

The State(s) They're In: Intersections of the Henriad, Hustler Narratives, and  
Alternative Music in Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho*  
By James Newlin

“An inheritance,” Derrida writes in *Specters of Marx*, “is always the reaffirmation of a debt, but a critical, selective, and filtering reaffirmation...” (114). Gus Van Sant's highly allusive film *My Own Private Idaho* marks itself as an heir to various histories and genres—including the genre the *History*, demonstrated by the film's oft-noted reworking of Shakespeare's *Henriad*—and in this paper, I investigate a similar “critical, selective, and filtering reaffirmation” in the film, in order to interrogate *Idaho*'s collage-effect and structure. I contend that the way Van Sant juxtaposes Shakespeare's *History* with his other sources—Orson Welles's earlier filmed version of the Henry Plays, *Chimes at Midnight*, hustler narratives, and, punk, folk, popular, and “alternative” music—must be read as a thoroughly personal vision, constructed out of engagements with historically situated genres and texts that force *Idaho*'s viewers to resist their expectations about those genres and texts. By defying genre, Van Sant challenges our notions of what makes an “authentic” Shakespeare adaptation, hustler narrative, or punk song; he produces something that goes beyond “authentic,” and becomes something fantastical.

Consider one blind spot found in some earlier analyses of *My Own Private Idaho*: i.e. the “gritty, realistic” reading of the film. Kathy Howlett's materialist, Jamesonian reading of *Idaho* suggests that the film's “gritty realism” “emphasizes the gulf between rich and poor in order to demystify “the ideological function” of Orson Welles's vision of the tavern world in *Chimes At Midnight* (171). But in her astute reading of Van Sant's “degrading” of Welles's film and its utopian vision of the past, she never clarifies what exactly makes Van Sant's vision so gritty or so realistic. Similarly, Mark Adnum describes River Phoenix's Mike as “hustl[ing] to survive and to escape the no-hope hell of his Midwestern home,” in an overly romantic reading of the film with the “youth at risk” genre projected onto it.

There is no escape *from* the Midwest depicted in the film: *Idaho* begins after Mike has left home, and, far from escaping, he voluntarily *returns*, in search of his mother. Furthermore, aside from a teary request for a couple of extra bucks from a john early in the film (which could just as easily be read as an affectation, since the plea is based on an elaborate lie about his

father's suicide attempt), there is little to suggest that Mike views his straits as being particularly dire. Mike, who has been called one of the most "profoundly unconscious" heroes of cinema, never demonstrates the kind of desperation or struggle of someone "hustling to survive" (Arthur and Liebler 28).

Presumably a gritty and/or realistic depiction of prostitution would want to show sex scenes that are gritty or realistic, but none of *Idaho*'s couplings are either. There is the trick where Mike's orgasm is represented by a farm house falling out of the sky and crashing into the ground in slow motion; the one that parodies old Hollywood musicals, set to Rudy Vallee's "Deep Night," with Mike dressed like a "Little Dutch Boy"; the *ménage a trois* with Scott Favor (Keanu Reeves) and Hans (Udo Kier), filmed as an imitation of still-photography (*ala* Scott's love scene with Carmella) and which Adnum perceptively recognizes is "in the style of porn magazine photo stories."<sup>i</sup> Not only are these scenes not realistic, they verge on the ethereal: *Idaho*'s tricks may not be romanticized, but (considering the film's treatment of Shakespeare) perhaps they have been romanced.

Such "gritty" readings of the film seem to infer that, because *My Own Private Idaho* is about hustlers, it conforms to the raw details typically expected from hustler narratives. What Stephen Orgel calls the authenticity *topos*, then, may not be exclusive to performances or realizations of Shakespeare's plays. For Orgel, the authentic is something wraithlike (Derrida may say "spectral"), a "something that is not in the text; it is something behind it and beyond it that the text is presumed to represent" (256).<sup>ii</sup> Howlett and Adnum argue that Van Sant's hustler narrative conforms to that genre's own authenticity *topos*, exemplified by the pseudo-autobiographical novels of Jean Genet, John Rechy, and JT LeRoy, which need not be works of realism to still assert a claim of authenticity (even, perhaps especially, if that claim is made outside or "behind" and "beyond" the text, such as a reference to the author's actual biography). And perhaps this assumption is faultless, since it is shared with the some of the film's own epitexts; specifically, LeRoy's contributions to *My Own Private Idaho*'s Criterion Collection deluxe edition DVD from 2005. LeRoy, whose work has been championed by Van Sant and who collaborated with the director on the school shooting drama *Elephant*, is heard on an audio track on the second disc in the collection, and is the author of a brief essay in the collection's booklet, titled "Boise on the Side." "Boise on the Side," upon examination, demonstrates both conformity

to the hustler narrative's authenticity *topos* and that *topos*'s accompanying anxieties, and, perhaps inadvertently, *My Own Private Idaho*'s powerful subversion of such genre expectations.

