

not the actor pretending to be fisted). The combination of a close-up of Poupaud's troubled face followed by Romain's mental image of past happiness with his lover reduces gay male sexuality to a choice between relations that are deemed positive and carefree (the mental image of the couple is a bright exterior shot in stark contrast to the dark claustrophobic club) as opposed to others that bind casual sex to anxiety and potential psychic violence. The spatial confinement of the club is clearly meant to be read as a metaphor for the character's own entrapment, the complex significations of S/M rendered literal through the character's subsequent submission to death. The ultimate problem with this return of the 'death drive' in recent queer narrative fiction (in its current 'not-about-AIDS' form) is that it blithely revives (unconsciously or not) the formula equating gay sexuality to death and disease that fuelled so much homophobic discourse around AIDS from the mid-1980s onwards.

WITNESSING AIDS

Téchiné's *Les Témoins* (2007) looks back to the AIDS crisis and social panic of the mid-1980s but instead of contributing to an opportunistic negativity that seeks to rebrand the 'death drive' as the artistic imperative of queer cinema, the film suggests the human potential for renewed passion and political commitment through a dynamic tableau of five interlocking lives affected by AIDS. Novelist Sarah (Emmanuelle Béart) expresses the need to write the story of her husband Mehdi's (Sami Bouajila) passion for the deceased Manu (Johan Libéreau) to testify to the young man's ephemeral presence in their lives. AIDS testimony is also the central preoccupation of Jacques Nolot's autobiographical *Avant que j'oublie* (2007), which looks at seropositivity from the vantage point of an older gay man, and likewise recounts recent history to younger generations before the disappearance of all remaining witnesses. Nolot is Téchiné's friend, collaborator and co-screenwriter of *J'embrasse pas* (1992); he plays a small role as the manager of a run-down hotel frequented by sex workers in *Les Témoins*, the working title of which had been *Avant que j'oublie*. *Les Témoins* begins with the birth of Sarah and Mehdi's child and ends one year later with his birthday. Manu arrives unexpectedly at his sister's (Julie Depardieu) hotel in Paris where she is trying to eke out a living as a classical singer. He befriends Adrien (Michel Blanc) on a cruising ground, and is introduced by Adrien's friend Sarah to Mehdi, with whom he falls in love. Their secret passion lasts till the end of summer when Adrien discovers Kaposi's sarcoma on Manu's body. Responding to Manu's subsequent withdrawal, illness and death, Adrien sets up a charity and becomes a leading medical figure in the fight against AIDS, whilst Sarah struggles to write up her account of Manu.

Bill Marshall has provided a critical survey of Téchiné's sixteen films preceding *Les Témoins*, charting the emergence of same-sex passion in a minor mode from *Hôtel des Amériques* (1981) onwards. This was the first film of five to date with Deneuve: drawing on novelistic narrative techniques from

nineteenth-century fiction (particularly the *bildungsroman* archetype of the provincial innocent in Paris) and contributing to Téchiné's dominant reputation as a '*romanesque*' filmmaker. In an interview with Alain Philippon, he retrospectively situates *Hôtel des Amériques* as a break with his genre films of the 1970s:

From *Hôtel des Amériques* onwards my films are no longer genre films. I do not take inspiration from cinema. Throughout my subsequent production (which I do not see as divided into separate films but rather as successive, interlocking chapters), I have asked whether love exists, the leading strand running through all these films.

(A partir d'*Hôtel des Amériques* ce ne sont plus des films de genre. Je ne puis plus mon inspiration dans le cinéma . . . Au travers des films que j'ai faits depuis *Hôtel des Amériques* (que je ne perçois pas comme des films séparés, mais comme des chapitres qui se suivent et s'enchaînent) je me pose . . . la question: 'Est-ce que l'amour existe?'. C'est le fil conducteur de tous ces films.) (Philippon 1988: 121)

Marshall argues for Téchiné's use of plural narrative strands as 'modern' with its vision of a

post-traditional world, full of transformation, movement and displacement, in which characters struggle to find emotional meaning . . . Like a realist novel, Téchiné maps the social, economic and even political factors – material urgencies, spatial coordinates, structures of feeling – which determine the protagonists' situation. . . . However – and this is why his films are to be seen as so modern – Téchiné's protagonists are never actually determined by these determinants. (Marshall 2007: 35–6)

