

**INTIMATE CINEMA:  
THE PROXEMICS OF VIEWING SPACE  
AND A CASE STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY QUEER SCREEN  
TEXTS AND YOUTH IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT NARRATIVES.**

**REBECCA LELLI**

BA-Media, Macquarie University

Thesis for Examination  
Master of Research (MRES)

Macquarie University  
Department of Media, Music, Communications, And Cultural Studies (MMCCS).

Submitted on The 9th Of October 2017

## Statement of Originality

*This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.*

(Signed):  Date: 6.10.17  
(REBECCA LELLI)

## **Abstract**

Cinema has played an integral role in the formation of queer politics, community, and subjects. The spaces in which we engage with narratives on screen constitute our reception and relation to texts. Whilst the public movie theatre and queer film festivals have been of key importance in the past, the emergence of personal digital devices has shifted viewing spaces and complicated our definition of public/private spaces. This thesis utilises embodied approaches, and Edward T Hall's theory of Proxemics, to examine the importance of spatial context in film cognition.

Through a case study of contemporary queer screen texts, I explore the nuances of space in interaction between viewers and the screen text. LGBTQIA+ youth are now engaging with queer screen texts in intimate spaces. Safely cocooned in bed with their screens, these 'Intimate Cinemas' can be constructed by the individual user for specific purposes. This thesis attends to some possible consequences of these new spaces on queer youth identity development and wider queer politics. I have found that, as our understanding of public/private space has shifted, so too have the epistemologies of out/in upon which the closet and queer narrative scripts have been based.





## Contents:

Chapter One: .....	Introduction
An Auto-Ethnographic Perspective on 'Networked' Youth & Viewing Habits .....	6-7
Youth & New Media Research:	
The Need for an Adaptive Model of Viewership .....	7-10
Case Study Introduction:	
Simultaneous Shifts in Technologies & Queer Genre Aesthetics .....	10-13
Chapter Two: .....	Introduction to Proxemics
An Introduction to Proxemics .....	14-20
Screens & Framing .....	20-22
Out / In (Side) Space & Proxemics in Cinematography .....	23-24
Chapter Three: .....	Proxemics Across Mediums
A New Theoretical Approach .....	25-26
The Public Movie Theatre: Public Spectacle & Shame .....	27-29
Out(Side) .....	30-33
Coming Out .....	34-35
Dissonance and Impossible Spaces .....	36
The Validity of Queer Spaces .....	37-38
The 'Social' Living Room & Domestic Spaces .....	39-40
In(Side) and the Digital Turn to Intimate Queer Spaces .....	41-43
Personal Digital Devices: The Intimate Cinema of 'Cocoons' .....	44-46
Chapter Four: .....	Intimate Cinematography in Contemporary Youth-Oriented Queer Screen Texts
Cocooned in Colour & Light .....	47-51
New Contexts: Reflexivity and Online Spaces .....	52
Sound & Iteration .....	53-63
Intimate Space Outside & The Queering of The Child in Nature .....	64-66
Outside Queer Liberalism .....	66-67
Water & Intimate Immersion .....	68-75
Fluidity .....	76-77
Haptics & Sensuality .....	78-83
Chapter Five: .....	Conclusions
The Possibility of Intimate Queer Spaces .....	84-85
'Let's Escape' .....	85-87
Queer Utopias .....	87-88
Open Endings .....	88-91
References.....	92-103

## Chapter One

### An Auto-Ethnographic Perspective on 'Networked' Youth & Viewing Habits

Between 2005-2012 danah boyd interviewed teens about their media use, and in 'It's Complicated' deemed this demographic; *'the first generation of 'networked' teens'* (2014). I fit directly into this demographic, and though I do not profess to speak for an entire generation, I hope that this thesis can offer a grounded and personal addition to the scholarship on this period of shifting media landscapes. Growing up a 'networked' teen, these formative years for me and my peers were shaped by the transition and distinction between 'old' and 'new' media. Working in DVD rentals, I witnessed that medium at its height, followed by its demise, then experienced the rise of streaming-services and social-media. The catalyst for my research lies in a phenomenon I observed, that I believe has been under theorised. That is; a simultaneous shift in viewing habits, in queer genre/aesthetics, and the rise of queer youth online as a distinct political voice. Experiencing both pre-and post-Web 2.0 life as a queer teenager, I remember when DVD sets of shows like *Skins*, *Queer as Folk*, and *The L-Word* were coveted treasures, secretly passed around among video-store staff and our friends. But as streaming-services began to dominate distribution, an unprecedented library of diverse, international, queer screen texts became available online.<sup>1</sup> Not only were there drastic changes in the accessibility, visibility, and popularity of queer texts online, but there was also a visible shift in the aesthetics, narratives, and politics of these texts which were becoming more youth-oriented. For this thesis, I conducted a wide survey of these texts as well as a digital-ethnography of the online spaces in which these texts were shared and discussed, and observed patterns in the aesthetics of the most popular texts, and also in viewer responses and surrounding online discourse. I identify and explore a new 'Intimate Cinema' in relation to both viewing space and aesthetic genre. 'Cinema' within European/Western scholarship, may be used in reference to either a canon of texts, or we may refer to the space in which the text is viewed. I argue for the bringing together of these realms, to examine how they interact. This is a particularly necessary endeavour in today's digital landscape, as the screen text and medium context are so imbricated that they cannot be theorised separately.

---

<sup>1</sup> Definition: 'Screen Texts' refer to a wide range of filmic-narratives available online. For example, this thesis discusses a range of feature-films, short-films, web-series/made-for-streaming, and music videos. In recent years, we can also see how short Instagram style videos, or GIFs may also form a part of this genre.

Not only have distribution models and the texts themselves changed, but so has the medium. Youth are now engaging with these texts, alone, on personal digital devices [PDDs]<sup>2</sup>. When I was babysitting one evening, one young girl expressed it best when asked why she wanted to watch Netflix on her iPad instead of ‘the big TV’ she replied matter-of-factly: ‘*It’s closer...I prefer it close*’. It is this closeness of PDD viewing that I wish to investigate, as it has introduced a new level of intimacy to the viewing experience. Utilising queer screen texts and queer youth identity development narratives [QYIDN] as a specific case study, I attend to some possible consequences of these new viewing spaces. ‘Youth’ in this thesis are spoken about broadly, in reference to young users, around the world, who are in a position of socio-economic privilege which grants them access to their own PDD, high-speed download (compatible with video-streaming), and their own bedroom/private space. Thus, age is not the quantifying category e.g.; some may be gifted iPads at the age of five, whilst others may purchase their first laptop at the age of sixteen. At the age of six, my babysitting charge was already making her own decisions about what platform best suited her needs. She chose to be intimately immersed in the screen world, to be as close as possible to her beloved characters and, importantly, to share the experience with them *alone*. Bathed in the light of their digital screens, cocooned in private spaces, youth today are engaging with ‘cinema’ in unprecedented ways.

## **Youth & New Media Research: The Need for An Adaptive Model of Viewership**

My classification of ‘Intimate Cinema’<sup>3</sup> is based on the work of anthropologist Edward T Hall, whose ‘proxemic’ theory provides the theoretical foundation for this thesis. First formulated in ‘The Hidden Dimension’ (1966), proxemics describes the use of interpersonal space in communication. Hall outlines four distances; *intimate, personal, social, and public* [Fig.1] - which are commonly understood by humans across cultures to

---

<sup>2</sup> Definition: Throughout this thesis, ‘PDDs’ [personal digital devices] will be used to refer to a range of devices, including laptop computers, tablets, and smartphones. The definitive characteristic of this group is their mobility, internet access, the ability to stream or play video content, and their distinction as ‘personal’.

<sup>3</sup> The aesthetic characteristics of ‘Intimate Cinema’ (sans ‘Queer’) can be found outside the genre of youth-oriented queer screen texts, and these ‘Intimate Cinema’ spaces of PDDs are of course utilised by non-LGBTQIA+ viewers too. Further explorations of the use of Intimate Cinema by other demographics, or the use of Intimate Cinematography outside this specific genre would be of value but is outside the scope of this thesis and may be explored in future studies.

have different communicative meaning.<sup>4</sup> Hall investigated these ‘silent realms of communication’ and found that they created a new ‘biotope’ for humans; ‘Man has created extensions of himself ... The computer is an extension of part of the brain’ (1966: 3). When Hall was writing (in the mid 20th century), computers were still the size of an entire room, and used for complex mathematics. However, the personal computer today, in the form of PDDs, is designed specifically for the use of one person at a time and, in areas where economic conditions allow, owned and exclusively used, not by ‘man’ in Hall’s mass sense, but by one (hum)man.<sup>5</sup> These devices are personal, and their contents hidden - by virtue of password protected technology - much like one’s inner thoughts. These devices are in every sense, an ‘extension’ of the brain, the user is free to document private thoughts, or research questions they may not want to ask publicly. PDDs have become ‘companions to our emotional lives’ and ‘provocations to thought’, as Sherry Turkle declared; ‘We think with the objects we love, we love the objects we think with’ (2007:5). This is exaggerated for youth, who are experiencing a tumultuous period of identity development. Just ask any young person if you can borrow their device for a moment; the face of horror you will get in response is a telling sign. For millennial youth, these devices are used as a primary tool for identity formation and are an integral extension of the mind and one’s personhood.

Whilst youth and new media have been of key *concern* to researchers for a decade now, even amongst the most recent work, I found a disjunction between the texts I encountered and my own observations and experience of youth behaviour online. Canonical texts such as boyd (2014) and Turkle (2011), whilst valid and useful, remain framed toward an objective of ‘understanding’ for ‘concerned parents’. These epistemologies of parental concern have inadvertently maintained a ‘media effects’<sup>6</sup> paradigm. This approach strips agency of youth, positioning them as potential ‘victims’, allowing them no opportunity to express their critical ability’ (Gauntlett, 2002). This thesis builds on an emerging body of scholarship on LGBTQIA+ youth and new media. The ways that the Web has altered queer identity development have been well established in

---

<sup>4</sup> Arguably, Hall’s work has become ubiquitous in our everyday understanding of space and social interaction and, along with the more widely recognised work of; George Herbert Mead, Herbert Blumer, & Erving Goffman, provided key foundational ideas for in the field of Interactionism.

<sup>5</sup> These ‘extensions’ have been investigated more recently through Post-humanist/Trans-humanist approaches, building for example on Donna Haraway’s ‘Cyborg Manifesto’ (2006). Further explorations could delve into other ‘extensions’, such as Google-glass, and the potentials of VR.

<sup>6</sup> See David Gauntlett (1998) and Joshua Meyrowitz (2009) for a more thorough examination of the limitations of media effects.

this scholarship, particularly by Bond et al (2009), Bryson & Macintosh (2010), Byron & Hunt (2017), Craig & McNroy (2014), Craig et al (2015a; 2015b), Dhoest, & Szulc (2016), Downing (2013), Gray (2009), Hammack et al (2009), Hanckel & Morris (2014), Hillier et al (2012), Meyer (2007),. Drawing on this body of work, I focus specifically on the ways that PDDs may be altering direct forms of ‘narrative engagement’. ‘Narrative engagement’ refers to the process by which youth draw on existing socio-cultural ‘master narratives’ during identity development (Cohler and Hammack 2007). For LGBTQIA+ youth, ‘struggle and success’ and ‘emancipation’ have been identified as two master narratives (ibid), however, as I discuss, ‘coming out’ can also be seen to be one of these master narratives, which has been drastically altered by the ‘features of the postmodern cultural context, including rapid technological change, increased access to multiple contexts, increased individualisation, and a longer period of adolescence’ (Kuper and Mustanski, 2014: 504).

This past scholarship approaches the use of ‘media’/ ‘social media’ broadly, whilst I wish to investigate narrative engagement with screen texts as a resource for identity development. Rob Cover surveyed ‘mainstream films’<sup>7</sup> in the late 1990s ‘with a view toward providing an ethic on the resource nature of films that may well be that "first contact" with lesbian/gay discourse for younger persons.’ (2000: 72). This articulation of Cover’s, is foundational to my own work and the importance of investigating popular contemporary texts. I feel the interactions between viewer/screen/text produce the most intense affective responses to, embodied experiences of, and profound engagements with, these QYIDNs. However, rather than simply reading texts for their political meaning, which may be ‘taken up’ by the youth viewer - using models such as Stuart Hall’s ‘encoding’/ ‘decoding’ (Hall, 1993)<sup>8</sup> (as Cover does), we should instead attend to the space between viewer/text - that charged moment of affective interactivity we experience when we watch a movie. Cover’s work on ‘mainstream’ texts was still framed by an ‘over-riding concern’ for youth audiences who ‘learn through the iterative performances provided on the big screen.’ (2000: 75). But as I will demonstrate, such ‘concerns’ were shaped by the epistemologies of the ‘public’ cinema space and the ‘big screen’. Now, relations between viewer/text on PDDs have shifted toward a more egalitarian interaction which has been configured by the *small* size of the ‘personal’ screen.

---

<sup>7</sup> Cover analyses; *My Best Friend's Wedding* (Hogan, 1997), *In & Out* (Oz, 1997), *Chasing Amy* (Smith, 1997) and *The Object of my Affection* (Hytner, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> This is the only reference to Stuart Hall, all further references to Hall are to Edward T. Hall (1966).

## Simultaneous Shifts in Technologies & Queer Genre Aesthetics

The relationship between changing technologies and aesthetics has been explored before, by B Ruby Rich who wrote of the 'New Queer Cinema' emerging in the early 1990s as a result of cam-corder and VHS technology (as well as; the arrival of AIDS, Reagan, cheap rent, and the emergence of 'queer' as a concept and a community)(2013).<sup>9</sup> Rich's 'homosexual-postmodern'[homo-pomo] genre was full of 'pastiche, irreverence, excess, and pleasure' (ibid) and included such texts as Jennie Livingston's *Paris is Burning* (1990) and Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* (1991). Rich allows that; 'The invention of VCR machines and VHS tapes, now obsolete, was a revolution in distribution ...then as now, technological change could lead to social and political transformations.' (2013: xvii) I will explore some of the possible 'social and political transformations' that have taken place alongside recent technological change. In the tradition of Rich, I identify a new genre of 'Intimate Queer Cinema'<sup>10</sup> which has emerged in the wake of digital technologies, Web 2.0, and the rise of queer-youth as a distinct political voice.

Viewers in 2017 may engage with screen texts in innumerable ways. PDDs are not the only platforms available, and to establish a theory of analysis based solely on one medium has been the downfall of media studies in the past. We need a new theory that befits today's complex cross-medium, 'convergent' landscape (Jenkins, 2006)<sup>11</sup> (Meyrowitz, 2009). Users on different mediums do not represent discrete demographics. The same person may choose to watch a video on YouTube, and later that day attend the movie theatre, and these practices serve different 'social practices' (Couldry, 2012). Through the application of Hall's proxemics in Chapter Two, I synthesise a theory of viewership that can be adapted across mediums. Although the focus of this study is Intimacy and PDDs, the model explored in this thesis may be adapted for any viewing space.

Whilst these choices in viewing space are key to understanding the landscape of 'cinema' today, such choices may not be available to all youth. For some, geographic isolation may still restrict their ability to engage in forms of viewership outside the virtual

---

<sup>9</sup> Rich's oft cited article 'New Queer Cinema' was originally published in *Sight & Sound* (1992). References throughout this thesis cite the most updated 2013 edition of her full volume.

<sup>10</sup> I viewed over fifty contemporary texts, ten of which have been explored in this thesis in detail.

<sup>11</sup> Although Henry Jenkin's 'Convergence Culture' (2006) may be outmoded in some ways, his articulation of 'convergence' remains the most succinct and useful descriptor for today's cross-medium landscape.

realm, and for others, the material realities of homophobia may pose too great a threat to venture into public spaces. Virtual resources do not negate the possibility of danger or homophobia, but access to queer texts online provides a ‘socio-cultural lifeline’ for LGBTQIA+ youth who may be experiencing pressures such as bullying (Wolfe, 2012).<sup>12</sup> Rather than being *concerned* with the effects of screen use and new media on youth, I wished to explore the importance of this space for queer youth, i.e.; What are the unique features of this viewing space that appeal to youth? How may this space be altering the construction of QYIDNs? How does this space constitute queer subjectivity? Elspeth Probyn highlighted the spatial imperative of subjectivity as ‘a process and a production’:

It is also undeniable that the sites and spaces of its [subjectivity’s] production are central. ... the space and place we inhabit produce us. ... how we inhabit those spaces is an interactive affair. ‘space is gendered and that space is sexed ... The reverse has also been shown: gender, sex and sexuality are all ‘spaced’ (Bell et al., 1994: 31-2)’. (2003: 294)

Historically, public spaces such as the urban/the metropolis, and viewing spaces such as the film festival, were gendered/sexed as queer spaces. Prior to home-viewing technologies, access to queer cinema depended on access to inner-city art-house cinemas (McKinnon, 2016: 11). Queer subjectivity is constituted in turn by the interactions that take place in these spaces, and vice-versa, the lack of access to these spaces and the isolation of the ‘rural’. The same is true of our textual-interactions and ‘cinema spaces’, what spaces are available to the viewer, and how do these viewing spaces shape queer subjectivities? In ‘The Celluloid Closet’ Vito Russo stated;

It is uncanny how many lesbians and gay men have said that until they became adults, they literally thought they were the only gay people in the world... future generations will not have to know the pain of feeling they are the only ones in the world... (1987: 316)

As Russo predicted, this experience of complete alienation for queer youth has been drastically altered in recent years, primarily by Web 2.0 and changes in digital distribution models. Web-access has become a fairly ubiquitous and global aspect of queer youth

---

<sup>12</sup> Wolfe is the founder of WolfeVideo, the largest distributor of queer film in North America (2012). WolfeVideoOnline is one of the main platforms, along with Netflix etc., through which to access the contemporary texts under investigation in this thesis.

identity development. Of course access to PDDs and the Web is not completely universal (as I have outlined in my definition of ‘youth’), however it is still far more accessible than those queer spaces defined by geographic location. Thus, the new Intimate Cinema of bedrooms and PDDs may be the *only* cinema available to many queer youth. Therefore, we must attend to the possible effects of its context and its unique function.

