

Pedro Zamora's *Real World* of Counterpublicity: Performing an Ethics of the Self

Pedro Zamora died on November 11, 1994. He was twenty-two. The day after his death, a cover story appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*. The article explained that Pedro received thousands of fan letters a week. It quoted one from a South Carolina woman, who wrote: "I never thought anyone could change my opinion of homosexuals and AIDS. Because of you I saw the human side of something that once seemed so unreal to me." The letter speaks to Pedro's intervention in the public sphere. It bears witness to the difference this young Latino's life's work made. In this chapter, I will suggest that although these interventions in the majoritarian public sphere were important, one would fail to understand the efficacy of the activist's tactics and the overall success of his life's work if one only considered such letters. Pedro's work enabled the possibility of queer and Latino counterpublics, spheres that stand in opposition to the racism and homophobia of the dominant public sphere. Through this labor one begins to glimpse new horizons of experience.

~~In what follows, I will outline the activism and cultural interventions of television activist Pedro Zamora and describe the way in which he performed what I understand as a Foucauldian ethics of the self. This "working on the self" allowed Zamora to take a *next* step: a leap into the social through the public performance of an ethics of the self. I will also call attention to the ways in which this Cuban-American cultural worker's performances accomplished tasks that enabled the enactment of queer and Latino identity practices in a phobic public sphere. These tasks include the denouncement of the dominant public sphere's publicity that fixes images and understandings of queerness and *latinidad*; the enactment of resistance to the reductive multicultural pluralism that is deployed against them; the production of an intervention within the majoritarian public sphere that confronts phobic ideology; and the production of counterpublicity that allows the *possibility* of subaltern counterpublics.~~

In *The Care of the Self*, the third volume of his *History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault elaborated, through a tour of antiquity and its philosophical underpinnings, an ethics of the self—a working on the self for others.¹ *The Care of the Self* emphasizes an ethics around nourishing and sustaining a self within civil society. It is ultimately expedient to cite one of Foucault's more elucidating interviews at some length for the purpose of explicating "the care of the self" and its roots in Hellenistic and Greco-Roman culture:

What interests me in the Hellenistic culture, in the Greco-Roman culture, starting from the third century BC and continuing until the second or third century after Christ, is a precept for which the Greeks had a specific word, *epimeleia heautou*, which means taking care of oneself. It does not mean simply being interested in oneself, nor does it mean having a certain tendency to self-attachment or self-fascination. *Epimeleia heautou* is a very powerful word in Greek which means "working on" or "being concerned with" something. For example, Xenophon used *epimeleia heautou* to describe agricultural management. The responsibility of a monarch for his fellow citizens was also *epimeleia heautou*. That which a doctor does in the course of caring for the patient is *epimeleia heautou*. It is therefore a very powerful word; it describes a sort of work, an activity; it implies attention, knowledge, technique.²

I consider the work of televisual activist Zamora to be just such a sort of "work" that disseminated and "publicized" "attentions, knowledges, and techniques" that are consequential to the project of minoritarian subjectivity. I will suggest that Zamora worked within *The Real World*, which one should never forget is a product of the corporate entity MTV, and yet still managed to find ways to do this work *despite* the corporate ethos that ordered that program. Foucault had, at a later stage in his thinking, decided that our understanding of power could be augmented by richer discourse on the subject. Work on the ethics of self ultimately allows us a new vantage point to consider the larger games of truth that organize the social and the relations of these games to states of domination. Within the structure of MTV, and its corporate structure, Zamora performed his care of the self as truth game that "was for others," letting them see and imagine a resistance to entrenched systems of domination.

It is important to note that Foucault's "care of the self" is based on the lives of citizens and not slaves within antiquity. George Yúdice has pointed out this limit in Foucault's project and has gone on to theorize how an "ethics of marginality" might be extracted from Foucault's project:

The problem with Foucault's analysis, as I see it, is that the examples are drawn from the aesthetic practices of Greek freeman and, more important, modernist art. In both cases only elites engage in these particular types of self-analysis and self-formation. This does not mean, however, that Foucault's framework prohibits a priori other types of self-formation related to different social groups. On the contrary, insofar as knowledge, politics (power), and ethics mutually condition each other, despite their relative autonomy, the particularities of the group

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that engages in ethical practices (its knowledges, its politics) must be taken into consideration. If Foucault could trace the genealogy for dominant groups, it should be equally possible to trace that of dominated and oppressed peoples.³

Yúdice outlines the very specific origins of Foucault's paradigm. He suggests that even though elitist and First Worldist limitations exist within Foucault's paradigm, this does not mean that "Foucault's framework prohibits a priori other types of self-formation related to different social groups." Yúdice uses Rigoberta Menchú's *testimonio*, *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, as an example when unfolding his theory of an ethics of marginality. He uses the case of Menchú to amend Foucault's notion of "an aesthetics of existence" and transform it into an ethics in which practical politics plays a central role. Yúdice explains that "We might say that a 'practical poetics' is the ethical 'self-forming activity' in which the 'self' is practiced in solidarity with others struggling for survival. Menchú, in fact, has turned her identity into a 'poetics of defense.'"⁴ The example of Menchú and her *testimonio* potentially elucidates our understanding of the politics that undergirds Zamora's uses of the self, his care of the self for others. *The Real World* employs what it calls "video confessionals." These confessionals have been small rooms within the cast's living space where individual members are encouraged to "confess" to the camera outside the space of social negotiation. These spaces have been used by the cast as sites where they could perform their selves solo and in private. Real Worlders have used these solo performances to argue for themselves and their identities. These spaces of self-formation are, of course, highly mediated by MTV, even more mediated than Menchú's *testimonio*, which was transcribed and heavily edited by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray. Yet, this corporate mediation does not foreclose the counterpublic building possibilities within these video *testimonios*. Whereas his housemates and cast members from other seasons used the video confessionals to weigh in on domestic squabbles, Zamora used them as vehicles to perform the self for others. Zamora's work, these quotidian video performances, function like video *testimonios* that convert identity into a "poetics of defense."

