

A Queer and Foreign State: Iceland's Cinematic Subjects

ABSTRACT

Since the year 2000, twenty Icelandic films have been produced which could be aptly grouped as LGBTQ+ or queer Icelandic cinema. This “queer turn” in Icelandic cinema emerges as the nation makes strides in advancing LGBTQ+ rights and as its demographics markedly shift, first-generation immigrants now comprising 12.6 per cent of the population. These changes have not occurred in a vacuum, and the films discussed in this article complicate the boundary between native and foreign, Icelandic and non-Icelandic, alongside their centering of queer characters and stories. In addition to narrative focus on coming-out and sexuality, many of the films within “Icelandic queer cinema” thematize race and ethnicity, often through the inclusion of foreign characters living and traveling in Iceland. This collection of films is thus well suited to exploring the interlocking national and sexual regulations which produce the Icelandic nation state. This article explores conceptions of the Icelandic nation state in two films that span Icelandic cinema’s “queer turn,” Baltasar Kormákur’s *101 Reykjavík* (2000) and Ísold Uggadóttir’s *Andið edlilega* (*And Breathe Normally*, 2018). In tracing representations of racialized otherness within these films and taking theoretical cues from critical race theory and queer of color critique, this article considers the ways in which race and ethnicity co-constitute categories of sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Ultimately, this article poses “Icelandic queer cinema” as a key site for the contemporary negotiation of the meaning of national and sexual belonging in Iceland.

Keywords: Icelandic cinema, queer theory, race, abjection, Nordic exceptionalism

IN SEPTEMBER 2019, Icelandic film scholar Björn Vilhjálmsson remarked that, in light of films produced in the past three years, Icelandic cinema has adopted a “queer emphasis” (Björn Vilhjálmsson 2019, 10).¹ His colleague Björn Norðfjörð adds, that its “perspective on sex, race, and sexual orientation [has] changed considerably” (Björn Norðfjörð 2019, 39).² The authors are, on the surface, responding to the simple matter of there finally being domestic cinematic representation of non-white, non-straight, and non-gender-normative characters. While they are certainly not incorrect, I believe that traces of this thematic and perspectival shift in Icelandic film production date back even further. After addressing a longer history of queer cinema in Iceland, this article will make a case for considering the racial politics of these films. By exploring possible motivations for these cinematic shifts and reading national formations in two films, I will pose cinema as a key site for thinking through national and sexual belonging in contemporary Iceland.

Beginning in earnest in the early 2000s, cinematic representations of queer love and intimacy, queer-identified characters, and non-heteronormative lives have slowly but steadily proliferated within Icelandic cinema and television. These films make different formal and narrative commitments but share an investment in representations of queerness. For this reason, we might designate them as an “Icelandic queer cinema” so to speak, here understanding “queer” in its identitarian sense as an umbrella term for individuals minoritized for non-normative sexuality and gender identity or presentation. Within cinema studies, as in queer theory and queer studies more generally, “queer” often has an expansive breadth of meaning. Not simply synonymous with LGBTQ+ identity and representation, queer cinema can also comprise films that are made by straight directors and are concerned with non-normative straightness and can arguably even exclude films in which LGBTQ+ representation is present, if that representation works to oppress or eliminate queerness.³ The films I’m categorizing as Icelandic queer cinema, however, are not “queer” in the sense articulated by American film scholar and critic B. Ruby Rich, in her oft-cited 1992 essay, “The New Queer Cinema.” Rich presents early ‘90s independent gay and lesbian film as sharing

a cinematic style, dubbed “Homo Pomo,” characterized by “appropriation, pastiche, and irony, as well as a reworking of history” (Rich 2013, 18). The segment of cinema Rich describes is one in which a film’s aesthetics and queerness go hand-in-hand, where films are “great precisely because of the ways in which they [are] gay” (a queering of cinema qua medium perhaps) (ibid., 29). Such a description would be difficult to argue of the films of Icelandic queer cinema, which, by and large, are designed for mainstream consumption: their aesthetics are rarely if ever subversive, experimental, or avant-garde, and their politics are primarily representational. These films are LGBTQ+ or “queer” in that they contain representations of same-sex love and relationships, non-normative sexualities, genders and kinship structures, and polyamorous and non-monogamous relationships.

As Karl Schoonover and Rosalind Galt assert in *Queer Cinema in the World*, definitions of “queer” that are dependent upon representation can be unnecessarily exclusive, not to mention disavowing of the queer potential of cinema as a medium (2016, 6–20). However, I remain interested in the emergence of these overt, explicitly queer representations and the other discourses they draw upon, as artifacts of contemporary Iceland. My intention with this temporary, imperfect categorization of Icelandic queer cinema is not to exert a fixed definition of or horizon on what can and cannot be understood as a queer Icelandic film, but rather to respond to a contemporary phenomenon in Icelandic cinema and the stories it is telling. This “categorization problem” is perhaps a sign of a failed epistemological endeavor, but often when dealing with the non-referentiality of “queer,” failure is a welcome bedfellow (see Halberstam 2011).

RACE/NATION

It was not only a change in perspective of sexual and gender norms that Björn Vilhjálmsson and Björn Norðfjörð remarked upon, and indeed, Icelandic queer cinema did not develop in a vacuum. From 2012 to 2018, the population of first-generation immigrants in Iceland increased from 8 to 12.6 per cent, while those with a “foreign background” (defined