Karina Aveyard outlined how the continued reluctance to accept the cultural authenticity of the non-theatrical experience has been a key limitation in film consumption research (2016: 141). The elevation within film studies of the public movie theatre over non-theatrical viewership can also be traced through queer cinema studies. As I will discuss, queer cinema has tended to elevate the radical margins and the experience of queer film festivals as the more ‘serious’/politically useful form of queer textual and community engagement - perhaps due to fear for their extinction. However, the emergence of online communities and intimate viewing spaces, has not replaced or undermined real-world queer spaces or experiences, rather, they make available alternative options and choices to more diverse audiences. These choices relate to the ‘functions’ of media for LGBTQIA+ youth of which Craig et al. found ‘four themes that media use enabled’: ‘*coping through escapism, feeling stronger, fighting back, and finding and fostering community*’ (2015: 262).

We can see how the viewing of screen texts come under this umbrella of ‘media uses’. For example, my friends and I may choose to attend Sydney’s Mardi Gras Film Festival (which may serve wider ‘public’ community building functions), squish into a friend’s living room to watch the premiere of *Ru Paul’s Drag Race* (2009-) (which fosters bonds at a ‘social’ level), or retreat to bed and watch a web-series alone (in which identity formation is explored intimately and may be used as method of ‘coping through escapism’). It is this practice of watching queer screen texts privately, as part of the larger practice of identity formation, which forms the case-study for this thesis. I have focused on this viewing space due to its global ubiquity; for many queer youth - and the younger the more pronounced this difference is - engagement with queer-cinema and wider queer-cultures can *only* be done online, in virtual spaces. The wide access to viewing spaces that my friends and I enjoy is a privilege, and is not universal. The experience of millennials in Sydney is perhaps one extreme end of the queer experience spectrum. That is not to say that these individuals have always lived as happy little queer vegemites; any one of this diverse group could tell you of their struggles ‘growing up queer’ - in a religious family,



growing up gay and Asian, or growing up Trans in a single-sex school. But our *privilege is that we have choices* - both in our queer-cinema experiences and our ability and freedom to engage in wider queer political realms and communities. Thus, I aim to explore these viewing spaces with respect and 'humility'. As Eng, Halberstam & Muñoz contend, we must honour an ethics of humility and reframe ourselves within a diverse world of which we are not the centre (2005). For me, this has meant first and foremost - avoiding the supposition that online/virtual spaces, interactions, and experiences are less valid than those in the 'real world'. What this lead me to, was the dilemma of reframing a new genre of popular screen texts that past queer scholarship would have lead me to disregard as 'cozy' or 'homonormative'.

To achieve this balanced approach, I have avoided methodologies that would trap me in the binaries of media effects or representation politics. Past media theory has theorised viewership in various ways, however these theories have been based on one medium and cannot be applied *across* mediums. In Chapter Three, I will illustrate how Proxemics may be used across mediums. Utilising Proxemics, I will also examine the relationship between actors, camera/actors, viewer/screen, and between viewers, simultaneously (a task not possible using traditional film theory models). And in Chapter Four, I explore 'Intimate Cinematography' in a range of contemporary screen texts. I will examine how - in conjunction with the viewing space and online contexts - these texts, (which share aesthetic and thematic qualities), form an emerging genre of 'Intimate Queer Cinema'. I also explore the virtual realms surrounding these texts. By investigating how they were received, reflected upon, and contextualised by youthful viewers, I will demonstrate how this 'cinema' may be shifting QYIDNs. This new genre of cinema, addresses pressing tensions and dissonances facing the youthful queer subject in 2017. These tensions include, the desire to be both 'out and proud' and to remain safe. Before exploring this 'Intimate Cinema' experience in detail, I will outline the use of Proxemics in past scholarship.

## Chapter Two

### An Introduction to Proxemics

To offer a nuanced articulation of how and why youth engage with screen texts, I employ an interdisciplinary methodology which reflects the complexities of these interactions. I approach this viewer/screen/text relationship not through a top-down model, but through a networked, Interactional one - using Hall. Textual interactions and narrative engagements in the new 'intimate' spaces of PDDs, may shape youth understanding of identity, not just in Erving Goffman's sense of the self as interactional/performative (1959) but at a more intimate/personal level. I have framed my research not from an outside-in position of objective researcher, but have embraced an inside-out approach using auto and digital-ethnographic methods.<sup>13</sup> Through detailed textual analysis, and by focusing on our affective relationship with the text, I then work outward to demonstrate the ways that 'intimate' textual encounters constitute queer subjectivities. This structure corresponds with a Proxemic approach to space, moving freely from the intimate and personal outward to the social or public.

Proxemics allows us to view space and private/public worlds not as binary opposites, but as a range or scale along which a figure may travel. Thus, the boundaries between public/private are no longer represented by the construction of a wall or the closing of a door, but can be understood within Hall's 'hidden dimension'/ 'silent realm' of communication, which can be adjusted or mediated by the pulling up of a bed-cover, or the putting on of headphones. Hall wished to draw attention to, for example, the fact that distinctions such as private/public were ideas of 'Western man', whilst his model (based on years of international ethnographic study) could be applied globally. Furthermore, the classification of these 'zones' are not fixed, but 'informal'. 'The specific distance chosen depends on the transaction; the relationship of the interacting individuals, how they feel, and what they are doing.' (1966: 128).

---

<sup>13</sup> Within queer theory of course, the practice of auto-ethnographic perspectives on cinema has been well established (McKinnon, 2016: 5)

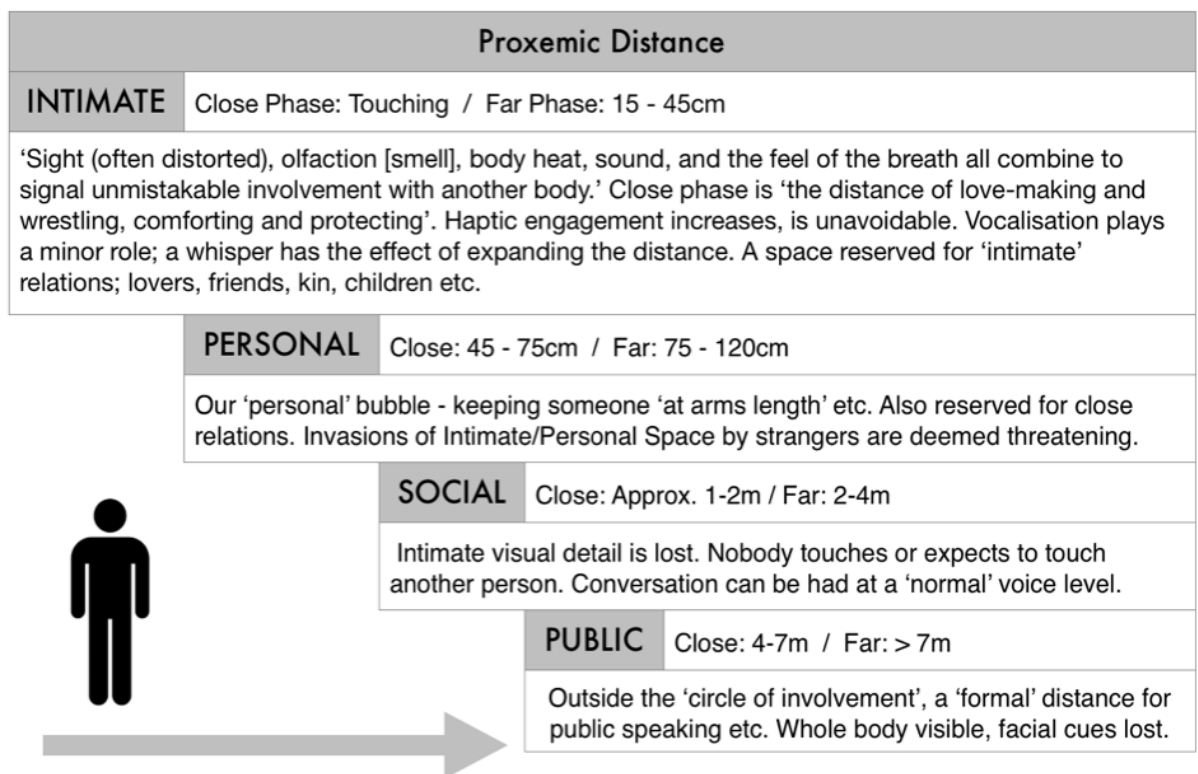


Figure 1. Proxemic Distances Table.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Information synthesised from Hall (1966: 116-129). Distances converted from Imperial to Metric System.

\* Definition: Haptic as in the sense of touch.

Vastly undervalued, 'The Hidden Dimension' provides a solid basis for proxemic screen analysis, through the chapter 'ART AS A CLUE TO PERCEPTION' (1966: 77-90), as well as Hall's use of photography and the links he makes evident between framing and proxemic understanding (ibid: Plates 10-12). Hall also establishes a foundation for the direct application of proxemics to film analysis specifically, in his discussion of Hiroshi Teshigahara's *Suna no Onna* (1964).<sup>15</sup>

Viewing it, one has the feeling of being inside the skin of the screen subjects. At times it is impossible to identify what part of the body one is looking at. The lens of the camera travels slowly, examining every detail of the body. The landscape of the skin is enlarged; its texture is seen as topography ... Goose pimples are large enough to be examined individually while grains of sand become like rough quartz pebbles... (Hall, 1966: 151)

The style that Hall identifies here, is precisely the type of intimate cinematography which I will be focusing on in Chapter Four; an aesthetic style which has become particularly popular in the new wave of queer texts. What Hall does not mention in his analysis of this scene, is that the use of extreme-close-ups and the haptic focus on skin, sand and water [Fig. 2], are used throughout the film to i) create a visceral sense of place; a claustrophobic experience of this enclosed sand-pit, and ii) create a sense of tension and intimacy between the leads, Jumpei and The Widow. This example demonstrates, though Hall himself does not acknowledge it explicitly, *the way that intimate cinematography is used to develop an understanding of intimate interpersonal relations between characters, and between viewer / text, by engaging senses associated with intimate distance.*

---

<sup>15</sup> Hall uses film style here to illustrate the differences in the 'sensual perceptual world' between the East and the West. Within studies of aesthetics, this distinction has remained pertinent to many scholars. Whilst these differences may be visible in classic cinema, I argue that today these trends are less defined by geographic/cultural categories, but by budget and global aesthetic trends. That is, independently produced, international screen texts focus more on sensory/experiential aesthetics than high-budget Hollywood features. Furthermore, this level of intimate distance shown in the film would be cross-culturally understood to be equally immersive, invasive, impactful etc. As Louis Antunes argues, the experiential appeal of global texts which focus on senses and non-verbal communication have a more 'universal' appeal (2016: 7). And this 'contemporary type of filmmaking across various geographical and cultural contexts and authorial voices, giving primacy to the experience aesthetics of film, defies the general presupposition that Eastern arts have more experience nature that is opposed to the more narratives forms of the West' (ibid: 8).



Figure 2. Selected Shots - *Suna no Onna* (Teshigahara, 1964)<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Note: All screenshots in this thesis appear exactly as they do in the text. However, where necessary, several sequences have been brightened for printing.

Intimacy and haptic sensory experiences have been explored to varying degrees by film phenomenologists. Laura Marks built on Vivian Sobchack's 'The Address of the Eye' (1992), which addressed the sensory cinema experience and the subject. Marks, in 'The Skin of the Film' (2000), argues for 'haptic visuality', a reframing of our embodied sensory and affective experience through touch (haptics) rather than optics. However, as I will discuss, Marks' focus on Intercultural Cinema is grounded in memory (which this thesis moves away from). Furthermore, Marks does not cite Hall in relation to haptics and intimacy, whilst I have found his work to be essential in our understanding of the relationship between the viewer and the screen/text and how affect and meaning develop. Hall's work, rather than being canonised as foundational, has been grossly overlooked. Recent scholarship has investigated how PDDs are influencing space, urban geography, and social interaction, for example; Jason Farman's work on 'Mobile Interface Theory' (2013) or Ito et al's 'Mobile Cities' (2009). These works too, rely heavily on Hall's ideas to develop understandings of emerging mobile mediums, however, they tend to skim briefly over Hall without engaging in any depth with his model. Joshua Meyrowitz's 'Television and Interpersonal Behaviour' (1986), although somewhat outmoded, demonstrates the best application of proxemics to 'medium theory'<sup>17</sup>.

Meyrowitz's 'para-proxemic'<sup>18</sup> framework identifies the correlation between proxemics, interpersonal behaviour, and screen medium. Meyrowitz builds on Horton & Wohl's early supposition that the 'para-social relationship' between television/viewer produced an 'illusion of face-to-face relationship with the performer' which psychologically replicated a real-life encounter (1956). Meyrowitz then uses Hall, along with Erving Goffman, to expand this 'para'-media condition further. He develops 'para-proxemics' to explain the ways that TV shots and locations replicate the way we perceive and react to interpersonal distance. He links this with 'para-social impressions' (Goffman), to account for the ways that the TV medium involves us in the image and makes us feel as though we were experiencing a 'real' interpersonal encounter (1986: 253). This is key, as I contend that our 'real life' understandings of interpersonal proxemics are transposed cognitively across mediums / viewing spaces, and explore how the repeated, ritualistic

---

<sup>17</sup> Definition: Medium Theory, first coined by Meyrowitz in 1985, draws attention to the study of specific mediums and is a reaction against the tendency toward 'media effects' models (2009).

<sup>18</sup> Definition: 'Para' here meaning *mediated*. Throughout this thesis I will simply use 'proxemic' as I often make reference to both the mediated screen/viewer relationship as well as non-mediated human/human relationships and posit that there is little-no cognitive difference between the two.

viewing of texts at particular distances (i.e. intimate) reaffirms, alters, and constitutes our understanding of space and interpersonal relations.

Meyrowitz briefly points to contextual medium differences, but is only interested in one medium - Television. Understandably, as Television was the dominant medium of concern in the later years of the 20th century, when Meyrowitz was writing, just as PDDs are now. However, he does not expand his theory *across* mediums as I do in Chapter Three. Whilst Meyrowitz briefly outlines the difference between ‘mediated’, ‘situational’ and ‘portrayed’ distance [Fig.3], he does not go into any depth on ‘situational variables’.<sup>19</sup> I will undergo a more detailed analysis of ‘situational variables’ across mediums, including the ‘public’ movie theatre, the ‘social’ television, and the ‘intimate’ space of ‘personal’ digital devices, and in Chapter Four address the relationship between ‘viewer/image’ distance (intimate cinema) and ‘portrayed distance’ (intimate cinematography) more thoroughly.

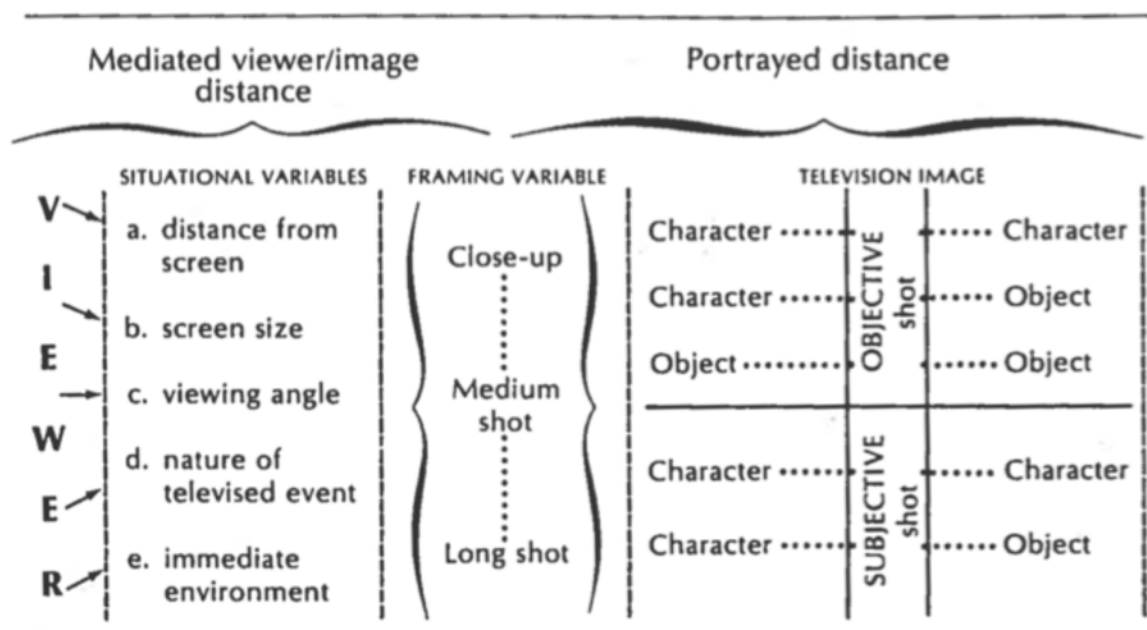


Figure 3. Meyrowitz's model of viewership (1986: 259).

<sup>19</sup> Definition: What Meyrowitz refers to as ‘Situational Variables’ would now, in Cognitive fields, fall under ‘Context Effect’ i.e.; the effects of bodily context on perception of a stimuli.

## Screens & Framing

Per Persson's 'Understanding Cinema' also utilises Hall in a detailed Chapter on 'Variable Framing' (2003:101-143) in which he examines this element of Meyrowitz's model in more detail. As Persson explains, in early cinema, the camera was *fixed* and the players moved toward or away from the camera, thus film in many ways replicated the stage/audience relations of the public theatre (2003: 56). However, when the camera was liberated it could move, much like another figure, toward/around/away from the players. From this emerged Point of View [POV] cinematography and editing, and introduced the idea that the camera could be understood to be an independent 'voyeur'. It was along these lines of psychoanalytic enquiry that film theory continued for decades, asking questions about, for example; Where is the gaze directed? From whose POV are we looking?<sup>20</sup> Now, cameras are lighter and more mobile, leading to a new style of intimate cinematography - allowing the viewer to get closer to the players than ever before. However, I wish to draw attention to the *screen* of PDDs which is now also liberated, mobile, and moveable. It is no longer only the filmmaker who makes decisions about *how* the audience looks, but the viewer too can alter this position - moving the screen, and the players, closer or further away. The viewer is making their own directorial choices about framing and distance as they watch (as was evident with my babysitting charge). Therefore, we can no longer simply understand texts using traditional voyeur/gaze theories about the relationship between the *camera/actors* and cinematic framing. Instead we must attend also to the relationship between the *viewer/screen*.