Following Yúdice's lead, I am disidentifying with Foucault's paradigm insofar as I am redeploying it and, to a certain extent, restructuring it, in the service of minoritarian identity. This chapter is interested in imagining an ethic of the minoritarian self. Within a Foucauldian framework recalibrated to consider the minoritarian subject's care of the self, to work on oneself is to veer away from models of the self that correlate with socially prescribed identity narratives. The rejection of these notions of the self is not simply an individualistic rebellion: resisting dominant modes of subjection entails not only contesting dominant modalities of governmental and state power but also opening up a space for new social formations. The performance of Latina/o, queer, and other minoritarian ontologies—which is to say the theatricalization of such ethics of the self—conjures the possibility of social agency within a

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world bent on the negation of minoritarian subjectivities. My project here is to map and document a minoritarian ethics of the self and, more important, the ways in which representations of and (simultaneously) by that self signal new spaces within the social. I will also suggest that the televisual dissemination of such performances allows for the possibility of counterpublics—communities and relational chains of resis-

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tance that contest the dominant public sphere. Within radical movements, Zamora's work may not register as progressive enough or may be seen as redundant. The fact that he agreed to work within the tepid multicultural frame of the corporate entity MTV might immediately diminish his significance to already-established activist communities. It is my contention that Zamora's work was not for other activists, queer or Latino, but was instead for a world of potentially politicized queers and Latinos; for a mass public that is structured by the cultural forces of homophobia and racism; for those who have no access to more subculturally based cultural production and grassroots activism. Thus, Zamora's activism preaches to the not yet converted, and in doing so may not seem as radical as the work of other activists, but should be acknowledged as frontline struggle and agitation.

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My focus on a nexus of identity markers that circulate around queer and Latino is of importance for various reasons. The AIDS emergency has become a painful habit of being for many of us. Those of us who live inside and around Latino communities and queer communities know the ways in which so much has been lost—indeed, that (the present and far too many futures have been robbed). [The necessity of publicizing such ethics of the self, of moving these ethics beyond the privatized zones of individual identities, is great during our contemporary health crisis.

But AIDS is only one of the reasons why publicizing and performing an ethics of self seems so essential for Latina/o and/or queer politics. The disjunctures between queer and Latino communities are many. The mainstream gay community ignores or exoticizes Latino bodies, while many Latino communities promote homophobia. Yet, as of November 1994, the month Zamora died, the linkages between queerness and *latinidad* have never seemed so poignant. The congressional election, nicknamed the "Republican revolution" by some news media pundits, made the headlines by establishing the New Right's majority status in the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives. This reactionary tidal wave also included legislation that was calibrated to legislate against certain identities. Although two antigay measures were barely defeated in Idaho and Colorado, California's Proposition 187, which further erodes the nation's civil rights by denying health care and education to immigrants who have been classified as "illegal" by the state apparatus, was passed. The targeted immigrant communities are non-Europeans, especially Latinos. An antilesbian and gay measure passed in Colorado in 1992—which read very much like the barely defeated ordinances in Idaho and Oregon—proposed that lesbians and gay men be stripped of any basic civil rights that would acknowledge and protect their minority status. The 1992 Colorado proposition was eventually overruled by the Supreme Court. None-

theless, the popularity of homophobia, racism, and can be argued that these there is something particular sphere announces these around. Indeed, homophobia popular agenda issues. Th as countless speakers at their anti-immigrant and 1996 GOP convention Robertson from roles of v be relocated right below the time camouflage and spelled out in the GOP further attacks on immig-

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theless, the popularity of such initiatives says something about the national body: homophobia, racism, and xenophobia are being codified in legislation. Certainly, it can be argued that these hate discourses have always been the law of the land, yet there is something particularly disturbing about the fact that the majoritarian public sphere announces these prohibitions and discriminatory practices as sites to rally around. Indeed, homohatred and Latino bashing are two of the New Right's most popular agenda issues. The 1992 Republican convention made all of this quite clear as countless speakers at the podium and delegates interviewed on the floor voiced their anti-immigrant and "pro-family" (which is always anti-queer) rhetoric. The 1996 GOP convention chose to remove ultraright zealots Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson from roles of visibility, thus allowing much of their politics of exclusion to be relocated right below the surface of the televisual proceedings. Despite this prime-time camouflage and a hollow rhetoric of "inclusion," the New Right's agenda, spelled out in the GOP platform, still promised a repeal of civil-rights legislation, further attacks on immigrants, xenophobic welfare reform, and more family values.

I am interested here in unveiling moments in which the majoritarian public sphere's publicity—its public discourse and reproduction of that discourse—is challenged by performances of counterpublicity that defy its discriminatory ideology. Counterpublicity is disseminated through acts that are representational and political interventions in the service of subaltern counterpublics.⁵ The philosopher Nancy Fraser, following the work of other writers, has criticized Jürgen Habermas's account of the public sphere for focusing primarily on the constitution of one monolithic bourgeois public sphere at the expense of considering other possibilities for publicity. Even though Habermas's work is essentially a critique of the bourgeois public sphere, his lack of recourse to counterpublics essentially reinscribes the exclusionary logic and universalism of the bourgeois public sphere. Counterpublics, for Fraser, "contest[ed] the exclusionary norms of the 'official' bourgeois public sphere, elaborating alternative styles of political behavior and alternative norms of public speech."⁶ Fraser points to the significance of subaltern counterpublics for women, people of color, gay men and lesbians, and other subordinated groups. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge describe the public sphere as being composed of various forms of publicity that are connected to different communities and modalities of publicity. Negt and Kluge's work maintains that counterpublics often emerge out of already-existing industrial and commercial channels of publicity, especially the electronic media.⁷

The act of performing counterpublicity in and through electronic/televisual sites dominated by the dominant public sphere is risky. Many representations of counterpublicity are robbed of any force by what Miriam Hansen has called the "marketplace of multicultural pluralism."⁸ The practices of queer and Latino counterpublicity—acts that publicize and theatricalize an ethics of the self—that I am mapping present strategies that resist, often through performances that insist on local specificities and historicity, the pull of reductive multicultural pluralism.

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The best way we can understand the categories *queer* and Latina/o or *latinidad* is as counterpublics that are in opposition to other social factions. What is primarily at stake is space. The mode of counterpublicity I am discussing makes an intervention in public life that defies the white normativity and heteronormativity of the majoritarian public sphere. Thus, I am proposing that these terms be conceptualized as social movements that are contested by and contest the public sphere for the purposes of political efficacy—movements that not only “remap” but also produce minoritarian space.

The theoretical schools I am blending here—social theory influenced by Habermas and Foucault’s discourse analysis—are more often than not pitted against each other. Habermas’s thinking appeals to and attempts to reconstruct rationality. Foucault’s, in its very premise, is a critique of rationality. The mappings that public-sphere social theory provide are extremely generative ones. Yet, as I leave the work of social theorists such as Negt and Kluge, Hansen, and Fraser and return to the major source of these paradigms, Habermas, I find myself having misgivings with his project’s philosophical tenets—namely, his use of and investment in communicative reason.⁹ Habermasian communicative reason presupposes that within the framing of all communicative gestures there exists an appeal to an undeniable “good” that would alleviate all disagreements within the social. Foucauldians and others find the category of a universally defined good to be an exceedingly easy target.