This use of multiple narrative strands within a social panorama marks Téchiné's cinema out from the political commitment characteristic of film production in the post-1968 conjuncture. In the interview with Philippon, he recalls his split with *Cahiers du cinéma* when the publication and surrounding milieu took a hard-left turn around 1968 (Philippon 1988: 119). Marshall situates the filmmaker's cinematic bent as broadly 'civilisational' rather than fully political, the constant preoccupation with sexuality and morality more recently seen by Téchiné himself as the common thread running through all his films.⁵⁷ This mix of social dynamics and intimate concerns is particularly well suited to the historical and moral context of AIDS in mid-1980s France that is captured in *Les Témoins*, but it had been evident in earlier films such as *J'embrasse pas*, for which, as Marshall explains, Nolot had originally scripted a cruder, darker and queerer version that included the young protagonist's sexual self-discovery with the *beur* character Saïd, and involvement in an underground and violent queer milieu (Marshall 2007: 85, 146). Marshall's analysis shows how the

filmed version centres on Pierre's disavowal of homosexuality as structuring his identity and the extent to which money, commerce and class as much as gender and sexual dissent confine the character's emotional life.⁵⁸ 'Pierre's itinerary in the film is about what possibilities there are for affection in modernity, in a world of lost tradition and discredited notions of "home", commodified sex, and competitive individualism.' The images of entrapment suggest that 'the young men are the bearers of grids of meaning and boundaries, with little active purchase upon them' (Marshall: 2007: 46, 47).

Older male characters with greater material and cultural capital tend to negotiate their way through the hazardous terrain of Téchiné's narratives with more assurance, though the 'married' characters Romain (Philippe Noiret) in *J'embrasse pas* and Klotz (Jean-Claude Brialy) in *Les Innocents* (1987) both testify to a sense of isolation and dissatisfaction unalleviated by the privileges of wealth or status. In *Les Témoins*, the affluent doctor Adrien criticises divisions of age within the gay community of the era which is proud, in his view, of its ethnic 'melting pot' and social inclusion but less honest about its incessant promotion of youth and beauty. The critical remarks voiced by Blanc point to persistent anxieties over issues of power (disparities of gender, race, class and age) structuring same-sex intimacies (Sinfield 2004). In the film's final section, entitled 'the return of summer', Sarah accepts that Adrien's distance following Manu's death and his reluctance to read her finished manuscript are signs that his new relationship with a younger man is rejuvenating him. In fact Adrien is shown to be more conscious of the social cleavage between heterosexuals and homosexuals brought on by the stigmatising impact of AIDS, one of the film's persistent political points. Adrien is established early on as the voice of post-gay liberation, but Téchiné's discreet depiction of the character's emerging love for the young Manu undercuts any initial pomposity. It is Julien Hirsch's cinematography that expresses more of Adrien's inner life than the character's own declarations, particularly the shots of the two characters visiting Paris on a *bateau mouche* in which they emerge into the bright sunlight: Libéreau's luminous face, shot in close-up, dominates the frame's foreground, supported in the background by Blanc's subtle inflection of awakening desire tinged with amiable curiosity. Likewise, Hirsch's lush images of Sarah's Mediterranean retreat jump from Adrien's declaration to Mehdi that he is 'mad about the boy' to an exquisite tracking shot of Manu bounding across the *calanque*, expressing the character's freedom and vitality, before returning to a static shot of an admiring Adrien. This dynamic pace is in fact established from the film's opening shot of Béart frenetically typing up the manuscript that will provide the intermittent voice-over frame for the narrative, a forward movement further enhanced by Martine Giordano's swift editing style and Philippe Sarde's tense musical refrain.