The liberation of *both* the camera and the screen in the digital age is key to my work. Meyrowitz and Persson both discuss variable framing in detail, (i.e.; the choice of close-ups, medium shots, or long shots) and concepts such as absolute/relative size. But these concepts deal only with framing, in a fairly static way. For example; a television presenter may, be shot from the waist up to replicate 'social' interpersonal distance (1986: 257). However, Meyrowitz states that 'a television lens distorts visual cues to some extent' i.e.; the lens cannot replicate natural ocular vision (ibid). Thus, his discussion does not extend to other aesthetic cinematographic qualities - as Marks does, through her focus on texture and graininess (2000). Since the advent of digital technology, the camera is now able to replicate the nuances of vision, such as 'blurriness' when a subject is 'too close',

---

<sup>20</sup> Leading to, for example, the influential work of theorists such as Laura Mulvey and her critique of the 'male gaze' (1975).



which Hall identifies as a characteristic of intimate distance at the ‘close phase’ (1966: 117). I explore these characteristics further in Chapter Four.

Hall and Meyrowitz both draw on Maurice Grosser’s analysis of the portrait (1951) to develop an understanding of framing and interpersonal interaction (Hall, 1966: 77) Meyrowitz finds;

The absolute size of the figure is not the key variable determining response to a picture. What is important is the distance that is suggested by the relative size of the figure within the frame. Similarly, on television a close-up on a nine-inch screen may suggest the same interpersonal distance as a close-up on a twenty-one-inch screen. (1986: 257).

Broadly, this is an important assumption when discussing proxemics in any image form, from portraits to cinema. Although I contend now that the wider variance of screen-size available to audiences has complicated this principle. A close-up on a ‘big screen’ or television screen is still able to affect audiences and relate an ‘intimate’ or ‘personal’ connection. However, there are important cognitive differences between images that are ‘relative’ versus ‘absolute’ size. A close-up on the cinema screen, whilst emotionally affective, remains fantastical and removed from the everyday, or personal. However, on a PDD, the affective response to a close-up takes on a new *intensity*. Although the ‘exact nature of response’ relies on content and structural variables (performance, plot, dialogue etc.) (1986: 261), the ‘*intensity*’ of a response is related to the distances established by shot structure (ibid). I contend that the *intensity* of our affective response (to a text and its characters) varies drastically based on, not only ‘shot distance’, but other ‘situational variables’ across mediums. These include; distance from screen, screen size, and who we watch with. For example, on a PDD screen the figure in the close-up approaches absolute size (particularly on a laptop/tablet where a close-up of a face or hand may *exactly* meet ‘actual size’) lending itself to a more intense interpersonal response from the viewer.

Even when the image does not meet actual size (e.g.; on a smart phone), the PDD medium still denotes real-world interpersonal communication. That is, we may now communicate with *actual* people through this medium; when video-calling for example, the figure on the screen is a real/actual person who exists in another place. Thus, when fictional characters share this space, they take-on a more indexical relationship to the

real/actual.<sup>21</sup> Ingrid Richardson provides an excellent overview of how face/interface/screen relations evolved, and how our screen ontologies are shaped by metaphors such as face-to-face, leaning-in, etc. (2010). She points for example, to scholarship on video-calling and the ways these technologies are altering our experience and understanding of screen interfaces (ibid: 6). When examining the medium of PDDs as a viewing platform we cannot ignore the wider ‘virtual experiences’ (Marks, 2002: xiii) and ontologies of that screen object; one that is personal, private, used for web-browsing, gaming, video-calling, and built around a touch-screen interface- which aids in the sensation of feeling ‘as if’ once could reach out and touch the figures on screen. My case study of PDDs and Intimate Cinema, aims to reframe our understanding of perception during this turn to new ‘virtual epistemologies’ in which; sense and embodied cognition take on new importance (ibid).

---

<sup>21</sup> Whilst film scholars have argued that digital cameras have lost the indexical relation to the real (as there is no photochemical process based on light and a ‘real object’), I argue that through conventions such as video-calling we have regained, on PDDs, an indexical understanding of the face on screen as ‘indexical’ rather than symbolic. Discourse on the nature of the cinematic image in relation to the ‘real’/‘indexical’ can be found amongst a range of scholarship, including; (Sontag, 1978; Prince, 1996; Manovich, 1999; Ng, 2007)

## Out / In (Side) Space & Proxemics in Cinematography

Cognitive Film Theory has provided some recent alternatives to traditional psychoanalytic film theory and ‘gaze’ frameworks.<sup>22</sup> Foundational in this field is Johnson & Lakoff’s work on conceptual metaphors (1980) and image schemas (1987). ‘Container Schemas’ are key here, as they provide the cognitive groundwork for understanding the ‘frame’ as a container metaphor (Buckland, 2015), i.e.; reliant on the distinction and interplay between outside/inside. Proxemics forms an important part of these spatial metaphors, as both ‘container schemas’ and proxemics are built on bodily/spatial metaphors. In container schemas; we are either out/in the contained space, whilst in proxemics we understand others to be out/in a particular proxemic zone/boundary. For example; the common command - ‘Get out of my space!’ demonstrates this schema, as well as the remark by Hall’s subject that when people are ‘too close’ they seem to be almost ‘inside you’ (1966: 118), or Hall’s own description of *Suna no Onna* - ‘one has the feeling of being inside the skin of the screen subjects’ (1966: 151). Not only are these metaphors helpful in understanding physical space in viewing environments and cinematography, but they are fundamental in our understanding of queer identity which has been constituted by in/out epistemologies of ‘the closet’ (Sedgwick 1993) and Pride/Shame which I will discuss later.

Models of viewership based on ‘mirror neurons’ and POV understandings have been popular amongst past cognitivists who favour models of simulation and mimicry, such as in Grodal’s ‘Embodied Visions’ (2009), and theorists like Marks who based her work on memory (i.e.; we understand the texture of skin or sand because we have a knowledge - built on memory - of this experience) (2000). However, Murray Smith questioned this approach and argued for ‘acentral imagining’, rather than ‘central imagining’ (1997) as he attempted to explain empathy/sympathy and embodied responses i.e.; why do we *feel* experiences that belong to characters and not to us? Building on this, more recently, Luis Antunes questioned - how can we understand and respond to

---

<sup>22</sup> This thesis brings together a range of interdisciplinary literature on space, proximity, media, film, screens, identity, and subjectivity. My exploration of proxemics could be seen to fall under the interdisciplinary umbrellas of Screen Phenomenology and Embodied Cognition / Cognitive Film Studies. Screen Phenomenology itself is often cited as an element of the Cognitive turn in film studies, as Embodied Cognition is not limited to only Neuroscientific approaches, but includes Phenomenological, Sociological, Anthropological approaches (which Hall’s work forms a part). Broadly speaking, my aim aligns with the pursuits of Cognitive Film Theorists, who wish to demonstrate ‘how the process of meaning-making in film is embodied’ (Coegnarts & Kravanja, 2015: 17), although I examine a wider range of ‘filmic’ screen texts.

multisensory stimuli when we have no personal memory of it? (2016)<sup>23</sup> Antunes provides a thorough overview of some paradoxes within phenomenological and cognitive approaches, and points to a continued problem faced by theorists;

Problems arise from the spectator's sensory context in opposition to the film's world; in other words, film certainly affects us, and our experiences are embodied, but are we participants or mere observers? (2016: 16-19).

I contend that we are *both* participants and observers. In the moment of interaction between viewer/text we are simultaneously outside and inside - aligned more with Sobchack's model of 'the film subject' and 'the film *as* subject' (1992). I do not feel we experience film from the POV of a character, or the gaze of a voyeur; but rather - since the emergence of virtual epistemologies (such as gaming) - we experience, through the camera as a vessel, our own virtual space in the story world and virtual relations to the figures within that world.<sup>24</sup> I embrace this idea that we are 'outside' the characters - we are *beside* them - and it is by virtue of this 'beside' that we can experience an interpersonal proxemic relation to characters, and are able to feel, for example, a sense of being 'too close'. Take 'falling in love', for example, as an affective embodied experience found in romantic narratives. If the protagonist of a screen text is falling in love, we do not 'mimic'/'mirror' this experience and fall in love with the object of the lead's affections, but rather, we may experience an affective response in which endorphins are released and *we enjoy the feeling of watching others fall in love*. We may be a little embarrassed, we may sympathise with them, but this affective response only occurs because we are still outside looking in. Albeit in intimate cinematography, we may experience a jarringly intense experience, as a result of this outside/inside position - we, as outsiders, are invited inside the intimate zone - *we are too close*.

---

<sup>23</sup> Antunes demonstrates this using an example from Kim-ki Duk's 'The Isle' (2000) in which a character swallows fish-hooks - which infamously led to cinema walk-outs and audience members vomiting. Antunes highlights how audiences experience such visceral, bodily reactions to this stimuli and yet themselves would not have a sensory memory of swallowing fish-hooks, thus he stipulates our cognition cannot be limited to memory alone (2016: 16).

<sup>24</sup> This 'camera as vessel' notion could be explored more thoroughly in future work, with reference to gaming phenomenology and how this relates to our relationship with the screen (Fahlenbrach, 2015) i.e.; how the player/viewer occupies the space of an 'avatar' through which the experience is mediated, and the metaphor of being 'sucked into' the game world/screen.

## Chapter Three

### Proxemics Across Mediums - A New Theoretical Approach

Proxemics can be applied across viewing spaces, allowing for a more balanced analysis of mediums without creating a dichotomy between the sacred 'old' and the disruptive 'new' media. I will demonstrate an application of Proxemics to i) The 'Public' Movie Theatre and ii) 'Social' Television in the domestic space, before focusing primarily on iii) 'Intimate' PDD Cinema. Following an analysis of each space, I also explore how these technologies relate to queer screen aesthetics by mapping distinctions through key queer texts, including Jennie Livingstone's *Paris is Burning* (1990), Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) and Andrew Haigh's *Weekend* (2011).<sup>25</sup>

These links between 'aesthetic' genre, and medium - used in relation to a Kantian idea of 'aesthetics'<sup>26</sup> (relating to questions of beauty in art) - are made by both Marks (2000) and Rich (2013). I too will be drawing on this element of aesthetics in this thesis, particularly when drawing comparison between the aesthetic style of Intimate Cinema compared to Rich's 'homo-pomo' aesthetic. However, I also contend that new 'virtual epistemologies' have expanded this notion of aesthetics toward one of 'experience'. As Antunes reasons, a 'multisensory' experience should also draw on David MacDougall's 'corporeal image' (2005); closer to what the Greeks meant by 'aisthetikos' (sense perception), which has little to do with notions of visual beauty, but points to wider cultural patterns of sensory experience (2016). It is these wider patterns of culturally constituted perception that proxemics forms a part.

Chapter Three will be followed by an examination of Intimate Cinematography in contemporary youth-oriented queer screen texts. I have selected key texts which were popular amongst youth online which I have categorised as an emerging genre of Intimate Queer Cinema. Prior to Web 2.0, queer texts which focused on youth protagonists and targeted youth audiences were rare (age restrictions of public screenings for example meant there was little use for films that targeted youth audiences). Only since the emergence of home-viewing options such as VHS/DVD a range of youth-oriented texts

---

<sup>25</sup> Although these films are not focused on youth identity development narratives, they are required to demonstrate the shifts in aesthetic style across queer cinema more broadly, prior to the emergence of more youth-oriented texts.

<sup>26</sup> In reference to Immanuel Kant's 'Critique of Judgment' originally published in 1790 (2000).

begin to emerge in the 1990s. However, as I will discuss, these 1990s texts primarily dealt with ‘coming out’ narratives and were contextualised by theorists within a discourse of strict public/private and mainstream/margins debates. What we have now seen with the advent of PDD technologies, streaming services, and the rise of youth as a viable online market and community, is an enormous influx of texts focused on queer youth. These contemporary texts can be framed by Hall’s more flexible, ‘informal’ model of spaces, as they complicate private/public distinctions in favour more intersubjective approaches.

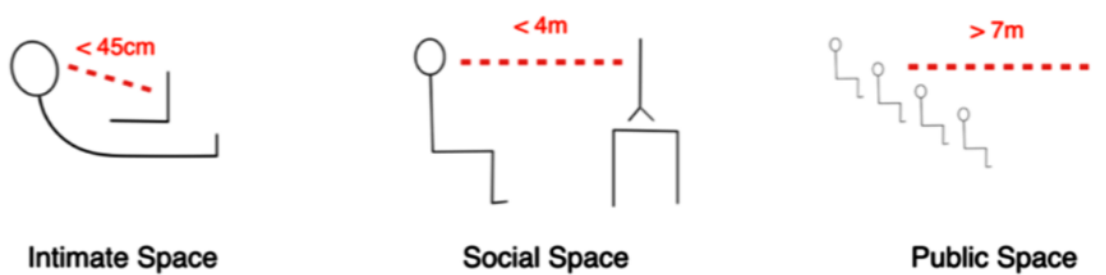


Figure 4. Proxemic Distance across Viewing Spaces.

## The Movie Theatre: Public Spectacle and Shame

Various interactions within the public movie theatre may involve different proxemic zones. For example, the distance between us and the viewer beside us may be classified as 'Personal' distance. However, the fact that these people may be strangers, signals that the movie theatre itself must be deemed 'Public'. Furthermore, the distance between the viewer and the screen is on the 'far' spectrum of Hall's Public zone (beyond 7m) [Fig.4]. Figures on the cinema screen have been viewed as giants of the silver screen, and our interaction with them is removed from the personal, to the fantastical. The 'big screen' public cinema has been remembered thus;

There's something extraordinary about [the cinema] that actor's face is 40 feet high! When they're forty-feet high there's something mythic about it, that's beyond your everyday life. (Danny Boyle, 2012)

The cinema should be a huge eighty-foot expanse - it should envelope the audience in the screen - that's cinema ... the sound all round you. Why people would want to watch movies on their computers I shall never know. (Phil Meheux, 2012)<sup>27</sup>

As I will outline later in my analysis of PDDs, the Intimate Cinema of watching movies on one's computer in-fact *maintains* these features of the traditional cinema that Maheux mourns - the dark room, being enveloped by the screen, and surrounded by sound. As for the 'forty-foot high' figure, this relates, as I have discussed, to the intensity of our emotional reaction to characters on screen (Meyrowitz, 1986) and presents a vastly different viewing experience to the new Intimate Cinema of PDDs, in which we are intimately confronted with a face on screen that meets 'actual size'.

Further 'situations variables' which effect cognition include, for example, the focal point of the screen in relation to saccadic eye movement (Russell et al.; Batty et al.; Kluss et al., 2016).<sup>28</sup> The seated position of the body in relation to the 'power' of the screen (Heath, 1976) should also be noted, in comparison for example to a prostrate/relaxed position in bed. These are just several examples of the variables which construct the movie

---

<sup>27</sup> Quotes from director Danny Boyle and cinematographer Phil Maheux, transcribed from the documentary *Side by Side* (Kenneally, 2012) which explored debates around digital cinema.

<sup>28</sup> Further investigates could conduct eye-tracking experiments to investigate whether saccadic movement is reduced when the screen is at a closer distance (PDD compared to TV or Theatre).

theatre as a 'Public' viewing space. The screen and its characters are positioned as untouchable, distant figures, and the only 'subject position' (McKinnon, 2016) available to the viewer is literally seated below the screen, susceptible to its power and influence (which arguably, is what lead to the epistemologies of 'media effects' models). Of course, these models of understanding are outmoded in today's media landscape, however we cannot ignore how remnants of these epistemologies remain in the construction of space in the theatre and our experience of public movie theatre viewing.<sup>29</sup>

The public movie theatre has also been of key concern to queer cinema scholarship, as this space was an important part of the development of queer communities and activism. Particularly, scholarship on the importance of the cinema and queer film festivals emerged in response to the 'domestic'/'normative' turn in the 1990s (which will be discussed later). Patricia White framed film festivals as part of the 'queer public sphere' (1999: 76), and Martha Gever felt that *'they become cultural spaces that can change our relationship to the screen. Our identities are constituted as much in the event as in the images...'* (1990: 201). This is crucial; if queer identities were 'constituted' in the public event of a queer film festival, we must also now attend to the ways queer identities are constituted in the Intimate Cinema of PDDs.

B Ruby Rich celebrates the cinema experience, and frames the film festival as a necessity and is dismissive of newer experiences:

... marked by the unmistakable sensibility of a thousand kindred spirits holding their breath in the dark. ... technology, however advanced and advancing, has not fully supplanted the yearning for community nor succeeded entirely in mediating its fulfilment. (2013: xxvii).

Rich declared early 1990s 'New Queer Cinema' to be 'fiercely serious'. By virtue of their post-modern aesthetic and distribution at public queer film festivals, Rich felt they were worthy of being taken 'seriously' as radically political art, which 'set out to save souls'. She compares this to more recent fare, in which she views 'queer audiences have too often retreated into a comfort zone of familiar faces and cozy narratives.' (2013: 281).

---

<sup>29</sup> In further investigations, it would be interesting to examine how movie theatres today are replicating the comfort of home viewing - using reclining chairs, cushions, serving food, etc.



Paralleling wider film studies, there has been a tendency in queer cinema studies to elevate the public movie theatre as the optimum way to consume film. Susan Sontag, voiced similar concerns and mourned for the *erotic ruminative ritual of the darkened theatre in which one was kidnapped, seated in the dark among anonymous strangers* (1996).<sup>30</sup> This mourning for the lost magic of the ‘dark cube’ can be found throughout film criticism, as outlined so thoroughly by Gabrielle Pedulla (2012). However, the public movie theatre experience is still valid, and enjoyed by millions - the home theatre and PDDs have not rung the death toll for cinema as was feared. Instead, as I have discussed, what newer viewing spaces allow for is the choice, to visit the theatre or stay home. And it is this choice, between queer spaces, which is of vital importance for queer youth for whom safety is of key concern. Whilst these experiences at the movie theatre or film festival may be unique, magical, erotic, and foster a sense of community - the cinema remains a distinctly ‘public’ arena, in which fear and shame constitute subject formation. As one of McKinnon’s interviewees recalls; “*I could not bring myself to go see it. What if someone saw me ...?*” (2016: 3)

---

<sup>30</sup> Of course, queer eroticism at the cinema was also constituted by cruising culture and the darkened cinema as a site of public sex. However, since the advent of mobile ‘hook-up’ apps, such cultures have diminished. Investigations into public and intimate sex sites in relation to these cinema spaces could form a part of further studies but remains outside the scope of this thesis.