as having at least one parent of foreign origin) increased from 15 to 20 per cent (Statistics Iceland 2018). The significant demographic change has been accompanied by national debates on integration and assimilation (topics also relevant to contemporaneous discussions in and around the LGBTQ+ community and its increased visibility). These shifts, and subsequent cultural tensions, are reflected within Icelandic queer cinema, with films exploring non-normative sexuality as well as themes of nationality and ethnicity. These films span genres, including coming-out/transition stories: Ísold Uggadóttir's short film *Góðir gestir* (*Family Reunion*, 2006), Olaf de Fleur Johannesson's feature film *The Amazing Truth About Queen Raquela* (2008), Barði Guðmundsson's short *Mamma veit hvað hún syngur* (*Mother Knows Best*, 2009), Rúnar Þór Sigurbjörnsson's short *Hann* (*Him*, 2018), Hallfríður Þóra Tryggvadóttir and Vala Ómarsdóttir's short *Ég* (*I*, 2018), Haukur Björgvinsson's short *Wilma* (2019), and Anna Karín Lárusdóttir's short *XY* (2019); coming-of-age features: Baldvin Zophoníasson's *Órói* (*Jitters*, 2010) and Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson's *Hjartasteinn* (*Heartstone*, 2016); sports narratives: Róbert Douglas' feature *Strákarnir okkar* (*Eleven Men Out*, 2005) and Grímur Hákonarson's short *Bræðrabylta* (*Wrestling*, 2007); romantic comedies: Haraldur Sigurjónsson's short *Áttu vatn?* (*Got Water?*, 2010) and Sigurður Anton's indie feature *Snjór og Salóme* (*Snow and Salóme*, 2017); literary adaptations: Hrafn Gunnlaugsson's television adaptation of Jökull Jakobsson's titular play, *Vandarhögg* (*Whiplash*, 1980); realist dramas: Baldvin Zophoníasson's feature *Lof mér að falla* (*Let Me Fall*, 2018); documentaries: Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdóttir's television history series *Svona Fólk* (*People Like That*, 2018) and Björn Björnsson's profile of Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir and Jónína Leósdóttir, *Ást er bara ást* (*Love is Simply Love*, 2019); and even thrillers: Erlingur Thoroddsen's horror feature *Rökkur* (*Rift*, 2017) and the second season of Baltasar Kormákur's Nordic noir television series *Ófærð* (*Trapped*, 2019). Eight out of ten of these feature films, a rather significant portion of a niche cinematic production, engage with inter- and trans-national themes, often elaborated through the inclusion of foreign characters or locales.⁴ These identities, the queer and the foreign – by no means necessarily separate – are seem-

ingly being negotiated and (re)produced within contemporary cinema, crafting various depictions of national (un)belonging. By reading two films that span the era of Icelandic queer cinema, featuring Icelandic settings and representations of same-sex attraction in women, namely Baltasar Kormákur's adaptation *101 Reykjavík* (2000) and Ísold Uggadóttir's realist drama *Andið edlilega* (*And Breathe Normally*, 2018), this article traces the nation state's engagement with figures of the queer and the foreign.

To introduce the nation, however, is to introduce another troubled category. Thomas Elsaesser asserts that European cinema, with its conceptual difficulties, does not exist (2005; 2019), a view supported by Wendy Everett (2005).⁵ Speaking of the survival of the category of national cinema within the Nordic region, Trevor Elkington and Andrew Nestingen pose the notion as “highly ambiguous” and “based on untenable assumptions”; they approach the category as “a site of conflict, heterogeneity, and change” (2005, 10). Kate Moffat, writing in the *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, echoes this sentiment, and offers cinema, designed to cross boundaries however fluid, as “one of the most effective ways to reflect, confront, and challenge” fixed national identity politics (2016, 226). Writing the same year, Mette Hjort and Ursula Lindqvist clearly affirm the category of Nordic cinema but also acknowledge the region's heterogeneity and undeniable location within transnational circuits of production (2016, 6). In articulating my own reasons for maintaining the “Icelandic” within Icelandic queer cinema, I cannot disavow the nation's limits as a methodological category, nor can I ignore the subsequent methodological investments “in the formation and exclusion processes of national identities” (Bergfelder 2005, 319). My belief is that this particular project warrants engagement with the national, as the films discussed are invested in thinking through the nation, its limits and aegis. And by actively emphasizing the category of the nation, I aim to further complicate its presumed fixity.

Iceland's general international reputation is one assertive of a liberatory queer feminist paradise (see Fisher 2019; Graff 2019; Hertz 2016; Sif Sigmarsdóttir 2018; Zeiher 2019), but this has not always been the

case. As Icelandic queer literary scholar Ásta Kristín Benediktsdóttir remarks,

‘The true Icelander’ has in national discourse not only been a man but first and foremost a straight man, and the gay man has been viewed...[as] under corrupting foreign influences and thus dangerous to the nation, its purity and future. [The gay man] was, in other words, one of the embodiments of foreign evil that threatened the identity of the Icelandic nation. (2017, 168)

This history is perhaps unsurprising to those familiar with queer studies, as the “specter” of the queer has often been tied to discourses of the foreign, and rarely in a positive or cosmopolitan sense. As evidenced above, in Iceland homosexuality has been viewed as a foreign corruption, not a domestic product (*ibid.*). It is thus significant to see echoes of this old relation haunting Icelandic queer cinema, in which the queer and the foreign, and consequently the nation, find themselves in dialogue once more. If, as the media and tourism boards would so like to remind us, gays have finally gained access to the Icelandic nation state, then there is reason to ask, as historian Íris Ellenberger does, who has taken the place of the threatening other: “Who...this ‘other’ that is not part of ‘us’ but ‘we’ cannot be without” is (2017, 254).

Within the realm of Northern Europe’s hegemonic investment in whiteness, it is perhaps not surprising to consider the racial and ethnic exclusions which construct and underpin the nation state’s physical and conceptual borders (El-Tayeb 2011; Garner 2016; Goldberg 2002; Wekker 2016). Kristín Loftsdóttir, a scholar of race and Nordic exceptionalism in Iceland, situates contemporary Icelandic racial politics within the larger history of Iceland’s colonization and later independence as a nation (2012). Key to the Icelandic case for independence (the nation was under Norwegian rule, followed by Danish rule, from 1262 until its independence in 1944), she argues, was nineteenth century Europe’s investment in the ideology of the nation state and its undergirding scientific racism (2014b, 22). Icelanders strategically mobilized,

and continue to mobilize, their colonial history in order to adopt a self-image of Nordic exceptionalism. As a dependency of Denmark until World War II, Iceland asserts a history of non-participation in European racism and colonialism, a claim of exceptionalism troubled by Kristín Loftsdóttir. She underscores Icelandic independence's reliance on a rhetoric of national uniqueness, crafted in opposition to and against the non-white, "non-civilized," non-European Other:

[R]acist sentiments prevailing in Europe are emulated very clearly in Icelandic texts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century ... As such, Icelanders participated in European racism at that time, recreating and affirming racial categories and narratives that constructed some people as 'natural' subjects of colonial rule. However, this identification with the belonging to the club of 'civilized nations' must also be understood in the backdrop of Iceland's own history as a dependency and representation as backward and primitive. (2014a, 37)

This example from Iceland's independence movement, in which Icelanders subject to colonial rule aligned themselves with the distinguished and civilized, against peoples characterized as naturally inferior, demonstrates the ways in which the Icelandic nation was formed upon racialized claims to uniqueness and superiority. From a contemporary perspective, we might understand Iceland's continued claims to Nordic exceptionalism as a manifestation of the "neoliberal postracial state," a concept proposed by Steve Garner to describe an instrumentalist state which serves the dominant interests of white male capitalist elites through the racialization of different populations (2016, 34). By "post-racial", Garner does not mean that the state has "moved beyond race" or that race no longer exists, but indicates instead how "official anti-racism as a 'technocratic rhetoric'" co-exists with racist and racializing lived experience among a state's residents (*ibid.*, 46). But, where does this leave sexuality?