Racial hierarchy is expressed antagonistically through Mehdi's resentment that Adrien couches his feelings of sexual jealousy in racial innuendo, even if Mehdi's ethnic identity is not singled out for comment elsewhere, surprisingly

given he is a *beur* policeman in the mid-1980s. Vincendeau remarks that the film's representation of ethnic integration speaks more of the era of its production than its historical setting.⁵⁹ Although both Bouajila and Libéreau are of Maghrebi origin, there is no given indication that the ethnic identities of their characters are meant to be read as formative of their desire for one another, and Manu's mixed-race origins are only later noted in passing after his death when his mother rails against her deceased husband's ostracism as a renegade following the Algerian war. Mehdi falls in love with Manu when he saves him from drowning, a natural awakening shown through a series of sensual images of the men's bodies underwater broken by Mehdi's struggle to pull Manu ashore. Their ensuing passion is framed by hidden trips to a flying club – the repeated images of flying (the plane Mehdi pilots, the helicopter Sarah observes take off) and sailing (the final sequence repeats the earlier motorboat trip but with Adrien's lover replacing Manu) work as both traditional 'literary' metaphors for the characters' journeys and spatial reminders of the film's overall preoccupation with social change and transition.

Jill Forbes ended her section on Téchiné in *The Cinema in France After the New Wave* by detecting a movement through his oeuvre 'from an initial concern to explore the history of the nation to a renewed emphasis on personal history with . . . a consciousness of how the two are inevitably intertwined' (Forbes 1992: 258). Forbes's remark that Téchiné, under the influence of Brecht, 'is concerned with the way a culture represents its own history and how individuals within a culture represent theirs' (1992: 258) is relevant not only to the precise conjuncture of the mid-1980s socio-political trauma of AIDS viewed from a later perspective, but also to the alternative arrangements for queer love and sexuality fleshed out in *Les Témoins*. Forbes ended her coverage of Téchiné with *Les Innocents*, in which, she argued, the immigrant character Saïd (Abdellatif Kechiche) is the central focus for all the other characters' desires (a focus unquestioningly adopted since by the younger wave of gay male filmmakers): 'With his sexual ambiguity, his dual nationality and his ill-defined social status, Saïd undermines the fixed identities that the cinema conventionally projects and explodes our belief in the ideal romantic couple' (Forbes 1992: 257).

One of the leading threads of this chapter has been to show how, despite the differing aesthetic concerns and ideological outlooks, the films covered seek to trouble the notion of a fixed gay identity and community or a received notion of family and kinship, in order to establish alternative templates for visions of same-sex intimacy and queer sexualities. *Les Témoins* brings together these non-normative strands in the context of AIDS and the effects of loss on interpersonal sexual and emotional relations. In short, Téchiné's more explicit gestures towards the socio-political environment of his individual narratives show for the first time in his work how a *subculture* has been representing itself within and against the dominant culture's norms. Despite the propensity for artistic clichés to portray the novelist Sarah (anxiously smoking; working at home under a mound of typescripts; ignoring her baby), her liberated sexuality

and lack of outrage at Mehdi's bisexuality show Téchiné together with co-writers Laurent Guyot and Viviane Zingg avoiding the traps of the traditional hetero-normative narrative – the lack of exclusivity in their relationship is conceived as a form of moral contract by Téchiné, who chose Béart to convey Sarah's erotic allure so that Mehdi's passion for Manu would not be seen conventionally to arise from marital boredom.⁶⁰ Mehdi's bisexuality is shown to be a plausible option because the audience, like the character, is surprised by it, due to a tendency to decode characters as either heterosexual or homosexual unless indicated otherwise (though he does add to the presumption of heterosexuality by earlier denying the existence of gays in the police force). His bisexuality is later criticised from a gay viewpoint by Adrien as a convenient means of benefitting from a closeted sexuality by seeing men whilst retaining heterosexual social privilege.