## Out(side)

Out/in metaphors not only dictate our understanding of space in interaction and film cognition, but have been foundational in the formation of queer subjectivities. That is, the way that QYIDNs are constructed around the conditions of being ‘in the closet’ or ‘out and proud’. These metaphoric distinctions can be mapped through the use of physical space in the cinematography of queer texts, illustrating the ways that these texts have historically, and continue to, address and contend with these tensions. I distinctly remember the release of Ang Lee’s *Brokeback Mountain* in 2005. I was only twelve at the time, and did not see the film until several years later - but I remember the gossip, the media attention, and the speculation that surrounded its release. Before experiencing the film, I was exposed to the concept of shame in relation to queer cinema and I was not alone in this experience [Fig.5]. Queer cinema releases were constituted by the mainstream media (McKinnon, 2016) and the frenzy surrounding the ‘gay cowboy movie’ has arguably become more pertinent to its place in the cinema canon than the film itself (Bronski, 2008; McKinnon, 2016; Rich, 2013; Roughton, 2014; Schneider, 2006; Wood, 2007).



Figure 5. Memories of *Brokeback*'s reception.

Surrounded by the Wyoming wilderness, Ennis and Jack's sexual identity develop in isolation - a depiction of rural queer experience, there is not a sequin or disco-ball in sight. This immersion in nature and isolation from familiar queer iconography, is what contributed to the film being both lauded and slammed as a 'universal love story' (ibid). Lee's Wyoming landscape is one of cinematic scale - with sweeping long-shots of mountain ranges and expanses of grass, the camera never gets 'too close' to the leads, who are framed constantly by their setting - creating a cinema spectacle, an epic romantic tale [Fig.6]. Moments of 'closeness' arrive in moments of sexual intimacy, primarily within the claustrophobic, stifling tent, and an infamous reunion kiss. However, the camera and the viewer remain detached, a foot or so away, just *outside* intimate distance. Most of these intimate scenes are ones of hurried passion, tainted by shame which is lurking just outside the tent, or watching from a doorway - in the form of Ennis' wife [Fig.7].



Figure 6. Selected Shots: Outside Space in *Brokeback Mountain* (Lee, 2005)



Figure 7. Watching and being watched in *Brokeback Mountain* (Lee, 2005)

Tarja Laine examines the way that texts confront the spectator with their own fear of shame, i.e.; a way in which the text 'looks back' (2007). *Brokeback* can certainly be framed in this way with Ennis' wife in particular positioned as Shame - looking in on Ennis and Jack and looking back at us. Furthermore, in the public movie theatre, among strangers - our subjectivity is constituted by those 'others' that surround us. Thus the public cinema experience is shaped by the fear of shame and outside > inside epistemologies of emotion/affect. Pride politics, and the fierce celebration of public screenings (as voiced by Sontag, Rich, and White), can thus be seen as an outward reaction to Shame. If Shame involves an awareness, on screen and in the audience, of watching/being watched (Laine, 2007), then so does Pride. If Shame is Ennis's wife watching him, then perhaps Pride is performed in the act of 'walking' in *Paris is Burning* (1990). In this pageant, queer figures are watched, judged, and cheered on by the community of their 'Ballroom' [Fig.8]. Pride/Shame and the construction of queer subjectivity has historically been framed through this act of watching/being watched. As Pepper Lebeija states in *Paris is Burning*; 'When you're gay you monitor everything, the way you act, the way you dress ... Do they see me? What do they think of me?' (Livingston, 1990). After its release, the documentary was celebrated as a radical text which shed light on the limitations of gender construction, however its position as radical/marginal was perhaps undermined by Madonna's *Vogue* (1990) video (featuring Jose and Lois Xtravaganza) which popularised 'voguing' as dance (Hilderbrand, 2013).

As 'radical' or 'serious' (Rich, 2013) as this text felt, it is only through this act of 'performance' - the hyper-awareness of the documentary camera that constructs these young 'children' as radical, political, icons. In the process of projection, watching, and celebration, we may have forgotten the 'real' function of the ballroom and the material dangers of the 'outside' world threatening youthful queer bodies - so starkly revealed in the pronouncement of young Venus Xtravaganza's brutal murder at the end of the documentary. In 2017, in a queer world ruled by *Ru Paul's Drag Race*, 'realness' has become synonymous with camp, extravagance, vanity, and arrogance.<sup>31</sup> These ideals which have naught to do with the 'realness' of the ballrooms, which in the words of Dorian Corey, was about being able to blend in. 'Realness' was a matter of life and death; 'when they [the children] can walk out of that ballroom into the sunlight and onto the subway,

---

<sup>31</sup> Whilst drag has its role in queer politics, as Suzanna Walters highlighted, this 'romanticisation of the margins' and the figure of the 'rebel queer' through drag, represents a 'commodification of resistance' that does not stop you from being oppressed or from being a target of violence (1996).

and get home, and still have all their clothes and no blood running off their bodies' (ibid). 'Realness' meant that being 'out' in the 'outside world' was a privilege, and for the queer youth in *Paris is Burning*, 'realness' was a survival tool - not a party trick.



Figure 8. Selections from the Ballroom floor, *Paris is Burning* (Livingston, 1990)

Queer screen texts can thus be read as reactions to closet and pride epistemologies, in the way they create alternative spaces. In *Paris is Burning*, we were allowed into the 'counter-public' (Warner, 2002) space of the Ballroom, which was created in the face of derision and oppression, whilst in *Brokeback Mountain*, we escaped to far-away pastures. But we were constantly reminded of the realities of shame and the consequences of homophobia from which these figures fled. That is, in the endings of these texts; in which both Jack and young Venus are murdered.<sup>32</sup> After struggling to find personal/familial connection and a 'private' space, these texts 'look back' (Laine, 2007: 39) through a frame of tragedy/death, and position the intimate spaces of the texts as 'impossible spaces' (Nowlan, 2006: 148). These spaces and queer figures were constituted by epistemologies of in/out (the closet), shame/pride, and watching/being-watched. In relation to contemporary texts, this raises new questions. What affective interactive experiences constitute queer subjectivity in this new space, if we are no longer being watched? And what implications might this have on In/Out closet-based Pride Politics?

<sup>32</sup> *My Own Private Idaho* also concludes with this 'death drive' (Lee Edelman, 2004) ending - in Mikey's death. Contextually, it is also interesting to note the extra-textual spaces around these deaths, i.e.; the real-life tragic young deaths of actors Heath Ledger and River Phoenix (Venus of course already being a real figure). Arguably, the tragic circumstances around these young icons has constituted and historicized these texts within the queer cinema canon.

## Coming Out

In the late 1990s there was a rise of ‘coming out’ films, centred around QYIDNs (Bronski, 2000; Nowlan, 2006). Michael Bronski found that, according to the post-Stonewall liberation movement, coming out was viewed as the first positive step toward acceptance and equal rights, thus the ‘coming out’ genre offered a simple ‘affirmative vision’ of a joyful life experience - ‘I am out, therefore I am’ - and ended with coming out (Bronski, 2000). This idea shaped QYIDNs for years to come (Siedman, 2004), and positioned the queer subject strictly within a binary of in/out. As Probyn reflects;

The closet is an interesting spatial expression, although it allows for only two options: in or out. Moreover as Sedgwick’s argument indicates, as a figure it mandates that we be either homo- or heterosexual. (2003: 295)

Within the 1990s sub-genre of ‘coming out’ films, the decision to ‘come out’ mandates a distinct choice between staying within or being out. The metaphor of the closet - its physical structure, the opening or closing of a door - conveys only a binary understanding of identity development. However, the fluidity of Hall’s ‘informal’ proxemics is more befitting the realities of a youthful queer experience, in which identity is understood to be intersubjective - i.e.; dependant ‘on the relationship of the interacting individuals’ (Hall, 1966: 128). As I will discuss, contemporary texts tend to skip ‘coming out’ altogether, in favour of more nuanced explorations of identity negotiation across various proxemic spaces and social relations. They certainly do not use public declarations, as some 1990s films did (Nowlan, 2006: 144).<sup>33</sup> They also do not use ‘coming out’ as an ending, but instead utilise open endings about self-acceptance, and shared-escape through intimacy, and I will discuss these endings in detail later.

Cover identified a key problem with queer narratives in the later-90s/early-00s; ‘honesty syndrome’ - the idea that non-heterosexual people have a responsibility to the community be ‘honest’ about their sexuality. As Cover states; this pressure to ‘come out’ is problematic for youth subjects, as it ‘*commonly leads to homelessness ... violence ... death*’ (2000: 81). What should instead be advocated is a queer discourse:

---

<sup>33</sup> In reference to the film *Get Real* (Shore, 1998) in which the protagonist comes out at a school assembly. The films identified by Bronski and Nowlan include; *Beautiful Thing* (MacDonald, 1996), *Get Real* (Shore, 1998) and *Edge of Seventeen* (Moreton, 1999)



... grounded in a concern for youth safety, and the idea that a person should state her/his sexuality only in strategic ways, and that there is no moral compulsion towards some mythical sense of honesty or social responsibility or necessary visibility (ibid).

This discourse Cover hoped for can be found online now [Fig.9], and is explored in the contemporary screen texts I will discuss.<sup>34</sup>



Figure 9. Selections from a blog post about 'coming out'.

<sup>34</sup> Cover's more recent body of scholarship has explored queer youth suicide and, in the wake of the recent push toward mental-health awareness, forms a part of a larger body of scholarship which has framed suicide and safety as paramount in queer youth discourse today (2016).

## Dissonance and Impossible Spaces

Closet epistemologies, whilst still widely used to articulate youthful queer experience, have expanded beyond the distinction between out/in to include micro-levels of interactional differences more in-line with Proxemics. We are now ‘beyond the closet’ (Seidman, 2004). That is, the ‘closet’ may still be an overarching concern for queer youth, but we are also ‘post-’ in the sense that we have a language through which we can articulate and understand what ‘the closet’ means for any particular LGBTQIA+ person. Seidman found that queer life at the turn of the millennium was 'defined by a contradiction' i.e. the queer community has 'come out', yet we must still participate in a world of heterosexual domination (ibid: 6). Today, we can still see this how this contradiction, or dissonance, exists in QYIDNs. It exists between the expectations of established ‘coming out’ scripts, and the realities of this experience -articulated here by interviewees in Michael Hobbes recent article on ‘The Epidemic of Gay Loneliness’.

... you emerge from the closet expecting to be this butterfly and the gay community just slaps the idealism out of you... When [I] first started coming out ... I went to West Hollywood because I thought that's where my people were. But it was really horrifying. It's made by gay adults, and it's not welcoming for gay kids. You go from your mom's house to a gay club where a lot of people are on drugs and it's like, this is my community? It's like the fucking jungle. (‘Adam’ in Hobbes, 2017)

The dissonance expressed here by Adam is one that has occurred because wider cultural master narratives of ‘coming out’, as perpetuated by popular films of the late-90s/early-00s place undue expectations on ‘coming out’ that do not prepare youth for the complex realities of the arguably never-ending ‘coming out’ process, or the contradiction of being ‘out’ but finding oneself still living surrounded by heterosexual dominance and oppression (Seidman, 2004: 6). Furthermore, youth are met in the ‘out’ world with a queer realm that is built by, and for, adults.



## The Validity of Queer Spaces

This dissonance can perhaps be attributed to a gap between; i) the adult queer world - which has been constituted by a politics of pride (inherited from reactionary AIDS activism) that has since lost its grounded political meaning for today's youth, and ii) the realities of oppression and heteronormativity that still dominate queer experience. Queer youth must contend with this dissonance that arises when a shallow version of pride politics in the form of Ru Paul tells them to 'love themselves',<sup>35</sup> antiquated cultural narratives of 'coming out' tell them they have an imperative to be 'honest' with themselves and those around them, whilst bullies, homophobes, and world-leaders spout messages of hate, and queer youth are left without the tools and strategies necessary to counteract these messages. Instead they must retreat inwards and construct their own intimate queer spaces that provide them with safety and hope - a queer space just for youth. This may be why new Intimate Cinemas work, and why youth rely so heavily on them - they speak to this imperative; to be 'out' and yet remain safe. As I will discuss, in the new Intimate Cinema, youth can remain safe in their bedroom, whilst reaching out / being out online.

Bell & Binnie spoke of a queer 'dissonance' at the beginning of the 21st century which they believed stemmed from an inability or refusal to make the 'hard choices' confronting the [post-queer] sexual citizen' (2000: 141). Drawing on this, Nowlan felt that coming-of-age films of the late-90s could be seen as a response to this, as they attempt to construct an 'impossible space':

... in which gayness continues to signify a distinct mode of social-sexual identity and a distinct subculture organised around this identity and sensibility, thus maintaining what gayness has meant and is still shaped by a collective experience of oppression and resistance. However, there is a contradiction here, as this space will also be a new gay space beyond oppression/resistance where it will be possible to be free (free to be left alone)... (2006: 148).<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> One of Ru Paul's mantras, expressed on a weekly basis; 'If you can't love yourself, how in the hell you gonna love somebody else?' (2009 -)

<sup>36</sup> Nowlan notes that it may be possible for privileged gays in US/UK (where these films are made/set) to maintain a semblance of this kind of space, but overall it is an 'impossible space' because the ends to which liberation were initially dedicated have in fact not been achieved, and cannot be, without further social transformation (2006).

Nowlan discusses this in relation to the way that the youthful protagonists of these films demonstrate a 'youthful desire to control space'. They 'all initially possess partial and limited approximations of what they seek in the space of their own 'rooms', where they are freer than virtually anywhere else to express whom they experience themselves to be, in how they decorate and organise these spaces...' (2006: 146). However, these rooms are subject to 'parental surveillance', and can't be shared, so the characters must move to more public spaces - such as gay bars etc. Nowlan finds that these films 'end before we can see if this spatial extension inaugurates a process of reaching out to establish a wider range of social connections and commitments.'(ibid).

However, as I will explore, contemporary screen texts have moved beyond basic closet epistemologies and 'coming-out' narratives. Instead they work through these dissonances and impossibilities through their construction of queer intimate spaces. The concerns that dominated queer cinema criticism in late-90s/early-00s were founded on a closet binary in which public/out was equated with queer counter-publics and spaces of radical activism, and private/in was associated with a retreat, back into the closet, away from the front-lines of politics and resistance in favour of the heteronormative private/domestic sphere (Warner, 2000). And it is evident that the technology of 'the public movie theatre' informed this discourse, and how these texts were framed. However, what these authors could not foresee was the way that the Web queered these boundaries of public/private, and with them, the binaries of the closet. Furthermore, virtual realms mean that these 'impossible spaces' no longer exhibit a 'contradiction', as youth can remain in these carefully constructed spaces that they 'control' and still 'reach out' into wider communities.

## The ‘Social’ Living Room & Domestic Spaces

The Television & Living Room space is ‘Social’ in Hall’s sense, as we welcome in family, close friends, and sometimes wider social acquaintances. The distance between viewer and the screen, in a standard living room, also usually falls within ‘Social’ distance [Fig.5]. As Meyrowitz discussed in relation to framing, the advent of television in the 1950s/60s lead to the widespread use of a shooting style that framed a TV presenter from waist-up, replicating Social distance (Meyrowitz, 1986). And as Meyrowitz explores further in his book ‘No Sense of Place’(1985) the television itself transformed the use of domestic living space forever. Along with Meyrowitz, an array of scholarship has investigated the social functions of home viewing and the choice between home or cinema viewing (Dinsmore-Tuli, 2000; Doherty et al, 1987; Ellis, 1992; and Jancovich et al, 2003). Barbara Klinger outlined a ‘continuum’ between ‘public’ and ‘private’ cinemas, and countered the protestations made by Sontag against home-viewing. Instead, she argued, as I too have maintained, that audiences make choices about the ‘cinema’ that best suits their needs (2006: 3-5). However, Klinger’s work still pre-dates the widespread use of PDDs and streaming services, thus her distinction between ‘public’/‘private’ cinemas remains based on binary understandings of public/private spheres that have today been blurred and complicated by PDDs and Web2.0.

As Julianne Pidduck (2003) outlines, queer texts at the turn of the millennium were relegated to either the ‘mainstreams’ or the ‘margins’. This, coincided of course with the rise of a ‘mainstreaming’ of queer content broadcast in the USA in particular (Ng, 2013). Texts such as the ‘coming out’ genre that Bronski and Nowlan discuss, aligned with ‘mainstream’ narrative conventions and aesthetics.<sup>37</sup> Alternatively, artists could explore more complex, subversive, queer stories, but these films found audiences only at queer film festivals or were pushed ‘straight to video’ where they gained a cultish popularity (Rich, 2013; Pidduck, 2003). Thus, the mainstream ‘coming-out’ genre (which monopolised youthful queer narratives at the time) was deemed ‘complicit’, as Nowlan states, ‘with the co-option [in the form of normalisation] of gay identity and subculture’ (2006: 145). Texts which sought distribution on ‘public’ mediums (such as the movie theatre), were thus ‘complicit’ in normalisation, whilst texts which gained only ‘marginal’ distribution (VHS/DVD) were considered more radical.

---

<sup>37</sup> Though neither Bronski or Nowlan discuss aesthetics, my survey of these films confirms this.