My post-Habermasian use of the public sphere is primarily indebted to Negt and Kluge’s critique of Habermas, especially their move to critique the underlying concepts of universal reason that they identify in his project. Their critique utilizes Immanuel Kant’s critical philosophy to problematize the category of an abstract principle of generality. Their work then opens up space to conceptualize multiple publics, complete with their own particularities.

Jon Simmons has explained that it is indeed difficult to locate Foucault on any map of politics inherited from nineteenth-century philosophy. But he goes on to add that

Foucault does belong to a “we,” though this “we” is not easily classifiable according to traditional categories. How does one define the gay movement, feminism, youth protests, the movements of ethnic and national minorities, and the diffuse discontents of clients of educational, health and welfare systems who are identified as single mothers, unemployed, or delinquent? His transgressive practices of self with writing, drugs, gay friendship and S/M operate in the space opened by these movements. Those whose designated desires, genders, ethnic identities, or welfare categorizations do not seem to fit in this space. It is in this space where some women refuse to be feminine and become feminists; in which black-skinned people refuse to be Negroes and become African-Americans; and in which men who desire other men might refuse to be homosexuals and become gay. Like Foucault, they practice politics of those who refuse to be who they are and strive to become other.¹⁰

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The space that Simmons describes is what I consider the transformative political space of disidentification. Here is where Negt and Kluge function for me as valuable supplements to Foucault's mappings of the social. This space, what Simmons calls Foucault's "we," can be given a new materiality and substance when transcoded as counterpublics. Fredric Jameson, in a fascinating essay on Negt and Kluge, sees this connection between the German writers and Foucault, despite the fact that he is ultimately opposed to Foucault and valorizes Negt and Kluge:

The originality of Negt and Kluge, therefore, lies in the way in which the hitherto critical and analytical force of what is widely known as "discourse analysis" (as in Foucault's descriptions of the restrictions and exclusions at work in a range of so-called discursive formations) is now augmented, not to say completed, by the utopian effort to create space of a new type.¹¹

The definition of counterpublics that I am invoking here is intended to describe different subaltern groupings that are defined as falling outside the majoritarian public sphere; it is influenced by a mode of discourse theory that critiques universalities and favors particularities, yet it insists on a Marxian materialist impulse that *regrids* transgressive subjects and their actions as identifiable social movements. Thus, my notion of a counterpublic resonates alongside Simmons's description of "those whose designated desires, genders, ethnic identities, or welfare categorizations do not seem to fit." The object of my study, Pedro Zamora, was, from the purview of the dominant public sphere, one of those who did not seem to fit. In this way, his work can be understood as a counterpublic response to dominant publicity.

The young Cuban-American activist disidentified with that dominant publicity, working with *and* on one of its "channels," MTV. Habermas, following the example of Frankfurt school predecessor Theodor Adorno, would probably see MTV as the providence of monopoly capitalism, locked into a pattern of sameness that was only calibrated to reproduce the consumer. A strict Habermasian reading could never see MTV as a stage where radical work could be executed. Negt and Kluge understand that, in this postmodern moment, the electronic media is essential to the reproduction of state capitalism and counterpublicity. Zamora also understood this. Using his keen sense of counterpublicity, he spotted *The Real World's* potential as an exemplary stage. One need only consider the cover letter he sent MTV when he was applying for the show to understand how the young activist immediately saw the political potential of the medium. I will first cite a section of the letter where his pitch challenges the producers to consider the possibility of having a person living with AIDS on the show:

So why should I be on *The Real World*? Because in the real world there are people living productive lives who just happen to be HIV+. I think it is important for people my age to see a young person who looks and feels healthy, can party and have fun but at the same time needs to take five pills daily to stay healthy.

On one of your episodes this season [season two] you had an HIV+ guy come in and talk about AIDS/HIV with the group. He was there a few hours and he left. I wonder what kind of issues would have come up if that HIV+ guy would be living with the group, sharing the bathroom, the refrigerator, the bedroom, eating together? Everyday for six months. Things that make you go hmmm.¹²

Here Zamora describes the dramatic and televisual energy his inclusion in the show would generate. He does not pitch his project in all its political urgencies. He understands that one needs to disidentify with the application process to be given access to the stage that the cable program provided him. He plays up the fact that his inclusion would make for good TV as well as be an important political intervention. He next speaks to his willingness to sacrifice his own privacy for the sake of his activism:

I know that being on *The Real World* would mean exposing the most intimate details of my life on national television. How comfortable am I with that? Well, I do that through my job every day.

If I can answer the questions of an auditorium full of fifth graders with inquiring minds, I am sure I could do it on national television.¹³

Zamora is willing to sacrifice his right to privacy because he understands that subjects like himself never have full access to privacy. Although the dominant public sphere would like to cast him in the zone of private illness, it is clear that any fantasy of real privacy, as *Bowers v. Hardwick* signals, is always illusory. In this statement, the young activist conveys his understanding that his desires, gender identifications, health, and national and ethnic minority status keep him from having any recourse to the national fantasy of privacy to which other subjects in the public sphere cling.

Magic Johnson, who achieved celebrity before he tested positive for the virus, uses his celebrity and the mass media in ways that are similar to those used by Zamora, who came into celebrity through *The Real World*. Hansen offers a reading of Magic Johnson's case that is so relevant here that it is worth citing at length:

When basketball player Magic Johnson used his resignation upon having tested positive to advocate safe sex he did more than put his star status in the service of a political cause; he made a connection, albeit a highly personalized one, between the industrial-commercial public sphere of sports, its local reappropriation within the African-American community, and the counterpublic struggle surrounding AIDS. While the latter is by now organized on an international scale, it continues to be marginalized domestically as a "special interest," to be denied public status with reference to its roots in gay subculture. Johnson's gesture not only made public a concern that the neoconservative lobby has been trying to delegitimize as private; it also, if only temporarily, opened up a discursive arena, in both mainstream publicity and within the African-American community, in which sexual practices could be discussed and negotiated, rather than merely sensationalized or rendered taboo. Not least, it provided a way to return sex education to schools from which it had disappeared under Reagan.¹⁴

Although there is much to say about the vastly divergent strategies of negotiation that Johnson and Zamora employed, it is useful to consider how the two men's ex-

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amples are similar. Both used the power of celebrity to make counterpublic interventions by way of using the mainstream media, a mode of publicity that is usually hostile to counterpublic politics. Both used their national stages to appear to various publics, including a mass public and the minoritized counterpublics from which they locate their own identities. They also decided to combat the neoconservative strategy of relegating a public health emergency to privatized and individual illness. Practicing a public ethics of the self, both men thematized and theatricalized their illness as public spectacles. The New Right is bent on removing AIDS from the public agenda, nourishing ignorance through the suppression of safe-sex pedagogy, and finally, cutting off federal support to people with AIDS (PWAs) and medical research. To better understand Zamora's example, it is useful to review the show's five-season run, noting shifts in each incarnation of the show.