Featuring a handful of elegiac descriptions of scenes in the film ("a lost kid, unloved, unmoored, unmourned on a desolate road"), "Boise On The Side" is primarily an interview with Van Sant about *Idaho* and its legacy. Filling out the rest of the three short pages are a number of long quotes from the film that appear to be drawn from Van Sant's published script, rather than the film itself. For example, a reference to Van Halen in the script was changed to Sinead O'Connor in the film; LeRoy's excerpt refers to Van Halen. So, if the film resists our expectations of a realist reading, it is worth noting that LeRoy is not even "reading" the film here, but rather the film's earlier draft, as a screenplay (8).

LeRoy's typography alternates between bold, italicized, and natural fonts and, occasionally, is in all-caps, mimicking the naturalized stream-of-consciousness of an outsider artist. (This typographical choice juxtaposes tellingly with the way Criterion's twin-columned layout and use of historiated lettering already imitates an early modern folio text, suggesting that Van Sant's intertexts can intersect but not always interplay.) The essay, with its variations in font and its genre-bending, has a collage-like feel. Or perhaps, given LeRoy's history as a journalist—both as a reporter for music magazines and as a diarist—it should more accurately be described as a scrapbook:

THIS IS NOT AN AFTER-SCHOOL SPECIAL. THERE IS NO SOCIAL WORKER OR ADULT WITH A HEART OF GOLD THAT RESCUES THESE KIDS. THERE ARE TRICKS, DATES, MEN WHO GIVE MONEY FOR WHAT YOU'RE CARRYING, YOUR BODY'S WORTH. AND THEN THERE IS BOB. THAT'S THE STREET. THE ADULT WHO IS LOVED IS THE ONE WITH THE BEST DRUGS.

*[We'd stand outside a theater in the Castro waiting for My Own Private Idaho to let out. Guys came streaming from the movie hungry for meat like a pack of lions smelling their first deer in a month. Those nights we could charge four times what we normally got... (8)]*

LeRoy's caps-locked text emphasizes the film's supposed realist or neo-realist authenticity ("THIS IS NOT AN AFTER-SCHOOL SPECIAL") by laying out a minimalistic summary of the film in blunt slogans. Then, using italics and brackets to imitate stage directions, LeRoy launches

into a personal recollection about prostitution, implying that, despite or perhaps because of the film's grittiness ("THAT'S THE STREET"), *Idaho* also romanticizes prostitution, at least for a certain kind of viewer.

LeRoy, whose novels and short stories were marketed as autobiographical—press materials detailed a devastating backstory of homelessness, childhood sexual abuse, and working as a truck-stop prostitute and street hustler—is called upon in the Criterion set as proof of the film's authenticity and grittiness. LeRoy, after all, should know. Except, and this may be no surprise to many readers, JT LeRoy was not an author so much as an elaborately constructed fictional persona by the author Laura Albert: Albert officially confirmed that LeRoy was an invention in a 2006 interview with Nathaniel Rich for *The Paris Review*. But what is of particular interest for studying the treatment of authenticity in *My Own Private Idaho*'s intersecting narratives and narrative types is that Albert continues to make such claims even after being exposed as a charlatan. In the *Paris Review* interview, Albert insists that LeRoy was not a "hoax," but rather a "veil upon a veil—a filter" and that readers who read *Sarah*, *The Heart is Deceitful Above All Things* and *Harold's End* as LeRoy/Albert's autobiographies were not far off: "Everything you need to know about me is in my books, in ways that I don't even understand" (167). As I mentioned, for Orgel the authentic is something wraith-like, so it is no surprise that in Albert's circumfession, she not only continues to prioritize authenticity, but links it to a kind of ghost logic. Claiming something like possession ("it really felt like he was another human being") enables Albert to cite the hustler trope of authenticity as well as defer from having to "understand" why she felt as though she had to lie. If these claims about the authenticity of LeRoy's narratives are not evidence of Albert's struggles with depression, they are certainly evidence of the impulse to read for and write for the authentic in hustler narratives.

