechos, preocúpate de mi cartera" – "don't overly concern yourself about my rights, pay attention to my wallet!" ("Preocúpate").

Bad Education is a crip film because it paradoxically keeps alive the notion that there is no future for crips even as it critically disorders or critiques the futures we are inheriting (and 'critique' is necessarily futural, so my point here is that the film – simultaneously futural and antifutural – hands us a logical contradiction that exceeds Edelman's over-simplified embrace of queer negativity). The real Ignacio dies, in the film, imbibing a substance that she herself needs but cannot biologically 'tolerate.' Similarly, at another level, through figurations that cannot be tolerated or re-membered to fit the new social order but that also can never be entirely forgotten, Almodóvar presents

us with impossible bodies engaged in disorderly conduct – with (put differently) disorderly specters that we, in the interest of always-expanding notions of crip justice, must attend to.

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