New technologies and drastic changes in media distribution consistently result in debates about the validity of mediums.<sup>38</sup> However, in queer theory this discourse is particularly hazardous as it relates, not simply to the validity of mediums and art, but leads quickly to judgements around the validity of life-choices - surrounding, as always, this tension between being 'in' or 'out'. Screen texts which emerged in the 1990s tended to either; i) Conform to mainstream/normalisation/assimilation narratives; (Bronski, 2000; Nowlan, 2006; Cover, 2000), or ii) Defy such politics through their more 'serious' use of 'homo-pomo' aesthetics, (Rich, 2013). Queer media at the turn of the Millennium, and home viewing in particular, was deeply imbricated in a discourse of 'mainstream/margins'/'normal/radical'; a discourse typified by Warner's work (2000; 2002) concerned with queer politics in 'the age of mass media circulation' (2000:52). However, this work maintains a dualism between public/private spheres, and implies that, as queer citizens, we must make a choice: between the domestic/private space which is linked with 'assimilation'/'normalisation', or the public sphere, which is the realm of radical politics and activism.

Rich's descriptor 'cozy narratives' is imbricated in this sense of 'mainstream' / 'assimilation' / 'normative' and this inherent fear that; in embracing a domestic space the queer subject will abandon politics. However, in a contemporary media landscape - we can reframe the construction of 'cozy' spaces and narratives as intimately queer or as a 'queering' or intimacy. Rather than dismissing these spaces and narratives, we must attend to their function. Andrew Gorman-Murray, provides us with a more nuanced, embodied, and material approach to the queer domestic space. He found that the maintenance of one's domestic space functions as a reconciliation of diverse identities, that is; our sexuality, cultural heritage, spiritual beliefs, familial bonds etc. (2008). McKinnon too, re-materialising the queering of domestic space in reference to queer home-viewing and the archiving of queer VHS/DVD collections (2016: 188). Just as the 'coming out' and 'homo-pomo' genres emerged alongside changes in viewing platforms and distribution models in the 1990s, it is useful here to point to Andrew Haigh's *Weekend* (UK, 2011) as a keystone moment within Queer Cinema, in which an intimate sensory aesthetic recently began to take shape which re-materialised the domestic queer space through the use of realism/naturalism.

---

<sup>38</sup> These discourses can be traced back to Plato's dialogue 'Phaedrus' (1973) and continue to dominant discourse around technological change (Ong & Hartley, 2012).

## In(side) and the Digital Turn to Intimate Queer Spaces

Set in a squishy London apartment, *Weekend* (Haigh, 2011) is shot using a single hand-held digital camera, and the viewer intrudes on intimate scenes between the two leads; Russell and Glen. The camera/viewer has unashamedly come closer. In scenes where Russell and Glen sit on the bed, for example, or awake from sleep - Haigh is literally sitting on the bed with them. The camera is very much inside this cocoon of intimacy, feeling/sensing rather than watching.

The naturalism was so important to me. I wanted it to feel like as an audience member you were sitting in the corner of the room, allowed inside for a limited time before you have to leave again. (Haigh in Hynes, 2011)

This naturalism marks a turning point in aesthetics. There is certainly nothing cinematic or spectacular about *Weekend*, no sweeping landscapes, no romantic score, if anything - *Weekend*'s aesthetic feel is closest to that of a home-movie.

These questions around digital aesthetic and new forms of 'intimacy', can be traced back to film criticism at the beginning of the digital age, as Arial Rogers outlines;

The new possibilities opened up by digital cameras, which were cheaper and smaller... in contrast to celluloid filmmaking, where larger crews and equipment were understood to interfere with the connection between filmmaker and subject, the digital apparatus intruded less and thus facilitated a sense of connection referenced through terms like "intimacy" ...this independent discourse suggested that the new technology allowed filmmakers to surmount what was viewed as traditional cinema's excessive mediation. (2012: 226)

This has certainly remained true, and can be seen in the reception of *Weekend*. As Dennis Lim said of the film;

We're so used to seeing dialogue-heavy scenes edited in traditional shot-countershot style that it can be startling to watch a long, leisurely interaction that allows us to fully apprehend the chemistry and the space between two people, the thrilling fact of their being in each other's physical presence. (Lim, 2012)

This intimate ‘space between two people’ is where the viewer sits, in *Weekend*, and in the genre of youth-oriented texts that came to follow. We are made to feel hyper-aware of our own presence in *Weekend*. Particularly in moments of heightened emotional and physical intimacy, whether it's a sex-scene on the couch, a late night emotional confessional, or small moments of domestic intimacy they share in the kitchen. We are intruding - we've fallen into their personal space and we can't get out. On the cinema screen, constituted by shame, this becomes a bizarre exhibition - as if this couple's home movies have been projected up on the big-screen for the world to judge. But in the new Intimate Cinema, in one's bedroom on a PDD; this experience becomes one of shared intimacy between the viewer and the characters. We virtually share the virtual space of the third-man, the camera, who has been allowed *into* their intimate space, and the viewer in-turn, *allows Russell and Glen into their own intimate space*. We share the bed with them, whilst we sit on our own, and they on theirs inside the screen. Any uncomfortableness that results from this new ‘too close’-ness (Hall, 1966) becomes a giggly sort of bashfulness, an electric sensual tension, rather than an awareness of shame. In this new Intimate Cinema there are no other bodies around us that we must be aware of - that hyper-awareness of the ‘other’ that feeds into our sense of shame is no longer present. Instead, the viewer can be completely absorbed - *drawn in* as Stephanie Clare discusses, to the intimate space of Russell's apartment (2013: 788). It is only in the film's final scene that the camera is removed from this intimate bubble, and we are starkly reminded of shame through the act of watching. I shall return to this scene in Chapter Five.

Clare's excellent analysis of *Weekend* focuses on characterisation, finding that Russell and Glen represent wider homonormativity debates (Duggan, 2002)<sup>39</sup>, as Russell wishes ‘to fit into heteronormative institutions and values, such as marriage, whilst Glen seeks to challenge these institutions and values.’ (2013: 787). Clare's motions to the ‘real political figure’ that Russell represents. This subject is ‘drawn into’ homonormativity, through the affective experience of romantic narrative engagement. Clare finds that Russell's homonormative desires (for marriage and coupledness), offer him a ‘fantasy of happiness’, embedded in which is a ‘structure of deferment’ (Ahmed, 2010)<sup>40</sup> in which one

---

<sup>39</sup> Lisa Duggan defined homonormativity as ‘a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption’ (2002).

<sup>40</sup> Sarah Ahmed's ‘The Promise of Happiness’ and analysis of ‘unhappy queer’ narrative scripts has been widely influential. Further explorations could investigate these new QYIDNs in relation to Ahmed's happiness scripts (2010).

can feel content as long as they have access to an ‘utopian’ ‘imaginary future’ (2013: 789-790). In order to build alternate social imaginaries to homonormativity, queer theory must attend to the ‘romance’ of homonormativity, as a set of affects and emotions which frame coupledness as ‘the good life’ (2013: 787). I contend that the practice of viewing texts in Intimate Cinema spaces forms a part of this ‘affective’ experience. Homonormativity may ‘draw in’ the youthful viewer through their affective response to the romantic narrative on screen and the genre conventions of romantic narratives. However, this reading simplifies the complexities of the viewer/text interaction. If we also attend to the *function* of various viewing experiences, we can come to understand their ‘draw’ - in more nuanced ways. The ‘affective pull’ of contemporary texts lies in the intimate relationship established in the moment of interaction between viewer/screen in new spaces. The new Intimate Cinema of PDDs, offers an intimately queer safe space in which youth can engage with joyful queer stories - protectively cocooned from the reality of their daily lives. The experience of engaging with Intimate Queer Cinema could be read as a form of ‘deferred happiness’. Whilst youth may be experiencing bullying for example, these texts may provide them with a structure of deferment in order to ‘cope through escapism’ (Craig et al, 2015). However, there has been debate about such deferment strategies for queer youth, perhaps best exemplified by the ‘It Gets Better’ campaign in the USA, which was both praised and criticised for propagating this narrative (Derritt, 2012; Majkowski, 2011). However, for many LGBTQIA+ youth - deferment is the only option available, and hope may provide the most powerful tool for survival.



Figure 10. The Intimate Space between two people in Haigh's *Weekend* (2011)

## Personal Digital Devices: The Intimate Cinema of ‘Cocoons’

The mobility of PDDs presents choice in proxemic viewing space - one can *choose* between various spaces. Rather than the medium dictating and transforming spaces, as the television did, the medium travels with the viewer and any space can become a cinema. One may choose to invite friends, siblings, or lovers, to share the viewing experience, by crowding together sharing ‘personal’ space, on a couch or bed. Or, one may choose to view alone, bringing the screen into one’s ‘intimate’ zone. These viewing choices about space and social relations constitute our viewing experience even before we engage with the text. This Proxemic model can also be used to examine more complex interactions which would be seen to contradict distinctions between private/public - for example when the proxemic distance between user/screen is at odds with distinctions of private/public. Proxemics however, allows us to understand space as a flexible system of social ‘gestures’ (Goffman, 1959). We can move freely between proxemics zones, and may be outside/in, inside/out etc. For example, in a ‘public’ sphere (such as on the train), a commuter may choose to ‘cocoon’ themselves in an ‘intimate’ space by putting on their headphones and watching a video on their phone:

**Cocoons** are micro-places built through private, individually controlled infrastructures, temporarily appropriating public space for personal use... (Ito et al, 2009: 74)

Meanwhile a film viewer in the public theatre may feel ‘cocooned’ by the darkness of the cinema and their isolation from the ‘urban’ space:

It is in this urban dark that the body’s freedom is generated; this invisible work of possible affects emerges from a veritable cinematographic **cocoon**; the movie spectator could easily appropriate the silkworm’s motto: *inclusum labor illustrat*; it is because I am enclosed that I work and glow with all my desire. (Barthes, 1995: 419).

Although these texts theorise the experience and functions of different mediums, we can examine this shared ‘cocoon’ metaphor in relation to our understanding of ‘cinema’. The cinema space, for over a century, referred primarily to the auditorium, theatre, or movie hall; an ubiquitous arena that became ‘the blind spot of film theory’



(Pedullà, 2012: 7). However, drawing on this ‘cocoon’ metaphor, we can reframe the ‘cinema’ as a set of functions/uses (Couldry, 2012; Klinger 2006). That is, the ‘cinema’ may now be built by a user in the privacy of their own bedroom, or even on a train. Furthermore, what does the use of the ‘cocoon’ metaphor (rather than another kind of closed-off habitat such as a hovel, warren, cave) tell us? Compared to these other examples a cocoon is; i) Constructed for a particular purpose, ii) this purpose is to ‘glow’/grow, to undergo transformative growth, iii) it is used only by one animal and is built tightly around the individual, and iv) it is used for protection during a period of vulnerability. If we transpose these meanings across mediums we can understand ‘cinema’ as a spatial function not a singular type of space.

Let us turn to an example of extreme ‘cocooning’ in which the intimacy of the space between viewer/screen aligns with the intimacy of the private domain occupied; watching a screen text on one’s own PDD, in one’s own room, in bed - cocooned in every sense. This new Intimate Cinema is by far, the most salient example of ‘cocoon’ing to date, and shares more characteristics of the ‘cocoon’ than either the public-theatre or the PDD-in-public. Bringing one’s PDD to bed, turning off the lights, literally ‘cocooning’ oneself in soft, warm, silk-like blankets, putting headphones on, bathed in the screen-light alone ... this ‘cocoon’ is perfectly constructed by the user, isolating themselves, ensuring they feel *safe* and protected (Craig et al, 2015b)- priming themselves to ‘work’ and ‘glow’ in the dark, to undergo a transformative experience. For LGBTQIA+ youth, undergoing an intense period of identity formation, this new Intimate Cinema provides the ideal transformative cocoon in which they can engage with queer stories in a private, safe, purpose-built, cinema-for-one. As Gorman-Murray (2008) and McKinnon found; this space allows youth to *subvert* the dominant heterosexuality of the spaces around them, such as the family home or an ‘unfriendly’ neighbourhood (2016: 187)

Some key ‘Situational Variables’ of this new Intimate Cinema include:

- Private / Safe
- Intimate Distance Between Viewer/Screen
- Warmth / Comfort of Bed
- Reclined / Relaxed Body Position
- Screen at Focal Distance / Reduced Saccadic Movement
- Immersive Dark Room & Light Emanating Outwards from Screen
- Use of PDD; extension of personal thoughts - Endogenous Viewing Experience<sup>41</sup>

I outline these key variables in relation to my case study of QYIDNs as a way of illustrating some possible consequences of this new viewing space. Of key concern, is that when a PDD is brought into our ‘intimate’ space, we are *allowing* the on-screen characters *in*, and project onto this viewing experience, the same meanings ascribed to any ‘intimate’ proxemic interaction. For Hall, the key characteristic of ‘Intimate’ space, which sets it apart as a unique interpersonal interaction, is the ‘too close’-ness of vision and the primacy of multisensory engagements between bodies - such as smell, and haptic engagement. This next chapter of textual analysis, will investigate a variety of shared aesthetic qualities amongst youth-oriented screen texts, that utilise what I have called ‘Intimate Cinematography’. These examples include, soft-pastel colour palettes, immersive lighting, natural settings, water scenes, olfactory sensuality, blurry too-close-ness, and a focus on skin and haptics. I map these qualities as a way of demonstrating how new trends in aesthetics are analogous with this shift in technological medium. Whilst these aesthetic characteristics may be found outside this genre, I explore the way that they heighten the intensity of an intimate textual interaction when viewed by youth in their intimate cocoon-like cinemas.

---

<sup>41</sup> Definition: ‘Endogenous’ used throughout this thesis to mean, originating ‘within’/‘inside’, an embodied experience which feels internal.

## Chapter Four

### Intimate Cinematography in Contemporary Youth-Oriented Queer Screen Texts

#### Cocooned in Colour & Light

When using PDDs, our screen relations shift. In a traditional movie theatre, our understanding of light and the screen-world is founded on the process of light projection. Light comes from a single source, at the back of the theatre, and falls on the screen - where figures are 'lit up'. But we the audience, remain in the dark, outside the 'dancing cone' of light overhead (Barthes, 1995; 420). We remain outside this light and are 'wrapped in darkness' (Epstein, 1921: 1). In the new Intimate Cinema of PDDs however, we are *bathed in light*. The light travels in the opposite direction, from the story-world it flows outward. Alone in our bedrooms, we may be surrounded by darkness, but the light-source of the digital screen itself emanates out, falling over us. Thus, we are included, welcomed in, to the intimate space of the story-world.

Common in contemporary queer youth texts is a particular style of colour grading and lighting that contributes to this intimate aesthetic and befits new 'cocoon' spaces. Light and colour are played with in such a way that the viewer and characters alike bathe in shared light. On screen, characters are often enclosed in coloured lights (through the use of on-set coloured filters, or post-production digital colour-grading), or back-lit by natural sunlight. As this light cloaks the characters on screen - so too we are cloaked in the tinted light emanating from the digital screen. Back-lit by natural daylight, streaming through windows [Fig.11] - these youthful queer figures are not giants of the silver screen projected for public consumption and held up as icons. They are instead framed as our intimate acquaintances, caught by the light in a spontaneous, natural, moment of intimacy. In Hayley Kiyoko's music videos (Kiyoko, 2015-2017), pink lights fall upon skin, and yellow hues provide nostalgic warmth [Fig.12]. Meanwhile, in Troye Sivan's *Blue Neighbourhood* Trilogy (Tim Mattia, 2015-2016) everything is colour-graded blue, tying the series together with a sense of melancholia [Fig.13]. *Moonlight* (Barry Jenkins, 2016) too utilises coloured light in similar ways, blue moonlight reflects off young Chiron's skin, whilst

neon-pink frames his mother in a moment of aggression [Fig.14].<sup>42</sup>

However, even this pink - which appears bright neon in frame, is still a soft, muted hue, when compared to the bold use of primary colour in Rich's homo-pomo era films [Fig.15-16]. Many contemporary texts favour a softer approach, natural lighting is primarily used, and when it is not - films are colour graded in a way that everything in shot seems to be enclosed in a glowing cocoon of coloured light. Whilst digital 'filters' now dominate how youth construct and maintain a particular 'aesthetic' online, contemporary texts replicate such trends through their cinematography. It is as if images are cross-processed through a ~Soft Pastel Queer~ filter, blanketing characters and intimate spaces in cloudy blue-greys, and vintage sepia-tones. In isolation, it may seem difficult to hold up these intimate, every-day figures as queer icons as they are not projected into public spaces. Unlike the brightly coloured 'children' of *Paris is Burning*, at first glance there is nothing particularly radical about these new youthful queer characters and spaces. These soft-pastel queers are reserved and private. This Intimate Cinema is certainly 'cozy' (Rich, 2013), however, we should not be so quick to brush off 'cozy narratives' or spaces as apolitical or not 'serious'. In this intimate space, the viewer does indeed 'work' (Barthes, 1995). It is in the *act itself*, of intimate textual engagement and joyful viewing experiences, that young queer audiences may gain strength and an integral sense of self-worth. Furthermore, when contextualised in the space of the internet, these figures emerge as radical through their act of intimately 'sharing' and in the way they connect with and speak to their youthful viewers online.

---

<sup>42</sup> The thematic focus on colour can also be found in the titles of these works, such as Kiyoko's EP *Citrine*, in the title of the original play 'In the moonlight, black boys look blue' (McCraney) upon which *Moonlight* is based, as well as its colour-schemed promotional posters (which used different shades of blue and purple to differentiate between Chiron at various ages), and of course in the title of *Blue Neighbourhood* (both the album and the trilogy of music videos).