Since its inception in 1991, MTV's *The Real World* has included queers in its "real-life" ensemble cinema verité-style melodrama. The show's premise is simple: seven videogenic young people, all strangers, are chosen to live in a house together. The twenty-something group is usually racially diverse. Its gender breakdown is usually four men and three women. It has had five different "casts" and five different incarnations, in five different cities: New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, London, and Miami. Each season has included a gay or lesbian character. The New York cast included Norman, a white man who sometimes identified as bisexual and sometimes as gay. While being rather charismatic, Norman was something of a minor character on the show; most of that season focused on the contrived sexual tension between innocent country girl Julie and Eric, a New Jerseyan Herb Ritts model who was nominally straight and went on to host the illustrious MTV dance-party show *The Grind*. Much steam was lost in the show's second season, in which the queer came as a mid-season replacement. Beth was a white lesbian who worked in B horror-movie production. Beth received probably less screen time than any other character in the show's five seasons. Norman and Beth both dated, but their sexual lives were relegated to "special episodes." The way in which these two characters were contained and rendered narratively subordinate to the show's straight characters is a succinct example of the inane multicultural pluralism that Hansen has described. It also clearly displays some of the ways in which queers and the counterpublicity they might be able to disseminate are rendered harmless within the channels of the electronic media and the majoritarian public sphere. Zamora was the third season's house queer. He did not, however, fall into obscurity the way his queer predecessors had. Rather, he managed to offer valuable counterpublicity for various subaltern counterpublics that included U.S. Latinos, queers, and people living with AIDS.

For five months Zamora was one of the few out gay men appearing regularly on television.¹⁵ He was also one of the few Latinos seen regularly on national television. Furthermore, he was one of the few out people living with AIDS on television. There should be no mistake as to MTV's motives in selecting Zamora. He was as handsome as a model and rarely looked "ill" in any way. He was a Cuban-American, a group

that comes as close as any Latino community in the United States to qualifying as a "model minority." Although articulate and skilled as a public speaker, he had a thick Cuban accent that must have sounded very "tropical" to North American ears. One could argue, in fact, that he walked a road that was paved by a previous "Latin star," Ricky Ricardo.¹⁶ Zamora was selected because of these features and his agency in this selection process was none. He fit a larger corporate schema as to what MTV wanted for the show and these reasons led to his being represented. Yet, Zamora was more than simply represented; he used MTV as an opportunity to continue his life's work of HIV/AIDS pedagogy, queer education, and human-rights activism. Unlike his queer predecessors, he exploited MTV in politically efficacious ways; he used MTV more than it used him.

The fourth season of the show was set in London. At this point the show broke from its pattern of having an out house queer. *The Real World* London show was less contentious than the San Francisco show. It only included one ethnic minority, a black British jazz singer, and not one out lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered person. It would seem that ethnic, racial, and sexual diversity that characterized the show's first three seasons was put on hold after the explosive San Francisco season (discussed later in this chapter). I will argue that the soft multicultural pluralism that characterized the series was exploited and undermined by Zamora and some of his peers. I am suggesting that the fourth season of *The Real World* can be read as a backlash of sorts; which is to say that it was an escape from North American politics and social tensions to a storybook England, a fantasy Europe that had none of its own ethnic or sexual strife. (The roommates actually lived in a flat that was made up to look like a castle.)

The fifth season, set in Miami, represents a back-to-basics approach in which the tried-and-true formula of nominal racial and sexual diversity was reestablished. The Miami cast included two women of color: Cynthia, an African-American waitress from Oakland, California, and Melissa, "the local girl," a Cuban-American woman from the Miami area. The house queer spot went once again to a white man, as it did in the show's classic first season. Dan, a college student from Rutgers University, was raised in the Midwest, where he grew up watching the show like many queer kids in the United States. In a feature article in *Out* magazine, Dan spoke about the way in which he, as a pre-out youth, marveled at seeing an out Norman in the show's first season. In the article he expresses his understanding that he was now, thanks to the show, going to be the most famous gay man in America. The young Real Worlde's statement testifies to the counterpublic-making properties of the program. Dan aspires to be a model and a writer for flashy fashion magazines. His interviews on the program and in the print media indicate that he was cognizant of a need to be a public "role model" for queers, but his performances fell short of the radical interventions that Zamora produced.

Dan understood the need to perform a positive image; Zamora, on the other

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hand, was conscious of the need to take the show's title seriously and be radically real. A coffee-table fan book that MTV published in 1995 while the fourth season was airing prints "sound bites" by many of the show's stars, producers, and crew; the book's revenues go, in part, to the foundation started in Zamora's name. In that book, story editor Gordon Cassidy comments:

The one thing I feel best about in this show is what Pedro enabled us to present to the rest of the country, and not just about AIDS, but about who he was as a person, things that networks can't get away with. You think of the problems networks have portraying gay relationships, interracial relationships, and he was all of those.¹⁷

The fact that Zamora was indeed all of these things is especially important. The "realness" of Pedro and the efficacy and power of his interventions have as much to do with the manner in which he insisted on being a complicated and intersectional subject: not only gay but a sexual person; a person of color actively living with another person of color in an interracial relationship; a person living with AIDS. Although Cassidy's comments could be read as an example of MTV's patting itself on the back, much of what he is saying is accurate. As of this moment, with few exceptions, broadcast network television is unable and unwilling to represent queers who are sexual yet not pathological, interracial relationships, and stories about AIDS that portray the fullness and vibrancy of such a life narrative.

To understand Pedro's intervention one needs to survey the status of homosexuality on television at the time of his death in November 1994. A *Los Angeles Times* feature article cites Richard Jennings, executive director of Hollywood Supports, a group promoting positive gay portrayals in film and television, on the resurgence of gay characters in the media: "As gays have increasingly 'come out,' many viewers have become aware of gay brothers, sisters and friends. Together with gay viewers, they are increasingly asking for sympathetic gay portrayals."¹⁸ This lobbying is opposed by right-wing activists such as the Reverend Louis Sheldon, head of the Orange County-based Traditional Values Coalition. Sheldon is quoted in the same article as saying that "Homosexuals should not be portrayed at all on TV." Sheldon, a bigot who is notorious for "picketing" outside of AIDS memorials and funerals, feels that sympathetic gay role models confuse viewers and contends that "If young males need to identify with someone, they should identify with Clint Eastwood."¹⁹ One might wish to dismiss Sheldon's comments as the demented ravings of an Eastwood groupie, but one cannot underestimate the influence that such zealots continue to exercise over mainstream broadcasting.