Key interventions into the study of Iceland by Kristín Loftsdóttir and other scholars have served to underscore the racial production of the

nation, with particular attention paid to its colonial history, while the sexual production of the Icelandic nation state has gone undertheorized (recent notable exceptions being the queer literary and historical work of Ásta Kristín Benediktsdóttir 2017, Hafðís Erla Hafsteinsdóttir 2017, and Íris Ellenberger 2017). Work in critical race theory and queer of color critique (among other fields) has pointed to race, nation, and colonialism shaping the production of gender and sexuality (Alexander 2002; El-Tayeb 2011; Eng 2010; Ferguson 2004; Goldberg 2002; Luibhéid 2005; Puar 2007; Puri 2002; among others), but this relationship is only beginning to be discussed within Icelandic scholarship. In light of nationalisms' interrelation with sexuality and Kristín Loftsdóttir's assertion (building on Étienne Balibar's work on neo-racism) that configurations of racial inclusion and exclusion in Iceland today center on the litmus of ethnicity and one's claims to ethnic Icelandic-ness, this intersection is a critical area of study for contemporary Iceland (2014b). Contemporary Icelandic society may continue to mobilize its reputation of Nordic exceptionalism around topics like race, as well as gender and sexuality (as the many international news articles praising Iceland as a queer feminist paradise would support), but Kristín Loftsdóttir's work, in tandem with Ásta Kristín Benediktsdóttir's, points to the superficiality of this engagement. It obfuscates racist and xenophobic ideologies that continue to circulate and operate at the intersections of sex and reproduction.

This preoccupation with the queer and the foreign renders Icelandic queer cinema a critical site for thinking through this dynamic, for interrogating the interlocking (ethno)national formations and sexual regulations which produce the Icelandic nation state. Given the nation's long investment in creating and upholding racial, ethnic, and sexual norms, it would be remiss to ignore the seemingly productive engagement of the nation, the ethnostate, within the queer. For these reasons, I examine how Icelandic queer cinema engages with and constructs the Icelandic nation state cinematically, as these films convey a preoccupation with the national, and the vexed relationship between its racial underpinnings and queer figures. Cinema and its ability "to 'stage' the

historical conditions that constitute ‘the national’” makes this cultural production a vital site for this exploration (Vitali and Willemen 2006, 8). The following readings pose Icelandic cinema as a site of theorization for the contemporary racial-sexual formation of the nation.

101 ASSIMILATORY POSSIBILITIES

101 Reykjavík (2000), Baltasar Kormákur’s adaptation of the 1996 novel of the same name by Hallgrímur Helgason, tells the story of Hlynur (Hilmir Snær Guðnason), a white 30-something unemployed man-child who lives with his mother Berglind (Hanna María Karlsdóttir) in Reykjavík (within the 101 postal code). Hlynur spends his days sleeping in and watching porn, and his nights out partying in the quirky Icelandic capital. This ironic comedy’s narrative drama arrives with Lola (Victoria Abril), a Spanish flamenco instructor, who develops a romantic relationship with Berglind. In Helgason’s novel the character of Lola is an Icelandic woman named Lolla, but in the film Lola’s foreignness is continually marked. As Lola does not speak Icelandic, the film’s dialogue weaves in and out of Icelandic and English; her arrival in Reykjavík acting as a rhetorical device for the film to explain eccentricities of the local culture to the anticipated non-Icelandic audience. Lola is portrayed as attractive, flirtatious, and promiscuous, on top of her identity as bisexual. During drunken New Year’s Eve celebrations, while Berglind is out of town visiting relatives, Hlynur and Lola sleep together (shown in flashbacks, the disruptiveness of their coupling results in the destruction of photos of the happy Icelandic family). Shortly thereafter, at the film’s mid-point, Berglind comes out to her son as a lesbian and tells him of her romantic relationship with Lola. We also learn that they intend to raise a child together, as Lola is pregnant, and while it is not explicitly discussed in the film, the audience is led to believe that the father is Hlynur.

Berglind’s coming out and Lola’s pregnancy spark a revelation for Hlynur, as he now feels he can accurately attribute his indifference toward heteronormative life goals, like marriage and child-rearing, to his “abnormal parentage.” In an extended voiceover monologue during

the christening of Berglind and Lola's new son, Hlynur expounds upon this new self-understanding, while via cross-cuts we see that instead of attending the ceremony he is trudging up Snæfellsjökull on a suicide mission (a journey we see glimpses of earlier during the film's opening credits):

What am I then? The offspring of a lesbian and a boozier? It's like two birds of different species. The lesbian bird and the boozier bird [...]
Unlike the boozier the lesbian is a relative newcomer to Icelandic nature. She is thought to have migrated from Denmark and Britain. Her only contact with the male bird is during conception. In recent years we have witnessed cases of male birds who are unable to fly at all. The offspring of a boozier and a lesbian is the Hlynur, an unusually slow developer that can't fly and remains with his mother for the first 30 years. The Hlynur is defensive by nature, but harmless.

Hlynur humorously poses his inability to assimilate to normative Icelandic society as derived from his non-normative parentage, and his actions, lying passively on the glacier as snow covers him, imply the predestined doom of this genealogy. In his monograph *The Cinema of Iceland*, Jakub Konefał reads the film as part of a larger trend in Icelandic cinema, placing it in conversation with other films from the 2000s and 2010s (Marteinn Thorsson's *Rokland* [2011], also based on a Hallgrímur Helgason novel, *XL* [2013], and Friðrik Þór Friðriksson's *Englar alheimsins* [2000]) that present "anti-Viking" anti-heroes navigating crises of masculinity and Generation X's arrested development (2019, 170). Echoing the discourse of "the true Icelander", Hlynur ironically attributes his slacker attitude to his mother's queerness, which renders their national status even more suspect, as "[the lesbian] is thought to have migrated from Denmark and Britain." Berglind's lesbianism and Hlynur's non-normative straightness, not to mention their romantic and sexual entanglements with Lola, threaten the coherence and survival of the nation state, and in Hlynur's rhetoric, the species. The main triadic relationship in 101 *Reykjavík* serves to align homosexual identity,

and non-normative/non-reproductive straightness, with foreignness, belonging outside of the nation.