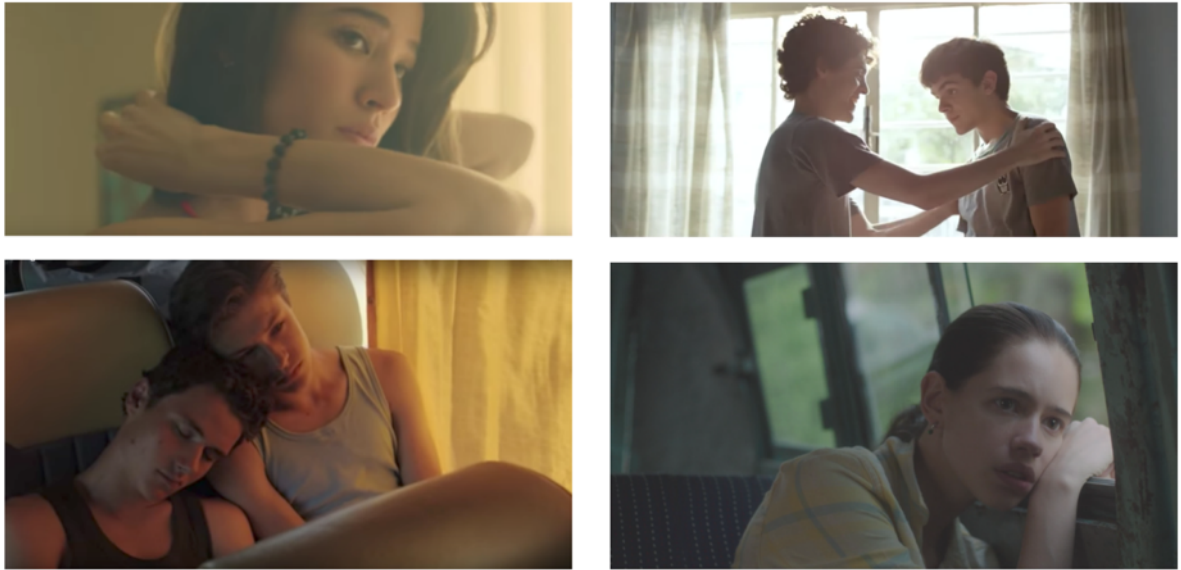


Figure 11. Capturing a moment of intimacy with natural light.  
 Selections from *Girls like Girls* (2015), *Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho* (2014), *Jongens* (2014), *Margarita with a Straw* (2014).



Figure 12. Pinks and Yellows - Selections from *Kiyoko* (2015-2017)



Figure 13. Selection from *Blue Neighbourhood Trilogy* (2015)





Figure 14. Selections from *Moonlight* (2016)



Figure 15. Homo-pomo selections: *Young Soul Rebels* (Julien, 1991), *Edward II* (Jarman, 1991), *My Own Private Idaho* (Van Sant, 1991)

*MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO* (1991)



*PARIS IS BURNING* (1990)



*MOONLIGHT* (2016)



Figure 16. Hue comparisons.

## New Contexts: Reflexivity and Online Spaces

In relation to these texts and their seemingly ‘soft-pastel’ politics, recent work on contemporary queer politics has voiced concern over an ‘ambivalence’ inherent in this shift toward ‘new virtual forms’ that ‘reveals certain migration from a need for LGBT presence in real physical social space’ (Pullen, 2010: 10). However, when contextualised in a queer-youth-online space and discourse, they offer intimate imaginaries of queer utopias and hope. In this queering of intimacy, these screen texts provide an alternative, new, space in which to construct identity privately, endogenously, and safely. They have rejected the realm of public shame that has constituted queerness for so long, and have dispensed with the binaries of ‘the closet’ which limited queer narratives to the dichotomies of ‘in/out’ and ‘homo/hetero’. By contextualising these texts, we can also examine their function as *selective* resources for queer youth who are, through online queer discourses, deeply steeped in complex understandings of queer epistemologies and criticism. Christopher Pullen finds that overall, online new media offers ‘LGBTs concerned for their identity’ a space in which to explore the ‘potential of intimacy’:

...which in the conditions of late modernity stimulates LGBT identity in new and productive ways. LGBT identity within online new media offers new scope, particularly when it is reflective, contextual, and continuously self-aware. (2010: 10)

Whilst Craig et al. found the ‘new media’:

... was seen as a space for creativity and production because of ease of accessibility and opportunities for reciprocal interaction. ... perceived as more flexible and open, and less constraining (than ‘traditional media’) ... Using new media, LGBTQ young people were able to be ongoing contributors and active participants, and were able to respond and react to and address LGBTQ issues and media messages. (2015: 42)

The online space into which these screen texts emerge is certainly, reflective and continuously self-aware. A contextual analysis of these texts demonstrates how they productively and critically engage with the potential of intimacy and other queer ‘issues and media messages’.



## Sound & 'Iteration'

Cover's work at the turn of the millennium focused on 'iteration', the analysis of dialogue, and I feel it is this focus that traps Cover, like many others, in a representation politics of good/bad queers - i.e.; characters that espouse sentiments in line with favourable contemporary politics are good and all others are bad. However, newer texts have moved away from 'iteration' toward a non-verbal, sensory exploration of queer experience - utilising cinematography and proxemics between characters to express more subtle, endogenous, expressions of character's feelings, struggles, and alignments.

For example, the moment of aggressive displayed by Chiron's mother in Moonlight [Fig.14], demonstrates an aesthetic which favours embodied experience over 'iterative' narratives. The first time this vignette plays, in slow-motion, her yelling is completely muted. What we must focus on instead, is the *feeling of being yelled at* - that embodied experience of being made to feel small as Chiron's mother seems to crowd the narrow hallway space. The second time it returns as a memory, it is replayed backwards - the word 'faggot' distorted beyond comprehension. Thus, as a viewer, we are directed toward an understanding of identity development that is not centred around iteration and 'identity politics', but toward an affective response toward a particular moment of interaction which comes to shape Chiron's queer identity in an intersubjective way.

Those iterative texts of Cover's include conversations between characters about sexual identity - various articulations of the same tired 'Am I straight!?' / 'Am I gay!?' source of narrative conflict which rely on basic binary understandings of identity categorisation. However, contemporary texts when read using proxemics and Goffman's framework of social-impressions (Meyrowitz, 1986) can be seen to explore the conflicts of identity formation as a more complex process of interactional subjectivity that is dictated by levels of social relations, that align with proxemics. Ahmed, for example, outlined identity as interactional; temporarily assigned to the subject, and 'open to contestation in the negotiation of everyday encounters'(1995). Someone may be 'out' to their 'intimate' or 'personal' relations such as friends and family, but they may choose to remain 'in the closet' in 'social' or 'public' settings, such as school. This is evident not only in these texts, but in the ways that youth reflect, on these QYIDNs. Feeling protected by the anonymity of online spaces (Bargh et al, 2002; Kuper & Mustanski, 2014) youth discuss sexual identity openly, as we can see in the type of comments left of Kiyoko's videos.

Through comment sections, as well as wider networks such as blogs/forums (such as Tumblr), youth are able to ‘reach out’. They may not be ‘reaching out’ into ‘real’ public queer spaces, but they are still able to connect. These online spaces are where much political and epistemological work is done by youth before, during, and after their encounters with these screen-texts. Just after viewing these texts, at the height of their affective response, youth may share experiences with peers in order to ‘foster community’ (Craig et al, 2015). Here for example, young viewers reflect on their own contexts, and how ‘the closet’ to them is constituted by intersubjective experiences and institutions such as school [Fig.17]..

I wish more kids in the world would understand this. Im in 7th grade and I go to a school filled with kids that are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. Being around them has made me realize that the world is so big and there is not a certain number of anything. Not one sexuality. Not one type of relationship. I'm glad I am not being raised where I am a person to hate on others for who they love. I am glad to be raised in an environment where everyone is different in the littlest ways and where I can be accepted for that. A lot of people my age just don't seem to get that.

[Show less](#)

Reply • 807  

[selected reply] I'm 13 and I'm bisexual but I haven't came out cuz everyone at my school always laughs and they tease my sister for being gay when she's not but I am and I'm scared they will do that to me to.

Figure 17. YouTube Comments on Kiyoko's *Girls Like Girls* (2015)

Within Kiyoko’s work, the way that various intersubjective contexts shape and limit youth identity, are expressed best in *Gravel to Tempo* (Kiyoko, 2016). We switch between a proxemic view of Kiyoko at a distance, keeping to herself, remaining *inside* herself, occupying no more space than bodily necessary, to her acts (imagined, we presume) of performative resistance, extending bodily *outward* though dance, into the social space of her school, and intruding into the personal space of the heteronormative girls she wishes to confront [Fig.18]. This text engages with the contemporary ‘queer dissonance’ between the desire to engage in ‘pride’/resistant acts of activism, and the desire to remain safe and sheltered. However, unlike previous genres, this ‘queer dissonance’ is expressed as internal ‘endogenous’ conflict for the young queer subject, rather than iterative forms of external conflict.



Figure 18. Playing with proxemic distance in *Gravel to Tempo* (2016)

American musician Hayley Kiyoko, along with Australian Troye Sivan, present interesting queer ‘icons’ for contemporary youths.<sup>43</sup> Both are held in high esteem for the sharing of intimate, personal queer stories that ‘speak’ to queer youth experiences; not through words/iteration but *through the act of sharing intimate embodied experiences*. The user-generated model of YouTube, for example, has made space for queer youth to express their identity and share personal experiences online, forming a strong online sense of community, openness, and belonging to a global queer youth community through shared narratives of ‘coming-out’, school bullying, first love etc. (Craig et al, 2015a; 2015b; Pullen, 2010) Sivan here, speaks about why he felt YouTube was the best platform for him, in relation to both his vlogging and music career.<sup>44</sup>

In the period where I was sort of figuring myself out, I turned to the internet ... I had, you know, anonymous accounts on every gay teen forum...I did the lot, I watched every coming-out video on YouTube and felt like I really sort of owed the internet a thank you and owed the internet my story... (2017)

Sivan’s music videos, along with the work of Kiyoko, stand out among the most popular queer screen texts on YouTube and are emblematic of an emerging intimate queer cinema and a shift in queer aesthetics.<sup>45</sup> Artists such as Sivan and Kiyoko have utilised the freedom of YouTube’s user-generated model to create music videos which focus on QYIDNs.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Sivan, began his career at the age of 12 (in 2007), making vlogs from his bedroom, singing original songs and sharing experiences of growing up queer in Australia. Kiyoko also began her career at the age of 12 (in 2007) posting music and videos on MySpace.

<sup>44</sup> Although ‘vlogging’ is not central to this thesis, the epistemologies around vlogging and YouTube form an integral part of why youth audiences connect so personally with artists like Sivan. This content is produced *in the bedroom*, creating a virtual space which is at once ‘public’ (available and shared online), yet ‘personal’. A distinctly interpersonal connection is established between the YouTube figure and the viewer - which remains *within* the ‘personal’ space of the bedroom, as the vlogger speaks from their make-shift bedroom studio, their personal belongings on display in the background, and *invites the viewer to share this space*. The viewer too, watching this video from the comfort and safety of their own bedroom, allows the trusted YouTube personality *into their intimate zone*.

<sup>45</sup> As of Sept 27th 2017: Kiyoko's videos (*Girls like Girls*, *Cliff's Edge*, *Gravel to Tempo & Sleepover*) have a combined view-count over 107 million. Sivan's *Blue Neighbourhood Trilogy* video series (including the director's cut video) have a total view-count over 98 million.

<sup>46</sup> Like most streaming platforms, when compared to their earlier broadcast counterparts, YouTube videos are not subject to strict protocols of rating systems and censorship, thus making queer content more readily accessible to youth. Of course, YouTube does still include some levels of censorship and age restrictions, protocols which have become stricter in recent years and have sparked some concern over the ‘accidental’ ‘flagging’ of safe queer content (Watson, 2017). But generally, these protocols are implemented at the level of content that is considered +18, or pornography, rather than any form of moralist or government based censorship laws in regards to queer content. And if youth do desire to watch ‘flagged’ content, one need only ‘sign in’ to ‘prove’ their age (which has zero accountability in regard to the actual age of the viewer).

By virtue of their form, these music videos contain no dialogue/iteration. Meaning is thus created through more bodily, visceral, and affective mediums of imagery and music. These videos (in keeping with the new intimate genre) do not ‘discuss’ the politics of sexuality, and are not confined by the iterative dichotomies of language structures which lead to good/bad politics of representations and binary understandings of out/in, homo/hetero sexuality. Instead, they explore QYIDNs in embodied endogenous ways.

Breaking this affective cinema of silence, in both Sivan’s *Blue Neighbourhood* and Kiyoko’s *Girls like Girls*, is the intrusion of homophobia into queer cocoons of intimacy. In both encounters, the queer couples have created for themselves an intimate zone in which they enjoy each other’s company in muted appreciation whilst the music plays over them, blanketing them in affective romance. This intimate zone is physically and emotionally disrupted by hateful interlopers, physical manifestations of homophobia, who *break in*, and pose a threat to these safe zones of youthful queer intimacy. Intimate cinematography changes quickly, from long-takes in which ‘the camera travels slowly’ (Hall, 1966: 151), showing tranquil scenes in which queer youths share intimate space, to jarringly-edited sequences in which intimate cinematography is manipulated to create a visceral sense of violence[Fig19]. In *Blue Neighbourhood*, bodily experiences of homophobic violence and queer pleasure are directly juxtaposed. Jump-cuts throw us between the feel of hands caressing and punching at intimate distance [Fig.20].<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, breaking the boundaries of intimate distance, and disrupting this tranquil quiet - these interlopers yell and scream, at close-range - shattering the conventions of intimate zones; which require only a whisper (Hall, 1966). Aside from these aural and spatial interruptions, these music-videos primarily rely on intimate cinematography to create a sense of queer intimacy between the queer youths on screen, and between the text/viewer.

The texts themselves favour these sensory experiential aesthetics, and ‘iteration’ (in the form of discussion) comes after, in the reflexive virtual spaces around them (such as YouTube comments etc.) The issues explored aesthetically through the texts are later explicitly met with reflective criticism. For example, popular YouTube channel ‘REACT’ documented the reaction of teens (both queer and not) to *Blue Neighbourhood*, who

---

<sup>47</sup> The ironies of intimate distance are made clear by Meyrowitz who stated in relation to ‘intensity’; ‘Intimate space is the distance of both lovemaking and murder!’ (1986: 261).

discussed why YouTuber personalities are able to ‘connect’ with their audience to convey important messages.

Emblematic of the wide-reaching dissemination of queer politics amongst youth online, is perhaps the fact that no reactors ‘reacted’ to the queer content of the videos until the homophobic father was introduced. Evidently, the *queerness* of this coming of age story posed no cause for comment amongst any teen viewers, until they were prompted and discussed complex issues such as the purpose of the video - which was seen to shed light on the problems of the closet, homophobia, and youth suicide. The REACT video for *Blue Neighbourhood* is just one example of the ways that contemporary texts online are no longer constituted by ‘mainstream’ media, publics, and shame, but instead by a reflective, open, user-generated online discourse (FBR, 2016).





Figure 19. Intimate Disruptions in *Girls Like Girls* (2015)







Figure 20. Intimate Pleasure and Violence in *Blue Neighbourhood Trilogy* (2016)



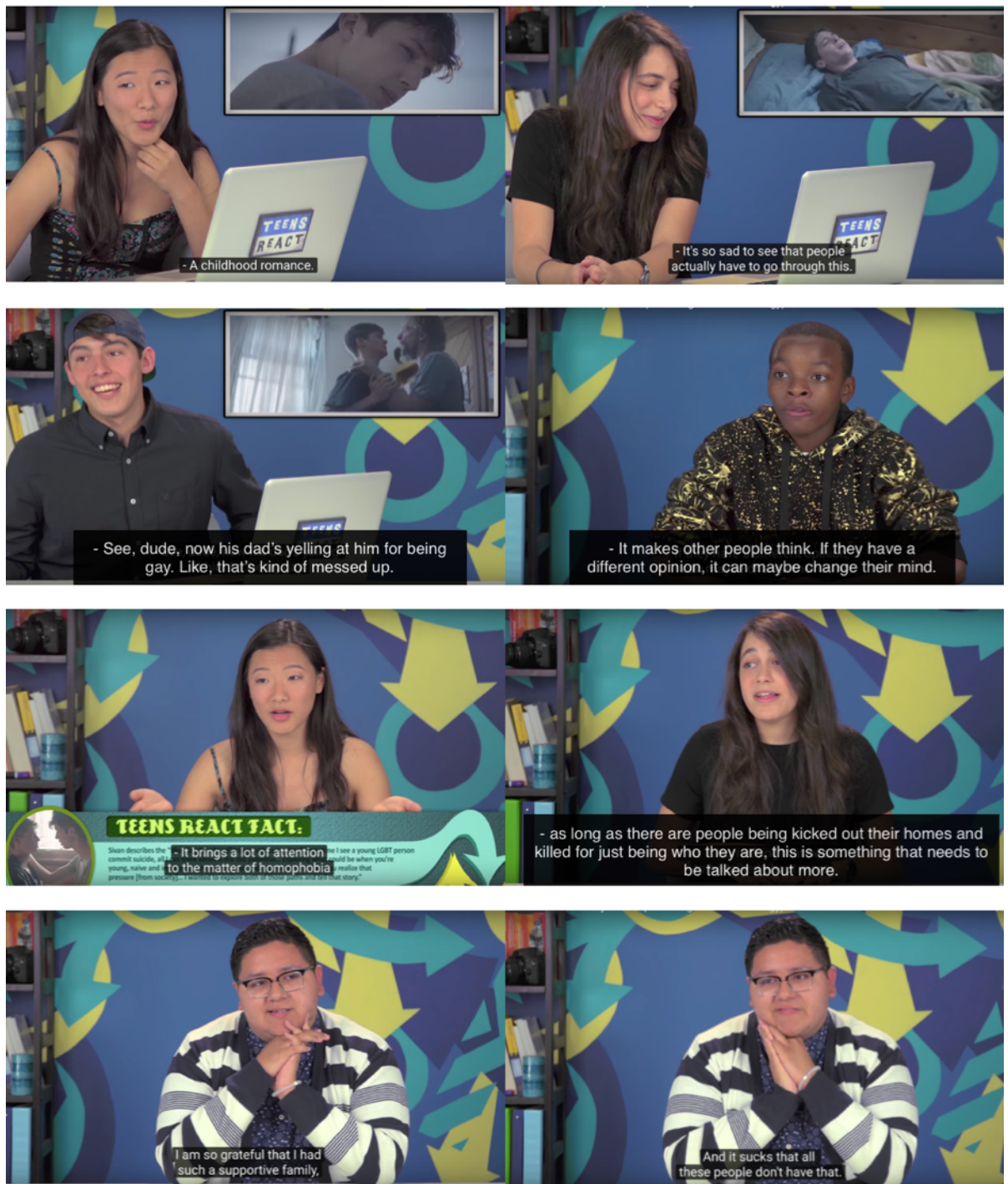


Figure 21. Teens REACT to Troye Sivan's *Blue Neighbourhood* (2016)

## Intimate Space Outside & The Queering of The Child in Nature

Two young boys play outside together, at the beach, in the bush, at the boatyard, climbing trees, playing with sticks, running, riding bikes ... a quintessential image of gendered youth identity development [Fig.22]. But such heteronormative meanings are queered in Sivan's *Blue Neighbourhood*, when the boys (now teens) kiss. This co-option of heteronormative gendered space and activities is performed by Kiyoko too, in *Girls like Girls* and *Sleepover*. The girls engage in distinctly 'girly' activities such as painting their nails, tending to their hair-and-makeup, dancing, and bathing together. However, once again such heteronormative understandings are queered when these intimate moments of girly-bonding become romantically and sensually intimate, through the use of intimate cinematography - such as slow-motion haptic close-ups.