Although some advertisers seem to have become more accepting of queer representation—Ellen DeGeneres's very public coming out in the spring of 1997 and the appearance of a black gay supporting character in ABC's *Spin City* are evidence of this—very few queer characters on television have, as of this writing, performed their

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sexualities on the screen. For example, when producer Darren Star wanted to show his gay character, Matt, kissing another man on the season finale of *Melrose Place* in the spring of 1994, the Fox network balked and asked them not to, afraid that advertisers would withdraw their advertising, as they did for a 1989 episode of ABC's *thirty-something* that showed two gay men in bed together.

Within this context, Zamora's performance of self, his publicized "care of the self," especially as represented in an episode that featured an exchanging of rings ceremony with boyfriend Sean, can be seen as radical interventions. In that episode, originally broadcast on November 3, 1994, the two men kiss no fewer than seven times in the half-hour program. Zamora's romance was, according to producer John Murray, significant within the history of the show as it was, "probably the deepest we've ever gotten into a relationship in our three seasons."²⁰ (Since then, Dan dated two men in the show's fifth season, one a closeted white man, the other an out Cuban-American. Although both these relationships seem significant in that they were *real* queer couplings on television, neither bond seemed as serious or ultimately as memorable as Pedro and Sean's.) When I suggest that such performances function as counterpublicity, I am imagining the effect that they might have on a queer child or adult whose access to queer cultures or energies might be limited or nonexistent. These highly mediated images, brought into the fold through the highly mediated channels of corporate broadcasting, still served as a site where children and others could glimpse a queer and ethnic life-world. What started out as tokenized representation became something larger, more spacious—a mirror that served as a prop for subjects to imagine and rehearse identity. This, in part, enables the production of counterpublics.

It would be a mistake to elide the representational significance of Zamora's work on the mainstream. Pedro, as Bill Clinton put it, gave AIDS a very "human face." Beyond that, he gave it a vibrant, attractive, politicized, and brown face. He showed an ignorant and phobic national body that within the bourgeois public's fantasy of privacy, the binarism of public health and private illness could no longer hold—that the epidemic was no longer an abstract and privatized concern. He willfully embodied and called attention to all those things that are devastating and ennobling about possessing a minority subjectivity within an epidemic. Although MTV gave Zamora a stage to do this work of education and embodiment, however, it should not be too valorized for this contribution because it often attempted to undercut it. What follows is a brief synopsis of Pedro's role and work on *The Real World*. It focuses on those episodes that are pertinent to Pedro's story or the story I am telling in this chapter. I then consider the show's nineteenth episode in more detail.

The show begins with Cory, a college student from California who rendezvoused with Pedro on a train.²¹ The young Anglo woman is very taken with Pedro, and Pedro, for his part, as he explains in a voice-over, was expecting to meet a woman who would be very much like Cory, very "all-American." Soon all of the roommates

are assembled: Judd, a Jewish medical student; Moham Puck, a white man who w American from Arizona w preceding descriptions see tity accounts that the p sharing his scrapbook w clippings from around the the cast not only as queer by this display and proce AIDSphobic and homoph episode began with the "a a train and concluded with the young AIDS educato presences, unlike the quee

Episode two presents a star presence, Puck. Pedro throughout the living spa sort of odd couple dilem nothing short of a medica tem. While Rachel goes t Right's beloved Jack Kem with Sean, an HIV-positiv lationship advances and th phobic jokes about Pedro after the series was comple occurrence that was, throu

In episode eight, Pedro's T-cell count has dropped ment in TV history: a pai never before. This sequen risk-prevention seminar a attention, schedules a bea choose to watch and supp crosscuts both sequences, during episode nine. Pedro by now predictable hom problems in episode eleven the house: it is either him ejected from the house.

In episode eleven, Pedro

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are assembled: Judd, a Jewish cartoonist from Long Island; Pam, an Asian-American medical student; Mohammed, an African-American Bay Area musician and writer; Puck, a white man who was a bicycle messenger; and Rachel, a Republican Mexican-American from Arizona who is applying to graduate school.²² (I am aware that the preceding descriptions seem to be somewhat stock, but these were the primary identity accounts that the program offered.) That first episode concluded with Pedro sharing his scrapbook with his roommates. The scrapbook consisted of newspaper clippings from around the nation of his activist work. This outed him to the rest of the cast not only as queer but also as a person living with AIDS. Rachel was put off by this display and proceeded, during an interview in the confessional,²³ to voice her AIDSphobic and homophobic concerns about cohabiting with Pedro. Thus, that first episode began with the "all-American girl" meeting the handsome young stranger on a train and concluded with a conservative Latina expressing a phobic position against the young AIDS educator. This episode framed Pedro as one of the show's "star" presences, unlike the queers from previous seasons.

Episode two presents an early confrontation between Pedro and the show's other star presence, Puck. Pedro objects to Puck's post-punk hygiene in the kitchen and throughout the living space. The show had hoped to frame this confrontation as a sort of odd couple dilemma, but it ignored the fact that Puck's lack of hygiene was nothing short of a medical risk for a person living with a compromised immune system. While Rachel goes to an "Empower America" fund-raiser and meets the New Right's beloved Jack Kemp, one of her personal heroes, Pedro goes on a first date with Sean, an HIV-positive pastry chef with a disarming smile. Sean and Pedro's relationship advances and the couple falls in love by episode six. Puck makes homophobic jokes about Pedro during this episode. According to interviews with the cast after the series was completed, these comments from Puck were a regular household occurrence that was, through editing strategies, downplayed by the producers.

In episode eight, Pedro goes for a medical examination. He discovers that his T-cell count has dropped significantly. This moment represents an important moment in TV history: a painful aspect of a PWA's quotidian reality is represented as never before. This sequence is followed by one in which Pedro gives a safe-sex and risk-prevention seminar at Stanford University. Puck, always vying for the house's attention, schedules a beachcombing expedition at the same time. Pam and Judd choose to watch and support Pedro while Cory and Rachel join Puck. The show crosscuts both sequences, emphasizing the divisions in the house. Tensions mount during episode nine. Pedro and Sean become engaged and Puck reacts with what is by now predictable homophobia. The house confronts Puck on his behavioral problems in episode eleven. Puck will not listen and Pedro delivers an ultimatum to the house: it is either him or Puck. The members vote, and Puck is unanimously ejected from the house.