The state makes an interesting appearance in *101 Reykjavík*. As Hlynur lackadaisically attempts to find a job throughout the film, he relies on unemployment benefits provided by the government. Over breakfast one morning, Lola berates him for this dependency as the Icelandic welfare system puzzles her. To retain his benefits, Hlynur must visit the Social Insurance Administration (Tryggingastofnun), which his mother reminds him of immediately after coming out to him, highlighting the ways in which the Icelandic nation state locates itself and its interests alongside its residents' personal and familial lives. Hlynur's visit only emphasizes this inherent concern, though it also demonstrates that only certain relationships and kinship structures are legible to the state. As Hlynur has just discovered that his mother and Lola are in a relationship and planning to have a child, which he suspects to be his, he arrives at the Social Insurance Administration – a representative of the nation state he has already shown disdain for – pre-occupied with his lesbian-oedipal family drama. The agent he meets with is matter of fact and inquires after his job search, to which Hlynur irreverently responds with questions pertaining to his ever complexifying family problems: should he tell his mother that he has slept with her girlfriend, what would the agent do if she were in his situation? The agent defers response to his personal questions, stating that there's "no need to tell me these things." This is interesting in light of the nation state's keen interest in the familial and reproductive relationships of its residents, particularly in regard to marriage, reproduction, and immigration. While the agent may not be personally invested in Hlynur's drama, the institution she represents is. Hlynur's confession of infidelity, an "outing" of sorts, reflects the scene immediately prior: Berglind's coming out to Hlynur. Emphasizing this parallel is the use of shot reverse shot editing and similar framing and blocking in both scenes, with Hlynur separated by a table from Berglind and later the agent.

In response to the agent's question as to whether Hlynur has found anything to do, he flipantly responds "I did my mom's girlfriend," but

that it is not a job with a future. This response is also deceptive. While “doing Lola” did not lead to the heterosexually monogamous future that Hlynur might have anticipated, or that the state might have approved of, it did lead to a child. This child is a future the nation state is very interested in, a future citizen. The agent’s refusal to engage Hlynur on the subject is indicative of the very issues Hlynur is seeking answers to: how does the state render legible his romantic and familial relationships and any potential offspring? On his way into the office he ponders: “What should I call Lola now? Stepfather?” and upon seeing the child in the hospital he muses: “Our little boy, all of ours. Lola will be his mom and my mom will be his dad. I’ll be his brother but his father too, and the son of his dad and of his grandmother. And his mother’s ex-lover. How will he turn out, himself?”

101 Reykjavík reaches its denouement in a domestic scene. Hlynur is in the bath with the family’s new child, christened Kristinn Milagros, while Lola makes breakfast and Berglind gets ready for work. Kristinn calls Hlynur “da-da,” calling attention to Hlynur’s likely paternity and to the non-normativity of the family portrayed in the film. After Berglind leaves for work, Lola and Hlynur gaze at each other over Kristinn. The camera slowly zooms in until they are centered in the frame, visually joined around Kristinn’s crib, framing an image of a new Icelandic family: foreign, not entirely straight, not entirely monogamous, not quite a dyad, and not entirely visible (see Figure 1). The following scene marks the end of the film. Leaving the privacy of the home, we return to the streets of downtown Reykjavík, revealing that not only is Hlynur now a father, but that he has also finally gotten a job as a parking meter inspector, a position he disrespected earlier in the film. Hlynur has fully grown past his 30 years of postpartum development, reaching maturity as a state-employed and procreative citizen. Similarly, Lola is no longer simply a foreign specter of queerness, but the mother of an Icelandic citizen, and as such her future is now in alignment with that of the nation state.

In light of its ending, *101 Reykjavík*, in this reading, depicts racialized homonormativity, which Roderick Ferguson understands “as the

process by which queerness is put in the service of a hegemonic rationality that conveniently regards queerness as a satellite for citizen ideals and as a lever for the state's regulation of racial difference" (2007, 115). This Icelandic example of a "quirky feel good" film, to employ Ellen Rees' definition, succeeds in presenting an image of tolerance and inclusion, a "national fantasy of social integration," in which foreign lesbians and oedipally-fueled triads can be utopistically assimilated into the nation, rendering any transformative, critical, or disruptive force silenced (2015, 157). The national and sexual boundaries upon which the Icelandic nation is formed are clearly demarcated in *101 Reykjavík*, but are also shown to be mobile – they can be broadened in whom they include and deem legible as citizen subjects, as long as those subjects still align with certain sexual and national normative goals.



FIGURE 1 – *101 Reykjavík*, *Lola* and *Hlynur* stand over *Kristinn's* crib.

ABJECT LESSONS

Director Ísold Uggadóttir's feature debut, *Andið eðlilega* (*And Breathe Normally*, 2018), is a social realist drama set in a recognizable, contemporary Europe. Here, unemployment is on the rise, welfare austerity measures have been enacted, and growing far-right populist movements

have expanded xenophobic policies. The film follows the brief alliance formed between struggling white Icelandic single mother and airport passport control trainee, Lára (Kristín Póra Haraldsdóttir), and Adja (Babetida Sadjo), a Bissau-Guinean woman (the only named character of color in the film) attempting to reach her daughter in Canada on a forged passport which is tagged for inspection by Lára. Set in the bleak and desolate landscape of Iceland's southwestern peninsula, the traces of British and American occupation haunt the surroundings – Lára's initial apartment in the refurbished American NATO military base, and the airport, itself a “gift” from the Americans during World War II, in which the characters' interactions are bookended – placing us within a tangled landscape of transnational relationships.