The film also points to contradictions in Mehdi's personal and public personae by documenting the lower-class milieu of sex work that disturbs the heterosexual hegemony that he ascribes to professionally in his job at the vice squad. Marshall has drawn on the inclusion of alternative social spaces in Téchiné's cinema, seen as 'utopia' following Foucault and Hocquenghem's advocacy of sexual non-differentiation against the mainstream assimilation of gay identities by the market; or 'atopia' following Barthes, meant to signal movements opposing the norm (Marshall 2007: 82–3). Nolot's bit-part as the convivial hotel manager (reminiscent of the mother and son couple in *J'embrasse pas*) is used to establish a positive image of the sexual margins of northern Paris (far from the ambient 'class tourism' noticeable elsewhere in French queer cinema), as he is shown to offer hospitality to Manu, who strikes up a friendship with Sandra, a resident sex worker at the pick-up bar *Le Clignancourt*, under the constant surveillance of Mehdi and his colleagues. The use of saturated colours (clashing shades of red figure in the early sequences outside the bar in the contrast between Julie's conservative clothing and Sandra's fluorescent wig) points to the erotic vibrancy of a community later threatened by the spread of AIDS and condemned by the vice squad which shuts down the hotel and arrests its occupants. Téchiné's bold visual contrast between early euphoria and later disintegration is particularly insistent in the case of Sandra, who energetically lip-synchs Les Rita Mitsouko's emblematic 1980s hit 'Marcia Baila' (expressing rage at a woman's death from cancer) in a foreboding moment before the onset of AIDS. This is an update of the sequence in which the Brazilian transgender sex workers dance with Pierre in *J'embrasse pas*, a moment Marshall describes as a 'utopian space before the catastrophe' (Marshall 2007: 63). Sandra's performance for the appreciative Manu – the sequence finishes with a prolonged reaction shot – together with the use of saturated colour again point to Demy's aesthetic stamp on contemporary queer film.⁶¹ However, whereas he tended to incorporate musical numbers as part of the narrative progression, they are used in *J'embrasse pas* and *Les Témoins* to punctuate it at crucial moments, a pause before the drama continues – we learn

from the film's closing dialogue that Sandra, incarcerated for prostitution, is HIV-positive and unable to obtain suitable medical treatment in prison.

Adrien's comment midway through the film (repeated to Sarah at the end) that a continuing friendship despite their differing sexual identities may be impossible marks out the era of intense homophobia that led to the launch in 1984 of AIDES, a charity founded in Marseille by Foucault's partner Daniel Defert. Téchiné retains the charity's name and models Adrien on himself, Defert, dermatologist Michel Canesi, and the influential AIDS treatment consultant Professor Jacques Leibowitch.⁶² Blanc is filmed lecturing to the medical community and explaining without condescension to Sandra the necessity of targeted HIV-prevention among sex workers. The use of television archive material of the widespread panic around the causes and spread of HIV/AIDS in the mid-1980s accentuates the move from an earlier carefree bohemian society of sexual experimentation to the subsequent outbreak of 'the war' (the title of the second section), the evocation of which borrows elements from documentary naturalism and science-fiction fable – Téchiné reminds us of the frightening atmosphere of social shame and stigma attached to AIDS which accounted for Foucault's much debated silence.⁶³ *Les Témoins* is nuanced enough to avoid both a pre-AIDS nostalgia and a reverential portrait of early AIDS activism. Mehdi pinpoints the blind spots in Adrien's political commitment, resenting his refusal to grant him access to Manu and accusing him of ironically coming to life through the epidemic, activism as sublimation. The comments on the potential ideological schism between heterosexuals and homosexuals were later historically transformed by the more radical identity politics of Act Up, transposed to a French context of state inaction by the end of the decade, a form of direct action that highlighted the moralistic opposition between straight, upright sexual practice and a marginal queer sexual politics that forged alliances across sexualities with socially stigmatised groups affected by AIDS, such as injecting drug users.

Philippe Mangeot, former president of Act Up Paris (1997–9), highlights the political limitations of Téchiné's take on the early implementation of community-based mobilisation. Mangeot remarks that Téchiné avoids the inevitable moral and political pitfalls of AIDS cinema from *Les Nuits fauves* onwards – that is to say, an over-determined treatment of AIDS, the feeling that HIV has at all costs to comply with the familiar tropes of death and desire, rather than, as Mangeot succinctly puts it, 'the disaster of an epidemic from which there is no lesson to be drawn' ('le désastre d'une maladie dont il n'y rien à tirer').⁶⁴ The medical and political dimensions of HIV/AIDS are what are missing from the earlier representations of individual suffering and martyrdom. *Les Témoins* does not, however, completely avoid redemption through the signification of Manu's death as a 'creative' gift to the surrounding witnesses. To that extent, Mangeot argues, Téchiné does not quite go as far as *Jeanne et le garçon formidable* in locating AIDS as of primary political significance. The gestures towards alternative forms of subcultural relations (the overlap between queerness and sex work in the pre-AIDS conjuncture) are indeed a sideshow to

the main narrative threads that remain for the most part within the sphere of intimacy. The collective dimension was fundamental to the emergence of AIDS activism through its production of new relations between the private and the public spheres. Mangeot's sharp critique shows the relative constraints of a radical political praxis within the confines of auteur cinema with its propensity for artistic individualism. The foundation of AIDES shown through Adrien's activism went beyond the singular agitation sketched in the film. Mangeot points to its Foucauldian framework:

the invention of new forms of relations, the production of techniques of the self that lead to a community-based response to the epidemic . . . The emergence of AIDS historically created new connections between the intimate and the political.