These scenes simultaneously offer spaces of resistance and normalisation. They resist and subvert heteronormative dichotomies of gender roles and youth development by illustrating that; activities that have been understood to be an important aspect of - especially Western, white, suburban, middle-class - youth development, do not guarantee heterosexual identity. There is a resistance here; a reaction against a historical discourse of queerness which has positioned queerness as 'unnatural' - in opposition to the sublime figure of 'the child' (Angelides, 2005; Edelman, 2004). Since the Victorian era, queer sexuality has been framed as perverse, an unnatural pathology (with a source to be found somewhere in the 'nurture' phase) which was conflated with paedophilia and cast as an enemy of the divine, sublime figure of the 'the child' (Angelides, 2005). The queer subject has also been seen to embody, through the failure/refusal to breed, a 'death drive', formed in contrast to 'the child' as a symbol of futurity. (Edelman, 2004).

Through a 'queering' of 'the child' figure, and a reclaiming of these spaces and activities, these texts depict a sort of youthful queer 'return to nature'. Youth seen playing together in the outdoors, amongst nature, draped in sunlight, present an image of queerness that is pure, untouched, and unfettered from the psychoanalytic/clinical depictions of queerness as an affliction or psychopathy. Instead, through the use of proxemics in cinematography, intimate attachments in these videos grow organically, and are framed as 'natural' - a resistant co-option of the Victorian image of the sublime child. Whilst figures such as the homophobic father in *Blue Neighbourhood* are framed as abnormal disruptions which stand in opposition to the queer-child. For the liberation movement, fighting



moralists required a determined reclaiming of the eroticism, and perversions of which they were accused (Warner 2000; 2002). Whilst for queer youth today, in face of parental figures who claim, ‘You are too young to know ...’ they must reclaim youthful innocence as a *part* of their queerness, rather than something that needs protecting. *from* queerness.



Figure 22. The sublime child in nature - *Blue Neighbourhood Trilogy* (2016)

The development of intimate bonds in nature, not only positions the youthful queer subject metaphorically as ‘natural’/‘normal’, but geographically/spatially *in nature*. That is, the development of intimate relations occurs *outside* the confinement of urban and social spaces. Nature becomes a *private/intimate space* of escape. This escapism in 1990s films, may have been situated in the metropolis, the gay-bar, or Ballroom; a space for queer escape and expression away from the small-mindedness of suburbia, or the homophobia of the rural town. Traditionally, within studies of queer diaspora, it is the sparkling metropolis that has been understood to be the symbol of queer utopia and escape. The metropolis was the end-point of queer-liberal filmic narratives, the metaphoric Oz at the end of the brick-road, and this narrative shaped understandings of queer diasporas and identity development (Muñoz, 2009; Eng, 2010). However, in contemporary millennial narratives, the rural by definition is not spatially dangerous or intolerant and the internet has somewhat dismantled these binaries of rural/urban. In these new narratives, homophobia and hatred stem from societal institutions and individual people, not geographies.<sup>48</sup> Thus, even in rural or suburban areas, safety is not sought by moving *spatially inward* (to urban centres) and *bodily outward* (by connecting with communities of queer people or ‘coming out’). Rather, safety is sought by moving *spatially outward* - into nature, and *bodily inward* to cocoons of self and intimate-other (friendship/coupledom).

## Outside Queer-Liberalism

In recent years, concepts of ‘homonormativity’ (Duggan, 2002) and Queer-Liberalism (Eng, 2010) have been of key concern. Whilst the queer urban/metropolis was seen to be the goal of queer diasporas in the past; the work of David Eng, for example, has demonstrated how these spaces have been historically ‘racialized’ and privileged (ibid). Space and intimacy in relation to citizenship and queer-liberalism are discussed in depth by Eng, but I would like to point in particular to his reading of Wong Kar Wai’s film *Happy Together* (1997). By contrasting it with Ang Lee’s ‘coming-out’ narrative in *The Wedding Banquet* (1993), Eng highlights how *Happy Together* abstracts the spatial and temporal bounds of ‘the-closet’ and queer-liberal spaces.

---

<sup>48</sup> For example, in a recent Q&A episode on the ABC, Australian youth - including young Indigenous queer activist Aretha Brown - discussed (among other issues) rurality and queerness. Brown stating for example that ‘rural Victoria’ is more accepting than Melbourne. The episode was praised by one viewer for; ‘destroying the stereotype that all us country kids are homophobic idiots’ (ABC, 2017).

There is no closet from which to emerge. There is no familiar scenes of ‘coming out’, no unveiling or shedding of a past life in order to embrace the truth of (homo)sexual identity and belonging. Stranded in Argentina, there is no familial or social structure into which the indignant Lai and Ho can come out. (2010: 77)

Through the queering of heteronormative youthful activities, immersion in natural settings, and the use of intimate cinematography, contemporary youth screen texts similarly construct intimate queer spaces which are not defined by closet epistemologies. Furthermore, Eng states that Lai and Ho are not ‘on the side’ of global capital and citizenship [queer liberalism]. They do not participate in the commercial scene of global gay life as self-possessed modern liberal subjects of rights and representation [they are instead aligned with undocumented migrant labor] and thus there is no claiming of legal rights or participation in the free market (2010: 78-79). I contend that the youthful queer couples in contemporary screen texts, share this distinction with Lai and Ho. Whilst these youth-oriented texts may be more concerned with queer intimacy than with ‘sodomy and the impossibility of domesticity’ (as Eng feels *Happy Together* is) they are not complicit in queer liberalism either. Queer youth protagonists are not fully ‘citizens’, they are not yet adults, they cannot vote, marry, engage in markets, own a home, owe a mortgage. These concerns that are so central to queer liberalism do not concern queer youth, who remain - temporarily - outside this structure. Thus, ‘intimacy’ in youthful texts is not understood in terms of legal/economic rights, but in relation only to the body, space, and intersubjective affective relations. Although ‘familial and social structures’ (Eng, 2010: 77) surround these youthful figures, they refuse to conform to the ‘honesty imperative’ (Cover, 2000) of ‘coming-out narratives’ (Bronski, 2000; Nowlan, 2006). Instead, youth construct new queer spaces for themselves and intimate-others that reject the constructs of both hetero- and homonormative narratives.

## Water & Intimate Immersion

In contemporary queer screen texts, water too forms a cocoon of youthful play and queer intimacy. Furthering a sense of immersion; water mutes, blurs, and cushions queer characters from the outside world. Advancements in, and accessibility to, water proof camera technology has allowed for an increase in water based scenes,<sup>49</sup> which are common to nearly every youthful queer screen text of the last few years. Scenes *in and under water* create an isolating, safe, cocoon-like space; a womb-like bubble around the protagonists who play, swim, splash, and enjoy moments of isolated intimacy. Sound design is key here, the splashing, trickling, bubbling, and submerged muted-ness of the water is heightened, especially when one is wearing headphones. Once again, when viewed in the new Intimate Cinema of PDDs, the viewer is not only intimately close, but *enclosed within* intimate distance, submerged with the characters.

The extremely popular Norwegian web-series *Skam* (Andem, 2016)<sup>50</sup> includes a swimming pool scene that is emblematic of water scenes in contemporary texts. This scene also makes intertextual references and draws on the embodied experience of watching a movie in new intimate spaces, exploring how this relates to contemporary queer youth experience and identity development. Isak, undergoing a transformative phase of identity development, looks to the internet on more than one occasion as a resource; in a range of scenes in which we are allowed access to his laptop, sitting in-between the intimate space between Isak and the screen, we watch his identity formation play out in internet searches (for example, taking ‘Gay Tests’ online etc.). But in one particular sequence it is to experience a film. During a session of social-media ‘stalking’ on his laptop, Isak finds out that Even’s (the object of his affection’s) favourite film is Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet* (1996). Isak promptly downloads the film on iTunes and watches it on his laptop in bed. A montage cuts together Isak’s emotional reaction to the film, a scene which highlights in both humorous and emotionally affective ways, the intimate experience of watching a film alone. As Isak is absorbed in the film, we move into his intimate space, placed at the same

---

<sup>49</sup> Which have become readily accessible since the margin of price between what is considered professional and commercial / amateur grade cameras has been reduced. A waterproof GoPro for example can be purchased for R.P. of around \$200 AU.

<sup>50</sup> Produced by NRK-P3 (Norway’s National Broadcaster’s youth station), *Skam* was released online scene-by-scene throughout the week and engages with users across social-media. It was created based on research conducted into what content Norwegian youth were seeking (through interviews at schools, online data-analysis etc.) This thesis refers primarily to Season 3, which focused on Isak’s narrative (2016).



intimate distance of the screen from his face - we even catch the blue light of the screen reflected in a tear on his cheek [Fig.23].

Later, *Romeo + Juliet*'s famous swimming pool scene is paid homage, when Isak and Even break into a private pool for a midnight dip [Fig.24]. The water laps up against the camera as they joke and swim around, before they conduct a 'holding your breath competition'. As the music from Luhrmann's pool scene plays, the two share their first kiss - underwater.



Figure 23. Isak watches *Romeo + Juliet* from his Intimate Cinema.



Figure 24. Isak and Even's 'holding your breath competition'.

Once again, we share in this immersive space, as a pool light glistens through the water, bathing the viewer in this shared light. Floating in an other-worldly space they, like Romeo & Juliet, are isolated from the complicated and overbearing politics of the ‘real’ world. Their embodied experience of engaging with this romantic film translates to their own experience of first-love, where the texts’s narrative is used as a script for identity formation. This scene, and the format of the web-series *Skam* more generally, is also interesting in the way it engages with youth ‘digitextuality’ (Everett, 2003). That is; the importance of intertextual understanding in online texts, and the ability to connect, link, ‘click through’. *Skam* engages with, and utilises, the meta-textual online space around itself - in a digital form of *mise en abîme*. Whilst Isak’s identity formation is shaped by his experiences online, *Skam* provides a convergent/intertextual experience for viewers, through the social-media accounts set up for the characters, and the texts that are shared there - including, for example, a home-video made by Even for Isak entitled; ‘The boy who couldn’t hold his breath underwater’ (Vanderley, 2017)<sup>51</sup>. *Skam*’s format illustrates how contemporary texts are able to engage with youth discourses online, in more prevalent ways than texts which were slowed down by the production/distribution models of more ‘traditional’ mediums. This ability for the text itself, in a way, to communicate directly with viewers further creates a sense of intimacy between the viewer/text.

A particular discussion between Isak (who voices some fairly misogynistic opinions about not being “‘gay”-gay’ even though he’s in a same-sex relationship) and Eskild (his roommate who openly identifies as queer), gained high-circulation online, and engaged with the dissonance around contemporary Pride discourse [Fig.25]. Through the reflexive nature of online youth cultures, the discourse surrounding *Skam* makes evident the ways that youth audiences engage critically with complex queer discourse. Whilst Isak and other youth may immerse themselves in intimate cocoons for brief periods, this practice does not need to negate their ability to engage with wider politics. This scene was praised by audiences online for facing up to ‘internalised homophobia’/ ‘heterosexism’ which is common amongst LGBTQIA+ youth (Szymanski et al. 2008). Continuing this blurring of textual boundaries, and the reflexive nature of *Skam*; the actors Tarjei Sandvik and Carl Eggesbø (Isak and Eskild) appeared at Pride Oslo and, along with producer Marianne Furevold, accepted the ‘Frydprisen’ [Fig.26] award for ‘breaking

---

<sup>51</sup> Translation of original title: *Gutten som ikke klarte å holde pusten under vann*

gender/sexuality norms' (NRK, 2017; Linnéa, 2017). This demonstrates just one way that, through intimate textual engagement, youth may 'reach out'/explore wider queer discourse.

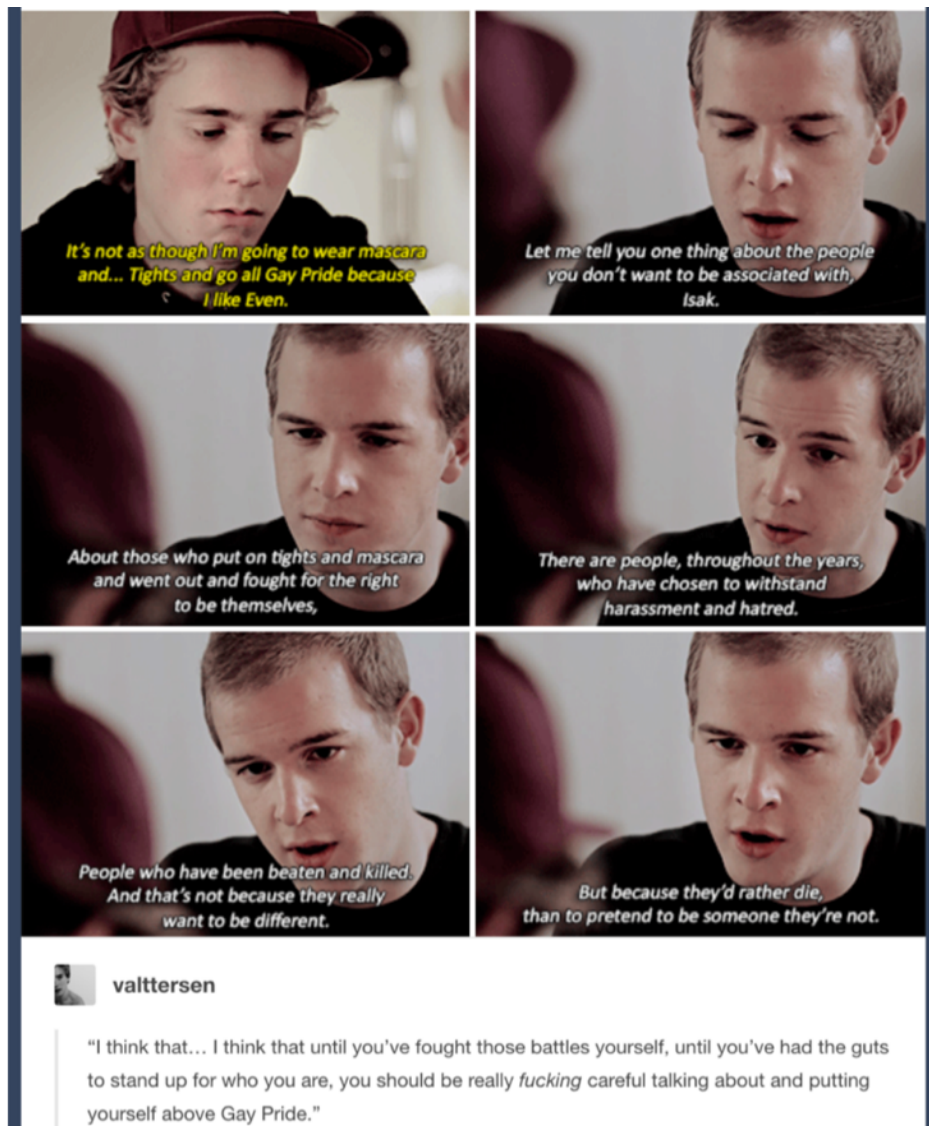


Figure 25. Eskild teaches Isak about the importance of Pride.

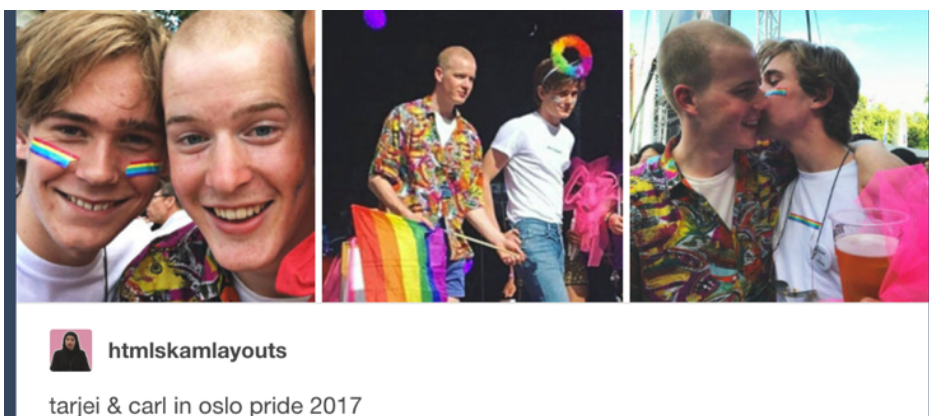


Figure 26. Social Media posts - the *Skam* cast at Pride Oslo.

Furthermore, textured shots of sand, as well as high-definition close-ups of water droplets on skin in these texts are not dissimilar to Hall's analysis of *Suna no Onna* and the way that skin and the form of the body take on 'landscape' qualities at intimate distance. Such scenes can be found across a range of contemporary queer texts, including *San Junipero* (Harris, 2016),<sup>52</sup> in which the feeling of sand on bare feet is directly associated with a queer utopia. In 'reality', Yorkie's body is debilitated and she is trapped in a bed at a palliative-care centre. However, in the VR world, she is able to experience freedom, and bask in even the smallest details of sensual experience. We sense her feelings of relief, joy, and serenity when she visits this virtual reality coastal paradise where she enjoys an intimate queer connection with Kelly. The tide gently pulls at her ankles, as her feet sink into the wet sand, and we can almost feel the gritty texture of this sand as she squelches it in her hand [Fig.27].