The film opens itself to a white savior reading in that a white character, Lára, is posed as the redeemer of a non-white character, Adja (Hughey 2014; Vera and Gordon 2003). But simultaneously, it has been discussed as proof of Icelandic cinema's growing political awareness, as it tackles the nation's growing wealth inequality, the security state, and discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ communities (Björn Vilhjálmsson 2019). This claimed political consciousness is in contrast to Björn Norðfjörð's comments on Icelandic cinema over a decade ago, in which he remarked that “Icelandic cinema is, in fact, strikingly non-political both in terms of identity politics and in taking a stance on political issues local or foreign” (2005, 71). He refers to this feature of Icelandic cinema as a “general political apathy” in which films strive for broad audience appeal, in parallel with a global trend of dissociation between cinema and politics (ibid.). While he may acknowledge the changes that domestic cinema has undergone in that period, I wonder, given the growing recognition of neoliberalism and its political atomization (and focus on personal and individual political representation as opposed to more direct collective propaganda), whether he would still agree with his previous assessment. While the films I have grouped under Icelandic queer cinema (admittedly many of which had not yet been released at the time of Björn Norðfjörð's dissertation) may not strike viewers as taking overt political stances, it is difficult to place them within a legacy of “political apathy.” Their politics

may manifest as highly personal, but long traditions of minoritized politics, of particular importance to issues of national and sexual belonging, would acknowledge these forms of political investment. *Andið eðlilega*, I will argue, with its imperfect investments, proposes a response to this neoliberalization, one which avoids apathy yet acknowledges the current lack of direct political mobilization in many regions of Europe.

The state, its lawmakers and authorities, are rarely, if ever, seen in *Andið eðlilega*. Information is communicated in highly mediated, decentralized modes, and rarely face to face. Ísold Uggadóttir utilizes this feature of contemporary neoliberal life as a means of narrative progression, leaving us with clues to our characters' lives observed by an impassive camera, but never fully spelling things out for us as viewers. Lára receives approval for a job training program by mail (though she thought she would be notified via email), she gets texts from the bank about her overdraft limit, voicemails from her landlord about being evicted, and notes on whiteboards from her son's school (see Figure 2). The authorities are nowhere, but traces of them and their systems are ubiquitous.

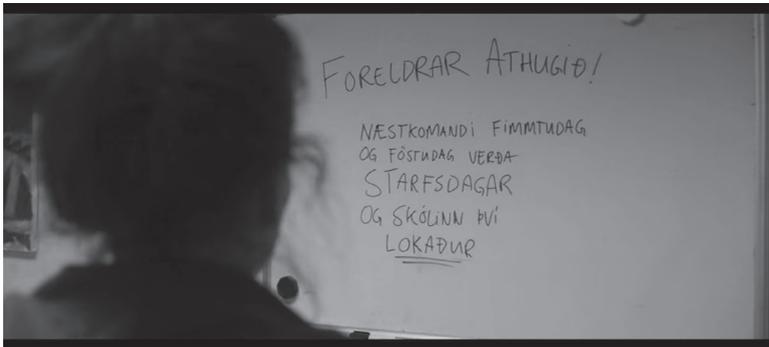


FIGURE 2 – *Andið eðlilega*, Lára reads a note on a whiteboard at her son's school.

For film scholar Thomas Elsaesser, adopting Julia Kristeva's exploration of abjection, this mediation and distance is an indication of one's existing in "the space of the abject," a liminal space where the boundaries

between self and other break down, a degraded or debased condition (2019, 142). This space, for Elsaesser, is an outcome of “relations without relations,” when one “relates to the community, the nation and the social symbolic only by way of bureaucratic routines and technocratic dispositifs” (ibid.). Iceland, too, is an example of abject relations. Konefał discusses the heterotopic nature of rhetorics regarding Iceland and its (no) place within the global imaginary. He reads the island/country/nation/state as a “space of exclusion,” a space “sentenced to cultural and political isolation...on the verge of acceptance and expulsion from the social order...[and] existing on the margins” (2019, 33). Konefał goes on to specify that Iceland, with its liminal geographic, political, and cultural position, can be read as a “heterotopia of deviation,” as this categorization focuses on “people sentenced to social marginalization and ostracism,” and is well suited “to describe the Otherness of an island and its inhabitants” (ibid., 34). This heterotopic perception lends itself well to the liminality and marginality of abjection. Adja and Lára, though occupying different axes of privilege, are thus rendered abject here, serving as the reviled alterities that define the nation state and its normative citizens. The film shows how Iceland strives to maintain its relatively sovereign subjecthood through its characters’ abjection.

When other people do appear in *Andið eðlilega*, it is not as individuals but rather as functionaries of the state and its various institutions (or as those who fall outside of the state), including its contracted private agencies—*dispositifs*—nameless, often faceless, representatives, carrying out orders, performing routines (Goldberg 2002, 7). As a passport control officer, Lára is variably included in this grouping of dispositifs, though at other times subject to their dominion. These lawyers, border guards, police officers, and case managers (like Hlynur-qua-parking attendant and the Social Insurance Administration agent in *101 Reykjavík*), are all smaller cogs in a much larger machine, one that we are led to understand has no one puppeteer or larger organizing function. Instead, it is a dispersive web of power with many nodes, the inefficiencies and Kafkaesque underworkings of which elude its members. Adja requests information, simply to understand her situation, but is met with igno-

rance at every turn. Adja's lawyer, seemingly unaffected by her precarity, checks his phone throughout her trial and chats to his wife about decanting the wine for dinner. He is unable to answer Adja when she asks him what will happen after she serves her jail sentence. Ignorance is not the only positionality of the state's representatives, a distinct lack of culpability is present as well. The police prevent Adja from holding on to certain items during her incarceration, stating that "it's just the rules." The manager of the refugee housing center fails to answer her questions as well, saying it's "just a system." Adja's asylum case manager apologizes, stating that the system's machinations are "not my rules," and are just "standard procedure." No one knows how the whole thing works, and no one seems to be responsible for its entirety either. Here, the state's representatives become nothing but law-enforcement agents, as difficult ethical issues or competing rights lead to a deference to the formal law regardless of its morality or lack thereof. This diffuse system speaks, in Elsaesser's opinion, to the weakening of the European state and its welfare priorities, in which consumers and survivor-victims replace citizens, and human rights replace activism and civic engagement, leading to the entrenched surveillance of biopolitics and "no safe zones for a sense of belonging" (2019, 140).