(l'invention de nouvelles formes de relations, la production de techniques de soi qui permirent d'opposer à la maladie une réponse communautaire . . . Historiquement, l'apparition du sida a opéré des branchements inédits entre l'intime et le politique.)

These are connections that *Les Témoins* alludes to without exploring them further.

Mangeot's verdict is that Téchiné is unduly reticent towards the oppositional politics that support his more familiar intimate narrative structure. Téchiné is indeed cautious about a possible '*communautariste*' division (derived from Anglo-American identity politics) of his work into pre-established categories, less from a reluctance to acknowledge the thematic presence of queer interpersonal relations, and more from a fear of losing the contradictions and complexities at work. His comments for *Sight and Sound* at the time of the British release of *Les Témoins* capture the filmmaker's middle-ground position on sexual politics, keen to explore questions of sexuality in tandem with their socio-political signification, but reluctant to be drawn into the gay artistic pigeon-hole: 'I can never accept that a character be reduced to his or her sexual orientation'; 'I don't think [*The Witnesses*] plays the card of sociological survey'; 'I think it's important to consider the issues on the film beyond the framework of heterosexual vs homosexual'.⁶⁵ Vincendeau sees *Le Témoins* as marking a 'watershed in Téchiné's career' by centring the entire project on male homosexuality, a point qualified by Téchiné's own wider-reaching preference for 'radically differing forms of sexuality' for each of the three male characters across the various markers of erotic preference, serological status, age, wealth and ethnicity.⁶⁶

Téchiné's recent reticence towards a 'gay' or 'queer' appropriation of *Les Témoins* is part of both a cultural and intellectual resistance towards critical paradigms derived from the reception of Anglo-American identity politics, and a more local reluctance on the part of filmmakers and critics to accept politicised appropriations of auteur cinema by minority subcultures. Marshall

makes this point with regard to Téchiné's previous output, using critical tools from Deleuze and Guattari to position the filmmaker as operating in a minor mode (Marshall 2007: 81–6), emphasising experimental and evolving patterns of 'non-heteronormative' sexualities, as opposed to a major mode predominant in mainstream gay cinema seeking to present a stable representation of prêt-à-porter gay/lesbian identities suitable for mainstream consumption. Such a framework, Marshall suggests, might correlate to the gay/queer opposition used in Anglo-American criticism to separate forms of bland positive imagery from trashier representations of sexual transgression (Marshall 2007: 81–2). Marshall's conclusion that 'Téchiné's films are neither militantly gay nor even coalesce around relatively fixed positions of gay identity and community' (Marshall 2007: 82) is an accurate summary of the filmmaker's preference for a queerness in minor mode, in which same-sex relations are woven into the larger narrative fabric. However, *Les Témoins* marks a turning point, at the crossroads between minor and major modes of sexual representation, with greater, if over-cautious, attention to a specifically gay history and with more elaborate patterns of male intimacy no longer positioned on the margins but placed at the centre of a more homogeneous social and narrative structure. In that respect *Les Témoins* is an accurate indicator of the existing 'queer' cinema in the contemporary French context, with its focus on male same-sex relations outside traditional models of coupling and kinship and the effects of AIDS and loss on queer sexualities – an ultimately modest brand of queer cinema within the traditional format and prescriptions of independent auteur production. The political frustrations voiced by Mangeot point not only to the relative limits of individual films or filmmakers, but also to the political temerity of an increasingly fragile independent sector. (Director Pascale Ferran's acceptance speech at the 2007 Césars ceremony attacked the increasing economic polarity in French filmmaking between dominant studio blockbusters and independent low-budget production.)⁶⁷ It is for this reason that the more radical image-making drawing on post-modern aesthetics and queer politics is now produced on digital video and circulated at local gatherings such as alternative film festivals or via the internet. The final chapter will begin to chart the local proliferation of a digital production influenced by the emerging translations of Anglo-American queer critique, marking the historical transition from a modest French queer cinema to an alternative 'queer underground'.