In episode eleven, Pedro travels with Rachel to Arizona to meet her Catholic and

Republican family. Pedro is exceedingly diplomatic with the family and connects with them as Latinos. Rachel's parents, both educators at a local school, invite Pedro to talk about AIDS at their workplace. One student asks if he still has sex and whether or not he has a girlfriend. There is a tight shot of Rachel's mother looking worried and seemingly holding her breath. Pedro pauses, then answers that he is in "a relationship" and continues to practice safe sex. There is a cut to a shot of Rachel's mother looking relieved. This maneuver shows what is for many antihomophobic spectators a difficult and problematic moment. Deciding *not* to be out and *not* perform and inhabit his queerness at that moment was a worthwhile compromise in the face of his professional work as an AIDS educator dealing with adolescents in a public school. It can also be understood, at least in part, as a moment of Latino allegiance, where queerness is displaced by the mark of ethnicity. Understanding this disidentification with his queerness as a disservice to queers or his own queer identity would be erroneous in that these shuttlings and displacements are survival strategies that intersectional subjects, subjects who are caught and live between different minoritarian communities, must practice frequently if they are to keep their residences in different subcultural spheres.

Episode thirteen focuses on Pedro's returning home to Miami and his best friend Alex. The homecoming is cut short when Pedro becomes sick. Zamora, in a post-*Real World* interview, explained that he had wanted to show it all, the good days and the bad days.²⁴ Representing the totality of living with AIDS was very important for his ethics of the self, his performance of being a self *for* others. That episode gives a family history and background. Pedro emigrated to the United States in the Mariel boat lift in 1980. He lost his mother to cancer at the age of fifteen, a tragedy that rocked his family. His family is represented as a very typical blue-collar Cuban-American family. Cuban-Americans, especially Miami Cubans, are associated with right-wing politics and values. It is thus important to see this family embrace their son and brother without hesitation. The image of Cuban-Americans loving, accepting, and being proud of a gay son complicates the map of *latinidad* that is most available within U.S. media. The better-known map that positions Cubans on the far right and Chicanos on the far left, while demographically founded, is nonetheless a reductive depiction of *latinidad*.

Episode sixteen depicts Pedro's bout with pneumonia that eventually leaves him hospitalized. The housemates experience a feeling of helplessness that is common in support communities for people with AIDS. By the next episode, Pedro is out of the hospital and accompanies the rest of the cast on a trip to Hawaii. By the twentieth and final episode, Pedro has become very close to Cory, Pam, and Judd. The cast is shown moving out of the Lombard Street flat.

The second-to-last episode, episode nineteen, points out the restraints that the show's producers put on Zamora's performances and the way in which the young Cuban-American responded to them. Pedro's romance became the major romance of

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the show; Sean never fell out of the picture the way Norman's and Beth's partners and flirtations did. Sean became part of Pedro's quotidian reality. Both made their presence continuously known in the San Francisco flat. A few weeks into their relationship, Sean proposed marriage to Pedro and Pedro accepted. In response, the show's other "star" presence, Puck, decided to one-up the queer couple by proposing marriage to his new girlfriend Toni. Puck stands as proof that not all counterpublics challenge the way in which the social is organized by the dominant culture. Puck's counterpublic is a juvenile version of rugged individualism; it represents a sort of soft anarchism that relativizes all political struggles as equivalents to his own exhaustive self-absorption. The competing modes of counterpublicity between Pedro and Puck eventually contributed to the breakdown in the domestic space that concluded with Puck's being asked to leave.

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Episode nineteen tracks Pedro's and Puck's respective romances. Pedro's queerness is played against Puck's heterosexuality. The episode crosscuts between the two pairings. One questions the producer's rationale for juxtaposing Puck and Toni's romantic relationship with Pedro and Sean's commitment ceremony. Because Puck was ejected from the house, producers continued to film his encounters with his former housemates Cory, Rachel, and Judd. But except for this penultimate episode, there had been no presentation of Puck independent of his housemates.

Early in the episode, Sean and Pedro are shown in bed together as they lie on top of each other and plan their commitment ceremony. To MTV's credit, there has never been any scene of queer sociality like it on television. The scene of two gay men of color, both HIV positive, in bed together as they plan what is the equivalent of a marriage is like none that was then or now imaginable on television. The transmission of this image throughout the nation and the world is a valuable instance of counterpublicity. Edited within this scene are individual video bites by both participants. Sean explains that

[b]eing with Pedro, someone who is so willing to trust and love and sort of be honest with, is refreshing. I think that knowing that Pedro does have an AIDS diagnosis and has been getting sick makes me recognize the need to be here right now. I know that one of us may get sick at sometime but [it is this] underlying understanding or this underlying feeling that makes it a lot easier.

Sean's statement and his performance in front of the video camera explain their reason for having a formal bonding ceremony as being a response to a radically refigured temporality in the face of AIDS. This, too, is an important instance of nationally broadcast counterpublic theater that provides an important opportunity for the mass public to glimpse different life-worlds than the one endorsed by the dominant ideology.

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Yet, the power of this image and Sean's statement is dulled when the program cuts to its next scene. The gay coupling scene is followed by Puck and Toni's coupling ritual. Puck, in a voice-over, announces that he and Toni are made for each other, that

they are, in fact, "a matched pair." They go window-shopping for a wedding ring and Toni eyes a ring that she likes; Puck scolds her and tells her that the window item is a cocktail ring, not a traditional wedding ring. He then offers to buy her a tie clip instead. (This footage is of mere window-shopping; later, the other couple is shown actually selecting bands.) Sean's voice-over is narratively matched with the playful Toni who explains that "[w]hen I first met Puck he was stinking and looking for a mate. I think we're in love. I know we're in love." Whereas Sean and Pedro are preparing for an actual ceremony, Toni and Puck are shown hanging out. Toni and Puck are not planning any sort of ceremony. The producers' strategy of matching the story lines and making them seem equivalent is resolved by crosscutting the commitment ceremony with one of Puck's soapbox derby races. Toni is shown cheering Puck on as he races his green boxcar.

Since the inception of *The Real World*, its producers have always hoped for a romance to erupt on the set between cast members. That has yet to happen.²⁵ In lieu of such a relationship, the producers hope for an interesting relationship between a cast member and outsider. Sean and Pedro's romance emerged early on as the show's most significant relationship. I am arguing that (the series producers were unable to let a queer coupling, especially one as radical as Sean and Pedro's, to stand as the show's actual romance), Pedro's and Sean's individual performances and the performance of their relationship were narratively undermined by a strategy of weak multicultural crosscutting that was calibrated to dampen the radical charge that Pedro and Sean gave *The Real World*.