Adja is denied asylum, requested on the grounds of her sexuality, even though her partner has been beaten to death. Here, the film sneaks around any *overt* homonationalist shoring up of the nation, as Iceland is not posed as the tolerant and thus modern and progressive queer savior over and against a non-Western country painted as backwards and homophobic (Puar 2007). Adja's denial is reflective of the realities of asylum, which remains "most accessible to those who are male, heterosexual, economically privileged, and from particular 'racial' and national origins [...] and most inaccessible for those whose persecution involved several intersecting axes of subordination" (Luibhéid 2005, xvii). Lára struggles to hold on to her potential job (a past of drug abuse threatens to disturb her attempts at stability); her weak social net, consisting of drunk squatters and the mother of her son's friend with whom she meets for brief trysts, proves unhelpful. These abject positionings (with

variable access to power) situate Lára and Adja in what Elsaesser understands to be a thought experiment, a “thinking through of some of the deadlocks that liberal democracies are left with at the beginning of the twenty-first century” (2019, 159). The two form an unlikely relationship, as they both continue to run into each other around the perimeter of the airport, Adja’s assigned housing and Lára’s car, where she is currently living, both placed on its outskirts. The tentative, temporary alliance they form – Adja provides a place to sleep for the mother and son as well as occasional childcare; Lára aids in Adja’s departure to Canada before she can be deported – point to “the conditions of possibility of a counter-image of what it means to be human” which the abject are uniquely situated to provide, in the non-normative space and relations they occupy (Elsaesser 2005, 125).

Ísold Uggadóttir’s film, while embedded in hegemonic whiteness, “thinks through” the moral and ethical implications of how one should live amid “fortress Europe’s” stringent and xenophobic immigration policies in light of global strife, climate crisis, and growing wealth inequality. *Andið eðlilega*’s final moments show us how Lára and Adja attempt to navigate this deadlock. Continuing from a cut to black, the camera lingers on Adja in close-up, as she dresses and puts on earrings. This is a marked departure from the camera’s usual distance and stillness as an impartial observer and draws explicit attention to Adja’s body. We see her in a taxi, passing Lára’s old housing block, as she visits Lára’s son Eldar (Patrik Nökkvi Pétursson) at school, watching him play at recess, clad in the winter coat she had packed to bring to her daughter in Toronto. After she waves goodbye, we return to the taxi, passing the stunningly bleak lava fields on the way to the airport in the Icelandic midwinter’s eternal twilight. We cut once more to a close-up on Adja’s face as she rides the escalator to airport security, and then see her in line at passport control, where Lára is working. We are aware of the constant surveillance of the space, as the film continually cuts to the ever-present border guards watching over the lines below. As Adja reaches the front of the line and hands over her forged passport, the silence of these final minutes is broken by brief dialogue, Lára asking Adja if she had a nice

stay. Keeping a restrained and composed affect, Adja replies with a quiet “yes.” Lára offers a genuine “thank you,” as she hands over the passport. Adja, taking it – their fingers touching – replies in kind and goes on her way. Lára calls “next,” as the film cuts to black.

Andið eðlilega's attention to Adja's body in this final scene emphasizes her particular embodiment and primes us for Lára and Adja's fleeting touch, in close-up, as the camera lingers on their hands, which brush over Adja's forged passport (see Figure 3). This is not a triumphant ending, though Adja avoids deportation and Lára finds employment. Our protagonists have not escaped precarity or complicity (as the centering of the forged passport reminds us). Is Lára's relief at Adja's departure not also inextricable from her presumed (white) guilt? Who knows what repercussions Lára may face or how many other individuals with doctored papers she may assist in detaining? And what might await Adja upon arrival in Canada, since, as Eithne Luibhéid comments, “migration rarely represents a clear-cut resolution to the difficulties that queers face. Rather they must deal with racial, gender, class, cultural, sexual, and language barriers that are inextricable from global histories of imperialism and exploitation” (2005, xxix). This thought experiment yields an ambivalent conclusion for our abjected protagonists.



FIGURE 3 – Andið eðlilega, Lára and Adja's hands briefly touch over Adja's forged passport.

A TROUBLED STATE

As I write this, deportation looms for yet another LGBTQ+ migrant in Iceland.⁶ And while cultural production is not mimetic in its relationship to the nation, the question of belonging seems ever more relevant and pressing. As David Goldberg reminds us, a formative feature of the modern state is its ability to include and exclude, and that one's inclusion is by its very nature dependent upon another's exclusion (2002, 9). This exclusion, as Fatima El-Tayeb points out, is primarily the burden of the minoritized, placing them "beyond the horizon of national politics, culture, and history" (2011, xx). This mechanism undergirds the artifice of the nation state's homogeneity, a logic which only reinforces the state's exclusionary power. The queer's inclusion in the nation is not a foregone conclusion if it remains only the middle and upper class, white, cisgender queers who are granted access.⁷

We are in the contemporary moment of the neoliberal postracial European nation state (Garner 2016). The films which make up Icelandic queer cinema speak to larger tendencies in European cinema: an occupation with societal skepticism, the interrogation of national myths and identities, themes of liminality and marginality, migration and diaspora, and a "climate of uncertainty that has for so long dominated Europe" (Bergfelder 2005, 320; Everett 2005, 12). These films stage national and regional anxieties, as who counts and who is included in the "nation" remains ever relevant. *Adja* and *Lára*, in their temporary circuit of abject relating offer us one fleeting possibility, demonstrating the limits of Iceland as a liberatory role model, or a "hinsegin/samkynhneigð paradís" (queer/gay paradise), posing the nation instead as a leader in "neoliberal multiculturalism" (Melamed 2006). In a time of neoliberal and multicultural co-optation of identity politics, it is the least precarious of the marginalized who have been assimilated into the nation state, which we see depicted in both films. *Adja* and *Lára*'s relative occupation of temporary abjection, their "negative relationality" in the words of Elsaesser, operates as an abject form of agency. This agency "can be relied upon to support a sense of self or identity other than the power of negativity itself" when the traditional bonds of marriage,

family, profession, nation, law, religion, language, etc. are stripped away (Elsaesser 2019, 131). As opposed to the ironic yet utopic imaginings of *101 Reykjavík*, where racialized homonormativity allows these bonds to remain in place and to include queer figures, *Andið eðlilega* operates within a “cinema of abjection,” showing how unassimilable difference, the otherness of the Other, and the “spaces that separate us” can come to unite us – however abjectly, imperfectly, or momentarily (ibid.).