NOTES

1. François Truffaut, 'Une certaine tendance du cinéma français', *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 31, January 1954, reprinted in Antoine de Baecque (ed.), *Vive le cinéma français!*, Paris: Petite bibliothèque des Cahiers du cinéma, 2001, pp. 17–36.
2. Christophe Honoré, 'La triste moralité du cinéma français', *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 521, February 1998, p. 5.
3. For a thorough analysis of the fusion of cinema and politics around the *sans-papiers* in 1997, see Phil Powrie (1999), 'Heritage, history and "New Realism": French

- cinema in the 1990s', in Phil Powrie (ed.), *French Cinema in the 1990s: Continuity and Difference*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–21.
4. Charlotte Garson, 'Crustacés et Coquillages', *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 600, April 2005, p. 51.
 5. Whilst supporting the more radical vision of queer relations outside the reproductive family and state recognition, Swamy is critical of the film's erasure of the ethnic identity of its half-Arab protagonist whose alternative kinship relations are all with white French people, thus ignoring 'the multi-ethnic origins of the protagonist, and the multicultural reality of contemporary France' (Swamy 2006: 62).
 6. Published by *Le Monde*, 16 March 2004.
 7. Didier Eribon, '“Des gens peu communs”', *Têtu*, December 2006, p. 74.
 8. Ginette Vincendeau, 'Cockles and muscles', *Sight and Sound*, April 2006, p. 47.
 9. Christophe Honoré, quoted in Jean-Michel Frodon, 'Profil Christophe Honoré, cinéaste au feu de l'écriture,' *Le Monde*, 10 July 2002.
 10. Co-written by Gilles Taurand, broadcast on 30 March 2001, France 2, contained in the INA archives, Paris.
 11. Didier Péron, 'Sur le fil, “Cécile Cassard”', *Libération*, 10 July 2002.
 12. Indeed the formal attributes of the film were used by Serge Kaganski to dismiss it as promising but too literary and theoretical to be moving, which was surely Honoré's point. See Serge Kaganski, 'trop-plein', *Les Inrockuptibles*, 10 July 2002.
 13. Louis Guichard in *Télérama*, 13 July 2002; Didier Péron, 'Sur le fil, “Cécile Cassard”', *Libération*, 10 July 2002.
 14. Ginette Vincendeau, 'Ma mère', *Sight and Sound*, vol. 15 (3), March 2005, p. 62.
 15. *Ibid.*
 16. On the critical convergence of Bataille and Pasolini, see Jean Dufлот (1970), *Entretiens avec Pier Paolo Pasolini*, Paris: Pierre Belfond.
 17. On Joana Preiss, see Françoise-Marie Santucci, 'Joana Preiss, la muse-girl', *Libération*, 30 June 2006.
 18. The critics both praised and trashed the film's fashionable allure – *Libération* commented on a glamour rarely seen in French film (Philippe Azoury, 'C'est “Ma mere”, son Bataille,' *Libération*, 12 May 2004) whereas *Les Echos* attacked its bourgeois-bohemian credentials, perversion in a chic, glossy wrapper (A. C., 'L'amour à mort', *Les Echos*, 19 May 2004).
 19. Philippe Azoury gives an insight into the shoot in late 2003 in the Canary Islands, in Philippe Azoury, 'Honoré au champ de Bataille,' *Libération*, 21 January 2004.
 20. Honoré sees the apparent libertarian message in Bataille as important to counter neo-liberal moral and economic hegemony (Michaël Melinard, '“ On est dans une période de puritanisme absolu”', *L'Humanité*, 22 May 2004).
 21. Honoré comments on the influence of Dennis Cooper in the interview accompanying the DVD version.
 22. Filmmaker Catherine Breillat particularly praised Honoré's feminising of male bodies in her radio review of the film (*Le Cinéma l'après-midi*, France Culture, 22 May 2004), whereas *Le Monde* criticised the clichéd use of 'gay' imagery derived from advertising, and made a homophobic point of taking Honoré to task for fawning over Louis Garrel rather than overcoming his desire for his leading man (*Le Monde*, *Aden*, 19 May 2004).
 23. Apart from the Pasolini revival, Lestrade also mentions the success in queer cinema of *O Fantasma* (Rodrigues 2000) with its memorable set piece of latex perversion on a trash heap (Lestrade 2004: 155–6). Lestrade earlier links barebacking to the development of extreme sexuality within gay subcultures through the fetish for sperm 'donation' (p. 87). He is also highly critical of the mainstream media in France for latching onto celebrity novelists like Guillaume Dustan who cynically used AIDS revisionism as a commercial pitch (p. 166).