Though the Criterion Collection and Van Sant may not have known about the LeRoy hoax when they chose to include "Boise on the Side" in the *Idaho* DVD set, Van Sant does include another, more explicitly fictional hustler narrative as a paratext to his film: the song "The Old Main Drag," by the Irish folk-punk band the Pogues, which plays over the film's conclusion and final credits. In "The Old Main Drag," the Pogues's singer and lyricist, Shane MacGowan, is clearly speaking from the perspective of a fictional rent-boy character; however, the poetic realism at play in "The Old Main Drag" is a part of the band's more general claim to authenticity as folk-song troubadours, rather than the authors of a hustler narrative.<sup>iii</sup> "The Old Main Drag"

demonstrates a mastery of the tropes of folk song storytelling – the rhymes are prominent but unobtrusive and never inane, and the speaker's details are immaculately chosen. But what I mean by “general claim to authenticity” is not just a question of quality. MacGowan's command of form (as well as the band's arrangements of traditional folk instruments like fiddles, pipes, banjos, and mandolins) does not mean that songs like “The Old Main Drag” are meant to “stand on their own,” but rather, that they ought to stand alongside classic folk songs like the traditional “Jesse James,” Ewan MacColl's “Dirty Old Town,” or Eric Bogle's “The Band Played Waltzing Matilda” (all of which are featured on 1985's *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash* with “The Old Main Drag”). By placing his own songs among these covers, MacGowan is not just inviting the comparison of his work to the folk canon, he is proposing that his work is a new classic; despite the band's punk rock influence, these are “authentic” folk and Irish songs.

MacGowan is not claiming to be authentic “rent boy,” but rather an authentic folk singer like Bogle, speaking for the people by speaking *as* the people. The catalog of ailments listed by the disenchanted soldier in “The Band Played Waltzing Matilda” (“the legless, the armless, the blind, and insane”) may be echoed in a line from “The Old Main Drag” (“I've been spat on and shat on and raped and abused”) and the song's title recalls MacColl's “Dirty Old Town.” But by placing “Drag” near the beginning of *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash*'s song sequence (track two) and by placing “Matilda” at the very end (track twelve), it actually sounds to the listener, particularly one unfamiliar with Bogle or MacColl's work, like the reverse is the case: that Bogle and MacColl's songs are indebted to MacGowan's. Like with Laura Albert (or, for that matter, David Garrick, whose 1744 performance of *Macbeth* is one of Orgel's earliest examples of a production claiming to “recover” the authentic Shakespeare, even as he cut ten percent of the text and wrote an entirely new speech for the dying Macbeth), there is a touch of deception to the Pogues's claims of the authentic (Orgel 246).

“The Old Main Drag” plays over *My Own Private Idaho*'s final credits, where tucked between “research consultant” and the “production accountant” credits is an “additional dialogue by” credit for William Shakespeare. The Pogues song arrives in a jarring way, replacing the film's familiar motif of a dreamily, soporific rendition of “America, The Beautiful” played on a lap steel, so that the juxtaposition illustrates the film's odd, under-discussed dialectic of nationality. Here the dream-vision of one country is replaced with the, to continue with our schema, gritty, realistic narrative about another. The blunt Britishness of the Pogues song (“The

Old Main Drag” begins “When I first came to London...”) both echoes and represents the intrusion of the Henriad into the hustler narrative with the appearance of Bob Pigeon. Why does a film, whose title immediately inscribes it as a work about a particularly American sense of inwardness, make so many allusions to the British stage?