Despite these efforts by the show's producers to diminish the importance of Pedro and Sean's relationship, the ceremony itself stands as an amazingly powerful example of publicly performing an ethics of the self while simultaneously theatricalizing a queer counterpublic sphere.

The ceremony begins with a shot of a densely populated flat. Sean and Pedro are toasted by Eric, a friend of the couple who has not appeared on any previous episodes, and who delivers a touching toast:

It gives me a lot of pleasure and I see it as a real pleasure to speak on behalf of Sean and Pedro and to them. In your love you remind us that life is about now and love is about being there for one another. It is with real bravery that you open your hearts to each other and I think it's with real hope that you promise your lives to each other. *We stand with you* defiantly and bravely and with real hope. To the adorable couple. (My emphasis)

This toast is followed by equally elegant statements by both Pedro and Sean. Eric's statement is significant because it marks the way in which Pedro and Sean's being for themselves ("to each other") is, simultaneously, a being for others ("We stand with you"). This ceremony is like none that has ever been viewed on commercial television. It is a moment of counterpublic theater. The commitment ceremony not only inspires the gathering of spectators at the ceremony to stand together bravely, defi-

antly, and with hope beyond the relatively private visual spectators.

The Real World that have never been mastering the show's continuous pedagogy sphere is reimagined real world is overruled by ennobling ceremony sequence in m stacked next to the queer spin put on *T* show's pluralist ethos to stand alone.

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The performance heterosexual relationship voice-over before the He points to the way abbreviated temporal Foucault's terms, a n sexual dyad, is shattered couple form. When of "giving oneself" t with the prescribed some lesbians and g not about aping bou sociality. Foucault, in stand homosexuality able. He explains tha in recognizing that v of life allows us to re a relationship that is

antly, and with hope, but also, beyond the walls of the Lombard Street flat and beyond the relatively progressive parameters of San Francisco, it inspires a world of televisual spectators.

The Real World is overrun by queers. Queer bonds are made manifest in ways that have never been available on cable or broadcast television. Pedro's insistence on mastering the show's format through his monologues, domestic interventions, and continuous pedagogy are relaxed in the sequence just described. Here the public sphere is reimagined by bringing a subaltern counterpublic into representation. The real world is overrun by queers—queers who speak about those things that are terrifying and ennobling about a queer and racialized life-world. The commitment ceremony sequence in many ways sets up the show's closure. Puck's antics, crosscut and stacked next to the commitment ceremony, are narratively positioned to lessen the queer spin put on *The Real World* by Pedro. Such a strategy is concurrent with the show's pluralist ethos. (Queer commitments, energies, and politics are never quite left to stand alone.)

The way Puck's relationship is used to relativize and diminish the emotional and political impact of Pedro and Sean's relationship is reminiscent of Pedro's selection to be included in the cast *with and in contrast to* Rachel, the young Republican Latina. Again, the ideologically bold move of representing an activist such as Pedro as a representative of *latinidad* is counterbalanced by a reactionary Latina. The fact that Rachel and Pedro later bond as Latinos, despite their ideological differences, is narratively satisfying, producing a sense of hope for the spectator invested in pan-Latino politics.

The performance of a commitment ceremony itself might be read as an aping of heterosexual relationships. Such a reading would miss some important points. In a voice-over before the ceremony, Pedro discusses the need to "risk" being with Sean. He points to the ways in which this relationship, within the confines of his tragically abbreviated temporality, forms a new space of self, identity, and relationality. It is, in Foucault's terms, a new form. The couple form, crystallized as the bourgeois heterosexual dyad, is shattered and reconfigured. Indeed, this is a disidentification with the couple form. When one is queer and knows that his or her loved one is dying, the act of "giving oneself" to another represents an ethics of the self that does not cohere with the prescribed and normative coupling practices that make heterosexuals and some lesbians and gay men want to marry. Pedro and Sean's ceremonial bonding is *not* about aping bourgeois heterosexuality; rather, it is the enacting of a new mode of sociality. Foucault, in an often-cited interview on friendship, suggested that we understand homosexuality not so much as a desire, but rather as something that is *desirable*. He explains that we must "work at becoming homosexual and not be obstinate in recognizing that we are."²⁶ Homosexuality is desirable because a homosexual way of life allows us to reimagine sociality. The homosexual needs to "invent from A to Z a relationship that is formless" and eventually to arrive at a "multiplicity of relations."²⁷

~~Becoming homosexual, for Foucault, would then be a political project, a social movement of sorts, that would ultimately help us challenge repressive gender hierarchies and the structural underpinnings of institutions. Thus, mark Sean and Pedro's union as something new, a new form that is at the same time formless from the vantage point of established state hierarchies.²⁸ The new form that Sean and Pedro's performances of self brings into view is one that suggests worlds of possibility for the minoritarian subject who experiences multiple forms of domination within larger systems of governmentality.~~

When considering Zamora's lifework one is struck by his accomplishments, interventions within the dominant public sphere that had real effects on individuals (such as the woman from South Carolina whose letter was cited at the beginning of this chapter), and other interventions as an activist. Zamora tested positive for HIV while still in high school, a few years after he arrived in the United States with his parents and two siblings in 1980 with some one hundred thousand other Cuban refugees who sailed to Florida in the Mariel boat lift. His activism began not long after he tested positive for the virus. Zamora testified before the Presidential Commission on AIDS and twice before congressional committees, took part in a public service ad campaign for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and was appointed to a Florida government panel on AIDS. He also gave many interviews in the print and electronic media. I first encountered Zamora before his tenure on MTV. I saw him and his father on a local Spanish-language television news program in south Florida while I was visiting my parents during college. As I sat in the living room with my parents, I marveled at the televisual spectacle of this young man and his father, both speaking a distinctly Cuban Spanish, on television, talking openly about AIDS, safe sex, and homosexuality. I was struck because this was something new; it was a new formation, a being for others. I imagined countless other living rooms within the range of this broadcast and I thought about the queer children who might be watching this program at home with their parents. This is the point where I locate something other than the concrete interventions in the public sphere. Here is where I see the televisual spectacle leading to the possibility of new counterpublics, new spheres of possibility, and the potential for the reinvention of the world from A to Z.

personal
encounter

Performing Disidentification

There are the limits to exploring. There is also no end to the possibilities. This chapter will elaborate the concept of disidentification. The private thematic will explore the politics of disidentification on Pedro Zamora's work. As a public artist, the other a private identity coordinates with his performances to do the

By "limits" I mean a restriction to some of the material of the subject. I wish to disidentify not only to disidentify from the dominant queerness, migrancy, and state and global power. Disidentification is about resistance to imperial subjugation. These strategies and tactics to counter identification is about the politics of disidentification. I have gone to the streets to explore such processes of self-identification that discriminate against the dominant identity that do not conform to the dominant

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Location of Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 85–92; originally published in *October* 28 (1984): 125–33.