24. This is the argument of Lestrade's subsequent account of contemporary changes in gay male sexuality in Didier Lestrade (2007), *Cheikh: Journal de campagne*, Paris: Flammarion.
25. On the background to the film's production, see Louis Maury, 'Léo le maudit,' *Têtu*, November 2004, p. 46.
26. A comprehensive state of affairs on 'sero-sorting' and the argument that it is simply the more acceptable face of 'barebacking' is to be found in Emmanuelle Cosse, Philippe Mangeot and Victoire Patouillard, 'La Préférence sérologique?', *Vacarme*, no. 40, summer 2007, pp. 42–7. For a counter-argument taking account of relational and emotional factors in 'sero-preference' and 'sero-adaptation', see the radical AIDS prevention collective *The Warning*, particularly 'Sero-sorting, don't act?', www.thewarning.info/article.php?id_article=0227 (accessed 26 September 2007). For a sociological inquiry into 'serostatus' and risk, see Mark Davis, 'HIV prevention rationalities and serostatus in the risk narratives of gay men', *Sexualities*, 5 (3), 2002, pp. 281–99.
27. The harm reduction campaign tested by AIDES in 2002 was influenced by similar campaigns previously developed in Britain by *Gay Men Fighting Aids*. See Watney 2000 for an account by one of the group's founders.
28. Lawrence R. Schehr offers a literary critique of Rémès in Lawrence R. Schehr, 'Reading serial sex: The case of Erik Rémès,' *L'Esprit créateur*, vol. XLIV, no. 3, fall 2004, pp. 94–104. For a frontal attack on Dustan, see the Act Up Paris dossier 'En finir avec Dustan', *Action* no. 77, available on www.actupparis.org (accessed 7 January 2007).
29. Guillaume Dustan, 'La Capote n'a jamais existé', *Libération*, 21–2 October 2000, p. 8.
30. Lesbian & Gay Pride Films (1996), *L'amour est à réinventer*, Paris: Editions Mille et Une Nuits/ARTE Editions, p. 151.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
32. Stéphane Bouquet, 'La mélodie du bonheur', *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 545 April 2000, pp. 65–6. Thomas Doustaly writing in gay magazine *Têtu*, however, criticised the film as dull and over-burdened by its engagement with minority politics, figuring Félix as gay, HIV-positive, Arab and unemployed. See Thomas Doustaly, 'Triste Félix', *Têtu*, April 2000, p. 20.
33. Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, 'Drôle de Félix: Un objet incontestablement gentil', *Positif*, May 2000, no. 471, 32–3.
34. José Arroyo, 'Drôle de Félix', *Sight and Sound*, January 2001, pp. 47–8.
35. *Ibid.* One might take issue with Arroyo's assessment that the film reminds us that Félix is dying, since it more obviously shows him alive and in ostensibly good health. Thank you to Florian Grandena for this point.
36. Olivier Nickaus, 'Le sida en chanté', *Ex Aequo*, no. 17, April 1998, p. 55.
37. Camille Taboulay, 'Attendez que ma joie revienne', *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 523, April 1998, pp. 72–3.
38. Gérard Lefort, "'Jeanne et le garçon" c'est formidable', *Libération*, 22 April 1998, p. 28.
39. Claire Vassé, '*Jeanne et le garçon formidable*: L'amour à mort', *Positif*, no. 447 May 1998, pp. 35–6.
40. For a social history of the New Wave, see Mary 2006.
41. Philippe Colomb examines the queer audience reception of Demy in France in Philippe Colomb, 'L'étrange Demy-monde', in Bourcier (ed.) (1998), pp. 39–47.
42. See interview with Honoré, 'Christophe Honoré: "Je n'accorde aucune importance au scénario", propos recueillis par Isabelle Regnier', *Le Monde*, 23 May 2007, p. 27.
43. Christophe Honoré, quoted in Philippe Lançon, 'Le coup de la grace', *Libération*, 21 May 2007, p. 33.