As has been noted again and again, the film does far more than just “allude” to the Henriad; Van Sant does not simply transcribe Shakespeare’s language, he translates it. For instance, Hal’s chiding “unless hours were cups of sack,” “clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping-houses” becomes Scott Favor’s “unless hours were lines of coke, or dials looked like the signs of gay bars, or time itself was a fair hustler in black leather” (1.1.2.6-7). But, though Jonathan Goldberg suggests it is Hal we desire, I find that it is “all but impossible to resist the attractions of” John Falstaff (or, as it were, Bob Pigeon) (145). Compare an excerpt from *My Own Private Idaho* with one from Orson Welles’s published screenplay for *Chimes at Midnight*. Van Sant:

You have corrupted me, Scotty. I was an innocent before I met you. And now look at me, just a little better than wicked. I used to be a virtuous man! [*Scott laughs loudly.*] Well, virtuous enough. I swore a little, I never gambled more than seven times a week. Poker! I never picked up a street boy more than once a quarter. [*A boy shouts: “Of an hour!”*] Of an hour. Bad company has corrupted me. I’ll be darned if I haven’t forgotten what the inside of a church looks like.

Welles:

Thou hast done much harm upon me, Hal—God forgive thee for it! Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing; and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked [*The Prince begins to laugh.*]. I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need to be, virtuous enough; swore a little, dined not about seven times a week, went to a bawdy house not above once in a quarter... [*Pauses*] of an hour ... Villainous company hath been the spoil of me. If I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, call me a peppercorn... (Welles 48).

The above speech from *Chimes at Midnight* is pieced together from Falstaff’s dialogue in *1Henry IV* 1.2.30-85, 3.3.12-15, and 3.3.6-7. Welles, like Van Sant, is not simply transcribing Shakespeare either: both films’s scripts are a kind of collage. Van Sant has claimed that watching *Chimes at Midnight* made him go back to Shakespeare’s text to find the inspiration for Scott

Favor, but I think it is safe to say he is more carefully adapting Welles than the Bard here: in a very literal sense, *Idaho* is not authentically Shakespeare. The sound of church bells, or chimes, which faintly appear as Bob Pigeon finishes this monologue is a not-so-subtle confirmation of its true source material.

Dick Hebdige famously reads the first, British punk culture as a “frozen dialectic” of “white” culture translating “black ethnicity” (69, 64). By accessing Shakespeare through Welles, Van Sant’s translation of another culture is far more complex than the one-to-one relation of, say, the skinheads’ “translation” of ska and reggae. Welles, an American in exile, was forced to place the Boar’s Head Tavern and the Battle of Shrewsbury in the deserts of Spain. Van Sant is an American like Welles, but an outsider due to his sexuality (remember that *My Own Private Idaho* is probably the most famous and most successful example of the so called New Queer Cinema).<sup>iv</sup> So while he films the *Chimes* homages in his hometown of Portland, he also gives his film an expatriate’s restlessness by returning Mike to the desolation of Idaho again and again throughout the film and by briefly stranding him in Italy. His method is much the same as the punks, and if the ethnic differences between America and England do not carry the same tension as the “frozen dialectic” of the punks, perhaps it is anxieties and expectations about authenticity—either as a “Shakespeare film” or as a hustler narrative—that provide the impetus for what Van Sant has done with Welles and Shakespeare.

Shakespeare is actually, briefly inscribed in the film before the introduction of Bob Pigeon, during the film’s one moment of *vérité* filmmaking. In the film’s café sequence, two actual hustlers address the camera interview style and recount their first times prostituting themselves, while Madonna’s “Cherish” plays in the background. As Madonna sings “Romeo and Juliet / They never felt this way I bet,” one of the hustlers simultaneously remarks that his first trick “had this big fucking cock and shit and, um, it was this totally awful experience.” The audience’s expectations of grittiness and authenticity in hustler narratives, here momentarily fulfilled (though the boys do tell their stories with a curious lack of emotion), are contrasted with an ideal and explicitly *unreal* notion of “Shakespearean” love.

This same scene is where Scott tells Mike that he and Bob “had a real heavy thing going,” that “he taught me better than school did,” and that “I’d say I love Bob more than my mother and my father.” The implication is, despite Bob being “fucking in love with” Scott, that Bob is responsible for Scott’s foray into prostitution. That Bob, in other words, “turned Scott

out” and that, in JT LeRoy’s estimation, is “loved” because he provides drugs to his young, impressionable victims. Even with Scott’s clarification of who was the object for whom (“he was fucking in love with me”), it is still implied that Bob is an abuser and that Scott, like the boys who share their stories with the camera, has been abused.