At a time when many of us find ourselves variously abjected, the phantasmatic unity of the nation can be a seductive force. The growing group of films that comprise Icelandic queer cinema present complex engagements with the sexual and national politics of the Icelandic nation state, from optimistic assimilation to the “perverse form of agency” found in a white-centered abjection (Hennefeld and Sammond 2020, 18). This cinematic turn warrants continued investigation. There is much more work to be done within this field, and, as these formations proliferate, many more futures to imagine.

MAXINE SAVAGE is a PhD student in Scandinavian Languages and Literature at the University of Washington in Seattle. Their research explores national identity, queer history, racialized affect, and textual materiality in contemporary West Nordic literature and cinema. Maxine’s scholarship has been supported by the Fulbright Commission and the American-Scandinavian Foundation.

REFERENCES

FILMOGRAPHY

- 101 Reykjavík*. 2000. Dir. Baltasar Kormákur. Iceland.
Andið eðlilega (And Breathe Normally). 2018. Dir. Ísold Uggadóttir. Iceland.
Ást er bara ást (Love is Simply Love). 2019. Dir. Björn Björnsson. Iceland.
Áttu vatni? (Got Water?). 2010. Dir. Haraldur Sigurjónsson. Iceland.
Braðrabylta (Wrestling). 2007. Dir. Grímur Hákonarson. Iceland.
Ég (I). 2018. Dirs. Hallfríður Þóra Tryggvadóttir and Vala Ómarsdóttir. Iceland.
Góðir gestir (Family Reunion). 2006. Dir. Ísold Uggadóttir. Iceland.
Hann (Him). 2018. Dir. Rúnar Þór Sigurbjörnsson. Iceland.

- Hjartasteinn (Heartstone)*. 2017. Dir. Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson. Iceland.
- Lof mér að falla (Let Me Fall)*. 2018. Dir. Baldvin Zophoníasson. Iceland.
- Mamma veit hvað hún syngur (Mother Knows Best)*. 2009. Dir. Bærði Guðmundsson. Iceland.
- Ófærð 2 (Trapped 2)*. 2019. Dir. Baltasar Kormákur. Iceland.
- Órói (Jitters)*. 2010. Dir. Baldvin Zophoníasson. Iceland.
- Rökkur (Rift)*. 2017. Dir. Erlingur Thoroddsen. Iceland.
- Snjór og Salóme (Snow and Salóme)*. 2017. Dir. Sigurður Anton. Iceland.
- Strákarnir okkar (Eleven Men Out)*. 2005. Dir. Róbert Douglas. Iceland.
- Svona Fólk (People Like That)*. 2018. Dir. Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdóttir. Iceland.
- The Amazing Truth About Queen Raquela*. 2008. Dir. Olaf de Fleur Johanneson. USA.
- Vandarhögg (Whiplash)*. 1980. Dir. Hrafn Gunnlaugsson. Iceland.
- Wilma*. 2019. Dir. Haukur Björgvinsson. Iceland.
- XY*. 2019. Dir. Anna Karín Lárusdóttir. Iceland.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, M. Jacqui. 1994. "Not Just (Any) Body Can Be A Citizen: The Politics of Law, Sexuality and Postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas." *Feminist Review* 48: 5–23.
- Ásrún Brynja Ingvarsdóttir. 2020. "Óbreytt staða hjá Maní og fjölskyldu." *RÚV*, February 25, 2020. <https://www.ruv.is/frett/obreytt-stada-hja-mani-og-fjolskyldu>
- Ásta Kristín Benediktsdóttir. 2017. "Sjoppa ein við Laugaveginn [...] hefur fengið orð á sig sem stefnumótsstaður kynvillinga": Orðræða um illa kynvillinga og listamenn á sjötta áratug 20. aldar." In *Svo veistu að þú varst ekki hér: Hinsegin sagnfræði og hinsegin saga á Íslandi*, edited by Íris Ellenberger, Ásta Kristín Benediktsdóttir & Hafþís Erla Hafsteinsdóttir, 147–183. Reykjavík: Sögufélag.
- Björn Þór Vilhjálmsson. 2019. "Frá sveitabænum að stafrænu byltingunni." *Ritið* 19 (2): 1–18.
- Björn Ægir Norðfjörð. 2005. "Icelandic Cinema: A National Practice in a Global Context." PhD diss., University of Iowa.
- . 2019. "Ljós í myrkri: Saga kvikmyndunar á Íslandi." *Ritið* 19 (2): 19–42.
- Bergfelder, Tim. 2005. "National, transnational or supranational cinema? Rethinking European film studies." *Media, Culture & Society* 27 (3): 315–331.
- El-Tayeb, Fatima. 2011. *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Elkington, Trevor, & Nestingen, Andrew. 2005. "Introduction." In *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition*, edited by Andrew Nestingen & Trevor Elkington, 1–28. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Elsaesser, Thomas. 2005. *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