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44. Honoré presents his pick of influential pop music in an interview for *Télérama*: see Laurent Rigoulet, 'Chant contre champ', *Télérama*, no. 2993, 23 May 2007, pp. 20–4.
 45. Ginette Vincendeau, 'Dans Paris', *Sight and Sound*, vol. 17, issue 5, May 2007, p. 59.
 46. Hervé Aubron, 'Connaît-on la chanson?', *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 624, June 2007, p. 29.
 47. Ginette Vincendeau, 'Dans Paris', *Sight and Sound*, vol. 17, issue 5, May 2007, p. 60.
 48. See, for example, Jacques Morice, 'Chants magnétiques', *Télérama*, no. 2993, 23 May 2007, p. 55.
 49. Chéreau quoted in interview, Yann Gonzalez, 'Chéreau, L'Homme à côté', *Têtu*, May 2004, pp. 74–5.
 50. Sue Harris provides an appreciative critique of the film in *Sight and Sound*, March 2004, 14 (3), p. 63.
 51. Jean-Michel Frodon, 'A fleur de corps', *Cahiers du cinéma*, September 2003, pp. 24–6.
 52. Thomas Doustaly, 'Le Marketing honteux des cinéastes gay', *Têtu*, May 2004, p. 72.
 53. Jean-Loup Bourget surveys the treatment of AIDS on screen by comparing Téchiné's novelistic style to Chéreau's 'intimiste' style: see Jean-Loup Bourget, 'Les Témoins: In illo tempore', *Positif*, no. 553, March 2007, pp. 42–3.
 54. Jean-Marc Lalanne, 'Les Témoins d'André Téchiné', *Les Inrockuptibles*, no. 588, 6–12 March 2007, pp. 48–9.
 55. Thierry Ardisson, *Tout le monde en parle*, France 2, 19 November 2005.
 56. Ryan Gilbey, 'Time to leave', *Sight and Sound*, 16 (5), May 2006, pp. 74–5.
 57. Gérard Lefort and Didier Péron, '"Faire le film avant l'oubli"', *Libération*, 7 March 2007, Cinema section, p. 2.
 58. Alain Brassart's chapter on Téchiné traces the filmmaker's preoccupation with diverse forms of masculinity (Brassart 2007).
 59. Ginette Vincendeau, 'A time to love and a time to die', *Sight and Sound*, vol. 17 (11), November 2007, pp. 46–7.
 60. Dominique Borde, 'André Téchiné, un devoir de mémoire', *Le Figaro*, 7 March 2007, p. 30.
 61. In the TV documentary, *Territoire Téchiné* (Jean-Jacques Bernard, 2005), Téchiné mentions the influence of Demy and the more common New Wave technique, whereby actors would take a break from their characters, even in the stylisation and choreography of Lola's dance sequence. The musical number in *J'embrasse pas* (like Sandra's dance in *Les Témoins*) signals 'a moment of unexpected release' ('un moment d'abandon, de dérapage').
 62. See the interview with Téchiné in *Têtu*, March 2007, pp. 22–3.
 63. Téchiné mentions Foucault in an interview for *L'Humanité*, 7 March 2007, p. 21.
 64. Philippe Mangeot, 'Sida: 2007–1984', *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 621, March 2007, p. 27. Same reference for the subsequent quotes from Mangeot.
 65. Téchiné quoted in Ginette Vincendeau, 'A time to love and a time to die', *Sight and Sound*, 17 (11), November 2007, pp. 46–7.
 66. See the interview with Téchiné in *Têtu*, March 2007, pp. 22–3.
 67. 'Discours prononcé par Pascale Ferran à la cérémonie des Césars 2007', *Positif*, no. 556, June 2007, p. 17.
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