Except that then Van Sant puts Shakespeare into the film. Bob and Budd (who speaks variations of Shallow’s lines and is played by Flea, the bassist for the punk-funk band the Red Hot Chili Peppers) enter to the sound of Renaissance faire music on the soundtrack and a chorus of boys howling his arrival as the assemble atop the buildings of downtown Portland; their ramshackle hotel, with its empty wall-frames, resembles the claustrophobic, Brechtian set of *Chimes at Midnight*’s Boar’s Head Inn. Van Sant does not just allude to Falstaff’s presence in Portland, he announces it, quite literally shouting it from the rooftops. (Attentive viewers may notice a further inscription: Bob and the boys drink Falstaff brand beer.) And by doing so, he upsets the viewer’s expectations about the characters’ previous abuse; Falstaff is in this film, as he is in Jonathan Goldberg’s reading of the play, a masochist, and not a sadist (153-4).

Susan Wiseman argues that, like in the earliest silent films, which co-opted Shakespeare for respectability, *My Own Private Idaho* uses the Henriad as a “cultural anchor” (201). But the use of the Falstaff character, in all of his pathetic glory, does more than just imbue Van Sant’s film with cultural capital; it also serves to invert the stereotype of the predatory homosexual. John Falstaff may visit a brothel four times every hour, but if Bob Pigeon is a pimp, then “picking up a street boy” that often is more than just *self*-destructive. Yet Bob Pigeon claims that he was a virgin, “an innocent,” and that he has actually been deflowered by his love for Scott. The use of “damn” rather than one of the “swears” that he apparently uses so often now is a feeble rebuke of Scott’s influence.

Kenneth Rothwell suggests that at the end of the twentieth-century, critics “gradually, subtly” changed their interrogations of Shakespeare films: “we have ceased to ask ‘Is it Shakespeare?’ but instead ‘Is Shakespeare in it?’” (91). Perhaps unintentionally, Rothwell makes the same pun that R. Allen Shoaf uses regarding translation:

The translator always does some violence to the body of the original. The translator is always at some risk of becoming a rapist ... [by] betray[ing] the body of the original by effacing it, substituting his own body for the original – he puts his in (the place of) the other. (116)



What kind of a penetration is it when Shakespeare is inserted “in” to another text? In the case of *My Own Private Idaho*, I think it is this kind of a textual rape, or, more accurately speaking, a punking.<sup>v</sup> Far from a “cultural anchor” lending a teen heartthrob movie a little art house respectability, Shakespeare subverts our expectations of narrative by replacing “gritty realism” with theatrical verse and inverting our notion of abused and abuser. Shakespeare punks the film’s narrative, just as the Pogues punk “America, The Beautiful” at the film’s conclusion.

The film does something to Shakespeare as well, but I am not sure that it is a radicalization like Wiseman suggests (209). Rather, it is a process of inclusion, rather than inversion. While Welles’s and LeRoy’s collages were pieced together from like pieces produced by the same writer (Welles’s sources being Shakespeare, and LeRoy’s being LeRoy), Van Sant’s work claims the randomness of bricolage. There is a punk heritage here, as well; David Huxley ascribes *The Great Rock ‘N Roll Swindle*’s cinematic punk-ness to its resemblance to “a mobile equivalent of a Jamie Reed collage” (88). Van Sant uses Shakespeare the way he uses the Western, porn mags, and rock music: as a source presented without commentary. And, as viewers able to diffuse the various sources, we conflate these disparate forms as well; we are forced to treat Shakespeare like a cowboy and like a punk.

The film’s title is drawn from a B-52’s song, “Private Idaho.” But Van Sant has changed the song’s directive, in the second person, to a first-person avowal. So what seems to the listener like a tirade against introversion (“You’re living in your own private Idaho... Get out of the state you’re in!”), becomes here a celebration of escapist fantasy. But what Van Sant’s film is really escaping is the call for representing the authentic. LeRoy speaks for the hustlers; MacGowan speaks for the folk singers; Van Sant speaks for himself. Though Van Sant’s film takes its text from a history, perhaps it is better thought of as a romance, where authenticity is not much of a concern, because it is superseded by the interplay of the fantastic, the pastoral, and the social: the kind of place where, in Scott Favor’s words, time itself could be a fair hustler in black leather.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> The “still” shots also suggest the influence of Derek Jarman’s *Caravaggio*, where live actors imitate Caravaggio’s paintings. Jarman is another filmmaker who juxtaposes the Renaissance with the imagery or sound of punk and new wave. Consider the famous, startling moment in *The Last of England* where Jarman’s half-naked lover, Spring, stomps on a copy of Caravaggio’s “Profane Love” in the heavy jack-boots associated with punk groups like Sham 69, then attempts to copulate with the painting. See also Jarman’s early film, *Jubilee*, a fantasy that transports Elizabeth I and John Dee to an apocalyptic future populated by lawless youths portrayed by members of the 1970s punk scene; and his adaptation of *Edward II*, which dresses Gaveston in a black leather jacket and features a performance by Annie Lennox. For a discussion of Jarman’s influence on Van Sant, see Van Sant’s “Freewheelin’: Gus Van Sant Converses With Derek Jarman.”