- . 2019. *European Cinema and Continental Philosophy: Film as Thought Experiment*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Eng, David. 2010. *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Everett, Wendy. 2005. "Introduction: European film and the quest for identity." In *European Identity in Cinema*, edited by Wendy Everett, 7–14. Portland: Intellect Books.
- Ferguson, Roderick A. 2004. *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 2007. "The Relevance of Race for the Study of Sexuality." In *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies*, edited by George E. Haggerty & Molly McGarry, 109–123. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Fisher, Owl. 2019. "On trans issues, Iceland has just put Britain to shame." *The Guardian*, June 21, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/21/trans-issues-britain-iceland-law-intersex-rights>
- Garner, Steve. 2016. *A Moral Economy of Whiteness: Four frames of racialising discourse*. London: Routledge.
- Goldberg, David Theo. 2002. *The Racial State*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Graff, Amy. 2019. "Iceland greets Vice President Mike Pence with rainbow flags." *SFGATE*, September 5, 2019. <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Iceland-Vice-President-Pence-rainbow-flag-bracelet-14417346.php>
- Hafðís Erla Hafsteinsdóttir. 2017. "Forsenda fyrir betra lífi? Tilraun til skilgreiningar á hinsegin sögu." In *Svo veistu að þú varst ekki hér: Hinsegin sagnfræði og hinsegin saga á Íslandi*, edited by Íris Ellenberger, Ásta Kristín Benediktsdóttir & Hafðís Erla Hafsteinsdóttir, 21–58. Reykjavík: Sögufélag.
- Hennefeld, Maggie & Sammond, Nicholas. 2020. "Introduction: Not It, or, The Abject Objection." In *Abjection Incorporated: Mediating the Politics of Pleasure and Violence*, edited by Maggie Hennefeld & Nicholas Sammon, 132. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hertz, Noreena. 2016. "Why Iceland is the best place in the world to be a woman." *The Guardian*, October 24, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/oct/24/iceland-best-place-to-be-women-equal-gender-maternity>
- Hjort, Mette & Lindqvist, Ursula. 2016. "Introduction. Nordic Cinema: Breaking New Waves since the Dawn of Film." In *A Companion to Nordic Cinema*, edited by Mette Hjort & Ursula Lindqvist, 1–11. Malden: Wiley Blackwell.
- Hólmfríður Helga Sigurðardóttir. 2020. "Sautján ára transstrákur fær ekki vernd á Íslandi." *Stundin*, February 14, 2020. <https://stundin.is/grein/10516/sautjan-ara-transstrakur-faer-ekki-vernd-islandi>
- Hughey, Matthew. 2014. *The White Savior Film: Content, Critics, Consumption*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Íris Ellenberger. 2017. "Að flytja út mannréttindi: Hinsegin paradísin Ísland í ljósi samkynhneigðrar þjóðernishyggu og sögulegra orðræðna um fyrirmyndarsamfélög í norðri." In *Svo veistu að þú varst ekki hér: Hinsegin sagnfræði og hinsegin saga á Íslandi*, edited by Íris Ellenberger, Ásta Kristín Benediktisdóttir & Hafdís Erla Hafsteinsdóttir, 229–270. Reykjavík: Sögufélag.
- Kane, Kathryn. 2010. "Neoliberal Investments in Queerface and Whiteface: A Critical Analysis of *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar*." In *Coming Out to the Mainstream: New Queer Cinema in the 21st Century*, edited by JoAnne C. Juett & David M. Jones, 151–173. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars.
- Konefal, Sebastian Jakub. 2019. *The Cinema of Iceland: Between Tradition and Liquid Modernity*. Berlin: Peter Lang.
- Kristín Loftsdóttir. 2012. "Belonging and the Icelandic Others: Situating Icelandic Identity in a Postcolonial Context." In *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region: Exceptionalism, Migrant Others and National Identities*, edited by Kristín Loftsdóttir & Lars Jensen, 57–72. New York: Ashgate Publishing.
- . 2014a. "Going to Eden: Nordic exceptionalism and the image of blackness in Iceland." *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 7 (1): 27–41.
- . 2014b. "Imagining Blackness at the Margins: Race and Difference in Iceland." In *Afro-Nordic Landscapes: Equality and Race in Northern Europe*, edited by Michael McEachrane, 17–38. New York: Routledge.
- Luibhéid, Eithne. 2005. "Introduction: Queering Migration and Citizenship." In *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings*, edited by Eithne Luibhéid & Lionel Cantu, ix–xlvi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Melamed, Jodi. 2006. "The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism." *Social Text* 24 (4): 1–24.
- Moffat, Kate. 2016. "From imperfect strangers to new citizens: Screening race and ethnicity in Nordic film history." *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* 6 (3): 225–33.
- Puar, Jasbir. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Puri, Jyoti. 2002. "Nationalism Has a Lot to Do with It! Unraveling Questions of Nationalism and Transnationalism in Lesbian/Gay Studies." In *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, edited by Diane Richardson & Steven Seidman, 427–442. Oakland: SAGE Publications.
- Rees, Ellen. 2015. "The Nordic 'Quirky Feel-Good.'" In *Nordic Genre Film: Small Nation Film Cultures in the Global Marketplace*, edited by Tommy Gustafsson & Pietari Kääpä, 147–158. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Rich, B. Ruby. 2013. *New Queer Cinema: The Director's Cut*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Schoonover, Karl & Galt, Rosalind. 2016. *Queer Cinema in the World*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Sif Sigmarsdóttir. 2018. "Once more, Iceland has shown it is the best place in the world to be female." *The Guardian*, January 5, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jan/05/iceland-female-women-equal-pay-gender-equality>
- Statistics Iceland. 2018. "Immigrants and persons with foreign background 2018." December 5, 2018. <https://www.statice.is/publications/news-archive/inhabitants/population-by-origin-2018>
- Vera, Hernan & Gordon, Andrew. 2003. *Screen Savivors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Vitali, Valentina, & Willemen, Paul. 2006. "Introduction." In *Theorising National Cinema*, edited by Valentina Vitali & Paul Willemen, 1–14. London: British Film Institute Publishing.
- Wekker, Gloria. 2016. *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Zeher, Chris. 2019. "The most gay-friendly places on the planet." *Lonely Planet*, October 8, 2019. <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/most-gay-friendly-countries>

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Andy Nestingen and Jennifer Bean for their insightful and encouraging feedback on earlier versions of this article. All translations are mine.
2. Icelandic terminology for sex and gender is rarely directly equivalent to English concepts. I have here translated kynferði as sex, a compromise for its various connotations, which in English might variably be rendered as biological sex, sexuality, or gender.
3. Kathryn Kane's 2010 reading of "queerface" in Beeban Kidron's *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar* (1995) argues for a distinct absence of queerness in this film about gay male drag queens.
4. Seen in the feature films: *101 Reykjavík*, *Strákarnir okkar (Eleven Men Out)*, *The Amazing Truth About Queen Raquela*, *Órói (Jitters)*, *Hjartasteinn (Heartstone)*, *Snjór og Salóme (Snow and Salóme)*, *Andið edlilega (And Breathe Normally)*, *Lof mér að falla (Let Me Fall)*.
5. Elsaesser revises this in *European Cinema and Continental Philosophy*, stating that "European cinema in the age of globalization should be called 'post-nationalist', in the sense of 'performing nationalism'" (2019, 281).
6. See the articles about Maní Shahidi's case (Ásrún Ingvarsdóttir 2020; Hólmfríður Sigurðardóttir 2020).
7. As Íris Ellenberger notes in her discussion on homonationalism in Iceland, "queer people who have gained access to the nation are a relatively small group of white, Icelandic, cisgender, gay, able-bodied individuals whose views and ways of life do not threaten accepted societal values" (2017, 168).