26. Fernando Ortiz, *Glosario de Afronegrismo* (Havana: Imprenta “El Siglo XX,” 1924), p. 185. The translation I use is taken from Gustavo Pérez Firmat, used in his study *Literature and Liminality: Festive Readings in the Hispanic Tradition* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1986), p. 99.

27. Pérez Firmat, *Literature and Liminality*, p. 108.

28. Jorge Mañach, *Indignación del Choteo* (Miami: Mnemosyne Publishing, 1969), p. 18.

29. For a masterful reading of Mañach and other manifestations of *choteo*, see Pérez Firmat, *Literature and Liminality*, pp. 53–108.

30. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: La Frontera* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), pp. 84–85.

31. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 42.

32. Griggers, “Lesbian Bodies,” p. 126.

33. There is a wealth of valuable interventions by lesbians of color that have challenged the ingrained white normativity of lesbian and gay identities. The work of Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, Cherríe Moraga, and Barbara Smith come to mind as thinkers who radicalized notions of gay and lesbian identity in an antiracist fashion.

6. Pedro Zamora’s Real World of Counterpublicity

1. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 3, *The Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1986). Also see Michel Foucault, “The Ethic of the Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom,” in *The Final Foucault*, ed. James Bernauer and David Rasmussen, trans. J. D. Gauthier (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987).

2. Michel Foucault, “On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress,” in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: New Press, 1997), p. 269.

3. George Yúdice, “Marginality and the Ethics of Survival,” in Andrew Ross, ed., *Universal Abandon? The Politics of Postmodernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 220.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

5. It is important to clarify that my use of public-sphere theory and the notion of a counter-public sphere is indebted to Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge and Anglo-American commentators on Jürgen Habermas. One can thus characterize my deployment of this critical vernacular as being post-Habermasian.

6. Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” in *The Phantom Public Sphere*, ed. Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 4.

7. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

8. Miriam Hansen, “Foreword,” in *ibid.*, p. xxxvii.

9. For an excellent reading of the political and philosophical disjunctures between Foucault and Habermas, see Jon Simmons, *Foucault and the Political* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

10. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

11. Fredric Jameson, “On Negt and Kluge,” in *The Phantom Public Sphere*, p. 49.

12. Hillary Johnson and Nancy Rommelmann, *The Real Real World* (New York: MTV Books/Pocket Books/Melcher Media, 1995), p. 158.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Hansen, “Foreword,” pp. xxxviii–xxxix.

15. Zamora has continued to be, even after his death, a beacon of queer possibility thanks to MTV’s policy of continuously airing *The Real World* reruns, from all five seasons.

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17. Johnson and

18. Joseph Hanan
1994, p. 12.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. The show use
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24. Hal Rubenste
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25. Judd and Pan
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26. Michel Fouca
Semiotext[e], 1989), p.

27. *Ibid.*

28. The Pedro Za
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7. Performing Disid

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in *Film and Video* (New

2. Robert Storr,

3. Tim Rollins,
Bartman (New York: A

4. John Guillory,
of Chicago Press, 1994)

5. Wahneema Lu
tives,” in *Mapping Mu*
iversity of Minnesota Pr

6. Slavoj Žižek,

7. Nancy Fraser
Robbins (Minneapolis:

16. Both Ricardo and Zamora are figures of ambivalence in that although they both held pioneering roles in the history of Latino representation in the media, they also seemed to have no qualms about performing for white people. Of course, this comparison falls apart when one considers the motivations that organized these performances for whites. Zamora's motivations were not about promoting an individual career, but instead about being an activist and a pedagogue in a larger health emergency. But both men are icons, and their iconicity is a troubling thing; one might wish that they had been less willing to assimilate, but one cannot discount the influence of their work on a larger cultural imaginary. This note is a response to a conversation with Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas, a Cuban-American activist and cultural worker whose astute skepticism and critical ambivalence have helped me nuance this discussion of Zamora's work. Cortiñas also urged me to consider a comparison between Ricardo and Zamora.

17. Johnson and Rommelmann, *The Real Real World*, p. 90.

18. Joseph Hanania, "Resurgence of Gay Roles on Television," *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1994, p. 12.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. The show used only first names. Thus, when I discuss the narratives of actual episodes, I will employ "Pedro," and when I refer mostly to the man and cultural worker outside of the show's narrative, I will use "Zamora."

22. I use the term *Mexican-American* to describe Rachel because I imagine that her political ideology would not be aligned with the politics of the Chicana/o movement.

23. The confessional is a room where house occupants perform a personal monologue for a stationary camera. The confessional footage is later intercut with the show's narrative.

24. Hal Rubenstein, "Pedro Leaves Us Breathless," *POZ* 1:3 (August–September 1994): 38–41, 79–81.

25. Judd and Pam did eventually begin dating, but only after the show stopped filming. Failed on-the-set couplings include Eric and Julie during the first season, Puck and Rachel in the third, and Kat and Neil in the fourth.

26. Michel Foucault, *Foucault Live*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. John Johnston (New York: Semiotext[e], 1989), p. 204.

27. Ibid.

28. The Pedro Zamora Memorial Fund was established after his death. The fund was set up to educate women, young people, minorities, and the poor about HIV/AIDS, and to fund AIDS service organizations. The fund, part of AIDS Action, can be reached at 202-986-1300 ext. 3013.

7. Performing Disidentity

1. For more on these films, see Chris Straayer, *Deviant Eyes, Deviant Bodies: Sexual Re-orientations in Film and Video* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

2. Robert Storr, "Setting Traps for the Mind and Heart," *Art in America* 84:1 (January 1996): 73.

3. Tim Rollins, "Interview with Felix Gonzalez-Torres," in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, ed. William S. Bartman (New York: A.R.T. Press, 1993), p. 19.

4. John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problems of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 11.

5. Wahneema Lubiano, "Like Being Mugged by a Metaphor: Multiculturalism and State Narratives," in *Mapping Multiculturalism*, ed. Avery Gordon and Christopher Newfield (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 69.

6. Slavoj Žižek, "The Specter of Ideology," in *Mapping Ideology* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 11.

7. Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," in *The Phantom Public Sphere*, ed. Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 22.