<sup>ii</sup> “The realization of a Shakespeare text,” Orgel writes, “involves a considerable departure from the text” (238). But these departures are not limited to simply editing for time or space; rather, they also refer to what is added in the pursuit of the authentic “behind” and “beyond” the text (“the real life of the characters, the actual history of which the action is a part, the playwright’s imagination, or the hand of the master, the authentic witness of Shakespeare’s own history”), such as James Macklin dressing his Macbeth in a kilt or Orson Welles granting his a “Scottish brogue” (256). But Orgel is as concerned with the critic’s search for “an authentic Shakespeare, to whom every generation’s version of a classic drama may be ascribed” as he is with the “something else” that performers and editors “reveal” (256). In other words, we want confirmation for our own readings, and the pursuit of that confirmation/authenticity, can lead to obsessing over the “something else” outside of the text. The vagueness and impossibility associated with the authentic in this sense also relates to Jacques Lacan’s three orders, specifically his formulation of the impossible “real.”

<sup>iii</sup> My understanding of folk music, aside from my own listening history, is largely indebted to Joe Klein’s famous biography of Woody Guthrie and Greil Marcus’s *Invisible Republic* (now in print as *The Old, Weird America*). I am aware that both of these texts focus on American folk music and that their rubric may not apply to MacGowan (who is Irish) or Bogle (born in Scotland, naturalized Australian). Still, while both Bogle and the Pogues lay claim to the folk traditions of the British Isles, as late twentieth-century folk composers, they tend to be as inspired by American politically-minded folk singers like Phil Ochs, Pete Seeger, and Guthrie as they are by, say, the Child Ballads. This is readily apparent in *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash*’s inclusion of “Jesse James” and in the Pogues b-side “Body of an American” (which has since been immortalized on HBO’s *The Wire*).

<sup>iv</sup> Without rehashing or oversimplifying the history of queer reading and queer activism of the end of the last century, I will quote the introduction to Michele Aaron’s *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader* for some context: “queer’s defiance is leveled at mainstream homophobic society *but also* at the ‘tasteful and tolerated’ gay culture that cohabits with it ... [queer artists] were defined as much, if not more, by their opposition to gay culture as well as straight” (7). *My Own Private Idaho* is often cited as a one of the flagship films of the New Queer Cinema, appearing at the same film festivals alongside Tom Kalin’s *Swoon* and Gregg Aracki’s *The Living End* in 1992, where B. Ruby Rich first noticed the trend. Still, there is no essay length treatment of Van Sant or this film in Aaron’s *Reader*, which seems to be more concerned with NQC’s influence on post-1992 queer films.

<sup>v</sup> I am alluding, of course, to the understanding of “punk” from American prison slang, which partly lent the movement its name. On the same page of McNeil and McCain’s oral history of punk rock in the 1970s, *Please Kill Me*, where you find James Grauerholz’s claim that “punk was a direct descendant of William Burroughs’ life and work,” you’ll find Burroughs’s own quizzical response to the genre: “I always thought a punk was someone who took it up the ass” (208). (Burroughs is, incidentally, an important figure for Van Sant, and appears in Van Sant’s earlier film *Drugstore Cowboy*, also set in Portland.) For more on the etymological history of “punk,” see Nyong’o; for further discussion of the intersections and overlaps of queer and punk identities, see my “‘Gimme Gimme This, Gimme Gimme That’: Confused Sexualities and Genres in Cooper and Mayerson’s *Horror Hospital Unplugged*.”

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