In the Dutch feature *Jongens* (Kamp, 2014) a young sports-team play together in a river in rural Netherlands. This social activity becomes intimate after most of the boys go home, leaving the protagonists alone together. Contrasting the loud, splashing sequence before it, the water calms, as Marc and Sieger float together and share their first kiss. Shot from above - we feel a sense of floating too, hovering above the intimate space they have created [Fig.28]. This scene also contextualises their sexuality and intimacy firmly alongside/inside 'rural' space. The shape created by their bare shoulders, is in keeping with an overall style in *Jongens* which focuses on this 'too close' 'landscape of skin'. As Sieger struggles with familial pressures and his own identity development, we are brought endogenously into his space as he obsesses over haptic routine such as fidgeting and working-out in his room at night [Fig. 29]. In keeping with the conditions of intimacy, these scenes involve no 'vocalisation' (Hall, 1966) or noise, save for the gentle sounds of water or Sieger's breath. We are directed to focus on the embodied experience of swimming, floating, stretching, breathing and the interpersonal space between two people. We do not watch from a far, but are involved in this sensory zone. Again intimate cinematography viewed 'up close' in sharp detail produces an intense multi-sensory experience for the viewer who feels *as if* they could reach through the screen that sits so close and brush the skin of the character, or feel the texture of the water and sand.

---

<sup>52</sup> Episode 3x04 of British series, *Black Mirror* (Charlie Brooker, 2011 -). *Black Mirror* episodes are stand-alone. *San Junipero* was directed by Owen Harris.





Figure 27. Yoriki arrives on San Junipero beach (2016).

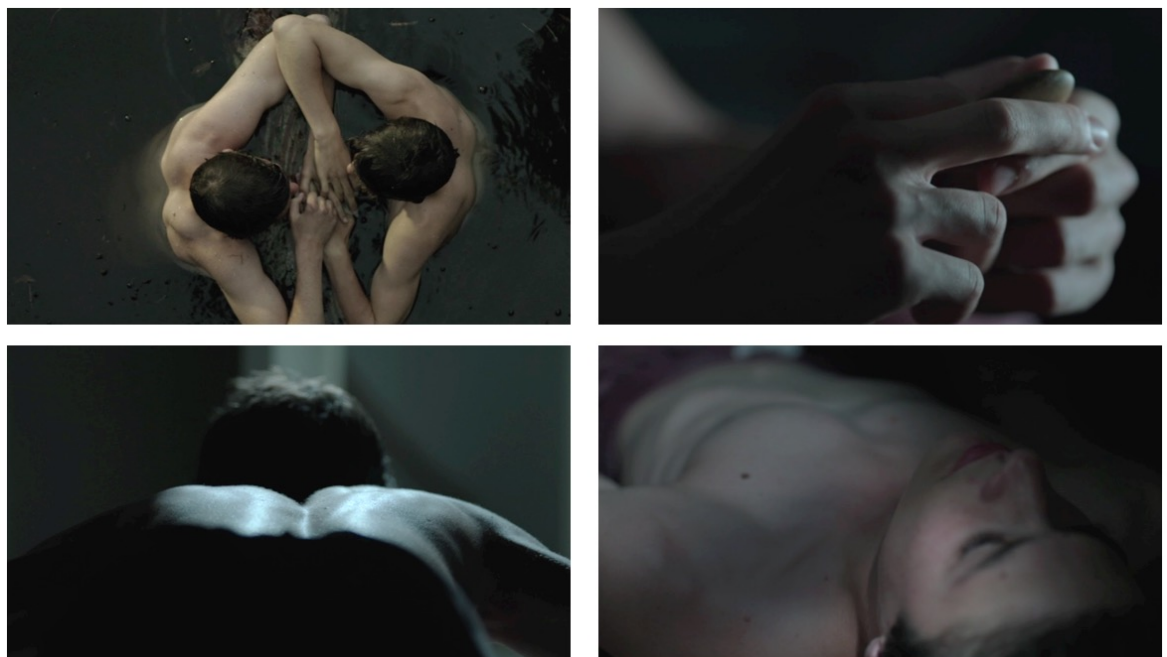


Figure 28. Landscapes of skin in *Jongens* (2014).

A similar moment of rural defiance, comes at the end of *Boy Meets Girl* (Eric Schaeffer, 2014), when Ricky unveils her trans body for the first time.<sup>53</sup> Growing up in small-town Kentucky, Ricky's QYIDN is first played out through her computer where, as a young adolescent, she kept vlog diaries. Later, she becomes comfortable with her gender identity and, gaining confidence, she moves outward and explores her sexual identity development through various relationships. In the penultimate scene, at their favourite spot by the river, her childhood friend Robby confesses his love for her. Naked as Venus, she emerges from the river, refusing to conform to simple male/female gendered body binaries. Her trans body does not stand in opposition to the natural realm, it is framed as a sublime part of it - the moonlight shining on her bare skin. Rather than framing 'first-time' experiences of queer intimacy within queer publics and sites of urban queer metropolis, these new intimacies are framed as *outside* and *rural*. Queerness is no longer privileged to the urban, but is open to any - and going to a gay-bar for the first time, or 'coming out' are no longer considered prerequisites of a QYIDN. Instead, distinctions of public/private are complicated by these texts which play with intimacy in outside, natural settings.

Water in *Moonlight* (2016), again becomes key to a young queer protagonist's identity development. From early scenes which depict Chiron's isolation, drawing himself a bath, and sitting alone - dwarfed in the frame surrounded by cold tiles - to learning to swim, being safely held afloat 'in the middle of the world' by Juan - the water lapping up against the camera [Fig.29] - to his first (and we later discover, only) encounter of sexual intimacy with Kevin on the beach. This scene with Kevin,<sup>54</sup> in keeping with the trend of these new queer texts, centres not on an explicit sexual act, but on other haptic moments that make up this intimate interpersonal interaction. This sequence moves through a series of close-ups at an intimate distance, from Kevin's hand on his neck, to the richly textured shot of Chiron's hand grabbing onto the sand [Fig.30]. This shot is 'sensual' in the way it mediates a haptic sensory response for the viewer; we can almost 'feel' the texture of sand on skin. It is also 'sensual' as an erotic metaphor, as it conveys Chiron's pleasure and substitutes the need for any 'money shot' so to speak. This focus on moments of shared haptic intimacy, is evidence of a politic of sexual identity development in which the genitally 'sexual' is secondary to alternative 'sensual' elements of queer intimacy. We

---

<sup>53</sup> I would like to note that, unlike many recent films about characters who are trans, Ricky is not played by a cis-male in drag, but is portrayed by a young trans actress, Michelle Hendley. This aids in its naturalistic aesthetic style, there is nothing performative or camp about her portrayal.

<sup>54</sup> Not only did the film win the Academy Award for Best Picture, but this scene was voted 'Best Kiss' at the MTV movie awards, notably voted for predominantly by teen audiences. Perhaps further evidence of a queering of the distinctions between the margins/mainstream.

return to this sensory experience in the texts final scenes. Reunited, Chiron and Kevin return to this same intimate shape [Fig.31]. This scene is overlayed with the distant sound of the tide lapping at the shore - conjuring this sensory experience again for the audience and asserting the primacy of this singular intimate connection for Chiron's identity.



Figure 29. Juan teaches Chiron to swim in *Moonlight* (Jenkins, 2016)



Figure 30-31. Sensual Haptics between Chiron and Kevin (ibid).

## Fluidity

This focus on the non-genital elements of sensuality and sex are emblematic of a shift in queer youth politics, away from binary definitions of homo/hetero toward a more fluid understanding of identity. Ironically, in these texts, youthful sexuality is not defined by sex. In the majority of contemporary texts, characters form intimate queer bonds in which 'sex' (neither the definition of biological difference, or the act) is rarely an element. As this thesis has outlined, contemporary texts focus on embodied sensory experience and bodies in space. Intimate spaces are created between these bodies, which are distinctly queer yet are also able to avoid shallow identity politics. They are made accessible to youth audiences through their engagement with contemporary notions of queerness that have expanded beyond binary limitations. Today's queer youth discourse is one of openness and fluidity, in which queerness has come to include sexual and gender identity outside binary understandings of homo/hetero. The LGBTQIA+ epithet itself acknowledges this and discussions of the fluid nature of gender and sexuality are common-place among youth in online spaces who have proliferated a kind of grass-roots lexicon that is continuously adjusted to allow room for growth and adaptation, and is made 'critically queer' (Butler, 1993) by the reflexive nature of the internet. Driven by youth, this movement has reached beyond the virtual realm, blurring the boundaries between the margins/mainstream. This is perhaps best demonstrated on the cover of National Geographic's 'Gender' edition, in which a diverse group of queer youth are branded icons of a 'Gender Revolution' [Fig.32]. Identities such as asexuality and demisexuality are of particular interest here. It is evident that, for many youths who identify as queer - it is not a Freudian sex-based definition of sexuality that determines their identity or 'otherness', but rather their rejection of it altogether. Youth today, for whom sex may not be of key concern, have turned to texts which focus on diverse depictions of queer intimacies. These intimate connections come in a range of forms, their only uniformity being in their depiction of queer bodies in space.



SPECIAL ISSUE  
THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF GENDER

# NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC GENDER REVOLUTION



Figure 32. Photograph by Henry Leutwyler (2017)

## Haptics & Sensuality

Within this genre of contemporary queer screen texts, there has been a push away from binary understandings of gender (boy/girl) and sexuality (homo/hetero), and a move toward more Intersectional approaches to queer experience and identity.<sup>55</sup> *Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho* (Ribero, Brazil, 2014) and *Margarita With A Straw* (Bose & Maniayar, India, 2014), both centre around protagonists, for example, whose identity and embodied experience is not only defined by gender/sexual identity, but by disability. Leonardo (HEQVS) is blind, whilst Laila and Khanum (MWAS) have cerebral palsy and are blind, respectively. Aside from the representation politics of these texts,<sup>56</sup> and connections between disability and queerness (McRuer, 2006; Narduzzi, 2011), key to this thesis is the way that blindness, in particular, shifts the sensory focus of these texts away from sight, or 'optics' (Marks, 2000). By virtue of a character's blindness, these texts provide some of the most dynamic instances of haptic sensory engagement in intimate aesthetics. They include many intimate shots of non-sexual touch that are a vital part of communication for individuals who are blind. Touch is key, from the touch of hands to guide one's fingertips over brail, a guiding hand on an arm, or the delicate tracing of a face [Fig.33 - Fig.34]. In these moments, the camera is brought into intimate space, and we gain an almost tangible sense of skin, or the material of a shirt. Furthermore, these haptics moments are played out slowly and background noise often distorted/softened/muted - highlighting the cocoon like effect of intimate distance, in which the outside world seems to fade into the background, and the intensity of haptic engagement is heightened.

Whilst our perceptual experiences result from audio-visual sensory information, they are mediated through the text, and become multi-sensory in their final perceptual result (Antunes, 2016: 20). In moments of 'haptic engagement', we only experience audio-visual stimulus on screen, but this stimulus makes reference to senses other than sound and sight. It references, for example, to the senses of touch and smell - which, in Hall's intimate zone, are key components of communication that are not engaged at other proxemics distances. We cannot literally reach into the screen and touch the skin of another figure. But through i) the text's detailed referents to the texture of the figure's skin, ii) by virtue of the screen's closeness, and ii) our phenomenological understanding of the

---

<sup>55</sup> Definition: Intersectional here in its most commonly/generally used form i.e.; we must acknowledge the 'intersections' of social oppressions including e.g.; race, economic position, disability, etc. and their effects on subjectivities. (Crenshaw, 1989).

<sup>56</sup> Avoiding representation politics, I have not discussed here the problematic representations of characters with disabilities being played by able-bodied actors, though I take personal issue.

PDD device, we perceive and feel *as if we could/should* reach out and touch ... but we cannot. Thus, it is in this moment of sensory engagement that we experience the electric feeling of tension of *not quite touching* when another person is sharing our intimate space. Thus, for youth watching such texts in the new cocoon-like intimate cinemas, the intensity of sensory engagement is heightened and the viewing experience becomes deeply affective, personal, and sensual.



Figure 33. *Margarita with A Straw* (Bose & Maniyar, 2014),



Figure 34-35. *Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho* (Ribero, 2014)

Such moments of haptic engagement are not limited only to these texts, but can be found in nearly every contemporary queer text I have identified across this new genre. Although, the narrative device that permits such high-rates of contact may vary. *Jongens* for example, uses sport rather than disability to pretence haptic engagement between same-sex characters. Sieger and Marc are members of an athletics team, and early moments of haptic engagement are filmed in dynamic and augmented ways to increase a feeling of closeness and immersion, so that the viewer may share this intimate space. The camera does not watch from afar, but is underneath, above, and within their cocoon of intimate connection and sensual tension. This is also another example of a queering/co-option of heteronormative gendered youthful activities. The rubbery feel of the running track, the sense of weightlessness achieved jumping on a trampoline, and the static-electricity of its surface - the texture of these moments is all communicated to the audience [Fig 36]. The use of intimate close-ups, a slow frame-rate, and the distinctions between blurry/sharp focus in the same shot (easy achievable on a digital camera) replicate the 'unmistakable' visual cues of intimate distance (Hall, 1966:116). We can relax *into* these moments, to savour the texture of these objects and figures on screen. These haptic moments of youthful sport and play are transformed and queered - scrutinised through close-ups, held up to the light, inflated and filled with intimate sensual tension.

*Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho* explores scenes of endogenous sensual experience for Leonardo, whose sensory experience does not involve vision. Whilst this film, like most others of this emerging genre, does not include a 'sex-scene', it includes a scene of intimate, personal, sensual-experience in which Leonardo, en-clothes himself in Gabriele's (his love-interest) hoodie, immerses himself in Gabriele's scent and masturbates. Fantasy and sensuality are embodied, through the desire to immerse oneself in the scent of another person - as a way of simulating the sensations encountered at intimate distance. Leonardo's dreams also communicate to the audience, his experience of the world which is focused on the shape of bodies and the feel of skin. This scene is visualised for the audience through a montage of haptic moments - a blurry, 'landscape of skin' illuminated by white light in the dark [Fig.35]. The composition of these scenes, which develop Leonardo's sexual identity, do not involve a voyeuristic erotic depiction of sex. Instead, this use of intimate cinematography explores the nuances of sensual experience - through an embodied representation of the deeply personal, non-visual, non-verbal, elements of proxemics. As Riberio stated, blindness raises questions and complicates an understanding of sexual identity based on gender difference (Turner, 2015). Furthermore, this aesthetic style is



leaning toward an endogenous cinema experience that was predicted at the turn of the millennium, in relation to the possibilities of digital film practices. Ariel Rogers, highlights these predictions that we may now reflect on. For example, a statement made by Steven Spielberg in 2002 in which he predicted; ‘Someday the entire motion picture will take place inside the mind. It will be the most internal experience anyone can have.’ (2012: 222). Although we are not quite there, we can see how the intimate aesthetics of these endogenous style scenes, when viewed on a private PDD (which is already shaped by epistemologies of ‘mind/body extension’), feel more *internal* than external.



Figure 36. Selections from *Jongens* (Kamp, 2014)

Kiyoko's *Sleepover* also provides an intimate depiction of internal fantasy. Set in her bedroom - the protagonist (Kiyoko) sings about an unrequited love for her friend whilst on screen her fantasies of a shared intimacy, are contrasted with detached shots of her isolation in reality. Intimate close-ups are filmed so close here, that stretch-marks on skin come into focus. 'Girly' activities are again tinted with queer sensuality in a milky-pink bath [Fig.37]. In *Girls like Girls* too, hyper-femininity is queered through intimate, textured, haptic close-ups, particularly, the sticky texture of lip-gloss [Fig.37]. A primary similarity in aesthetics across most contemporary queer texts is the way these scenes of haptic engagement are shot, they are not just close, they also make reference to real visual perception at intimate distance. For example, the focus is brought in and out repeatedly. This, in conjunction with a slow moving camera and a slow frame-rate, replicate the 'blurry'/'too close-ness' of intimate distance (Hall, 1966: 117).

Integral to Kiyoko's popularity and eminence amongst queer youth online, is perhaps her role as the director of her music videos. Whilst I have aimed to avoid, where possible, delving into representation politics, we cannot overlook Kiyoko's directorial role.<sup>57</sup> Authorial 'intent' in this thesis is superfluous to a reading of these texts, however it does come into play when the author themselves becomes visible to the viewer / forms a part of the text in a meta/intertextual sense. As online personas, Kiyoko and Sivan have constructed narratives around their own identity formation, as relatable queer youth sharing their personal stories. The distinctions between these figures as fictional/real are blurred as Kiyoko and Sivan both feature as the protagonists of their own music videos. Thus, these QYIDNs relate to the 'real political figure' (Clare, 2013: 788) of the youthful queer subject in more forceful ways than *Weekend*. Kiyoko's role as director is in many ways, a part of her work - it is clearly written on the screen [Fig.38]. This forms a part of her appeal for young queer audiences who may identify with her work more personally/intimately knowing this. In keeping with the user-generated model of YouTube, (and the wider grass-roots, one-to-many, politics of youth online) Kiyoko is herself is framed as young queer artist, willing to share intimate stories of her own identity development with other queer youth. By contextualising these works within both Intimate Cinema spaces (where they are

---

<sup>57</sup> It is for this reason that I omitted East-Asian texts from this thesis. There has been a plethora of popular queer-youth texts emerging online in recent years (particularly from Thailand) many of which fit this aesthetic genre. However, for the majority of viewers (due to the sites on which these texts are distributed) these texts cannot be read outside their virtual cultural context as either BL/YAOI fan-produced texts, or as prohibited (e.g. in China). These texts serve a social function and may be part of identity development for some youth. Overall this function aligns more with 'fandom' cultures - which have been thoroughly researched within that sub-discipline.

viewed) and the online realm (where they are distributed and reflected upon), we can begin to understand their function. We can no longer sit in the shadows of the ‘dark cube’ with our backs to the light and examine a text in isolation. Facing the light, we must now turn our attention to the illuminated spaces around us. This includes our own cinemas (the spaces from which we view), as well as the space inside the screen (the virtual realm of the text).



Figure 37. Selections from *Kiyoko* (2015-2017)



Figure 38. Opening titles from *Kiyoko* (2015-2017)

## Chapter Five

### The Possibility of Intimate Queer Spaces

Nowlan found that the ‘impossible spaces’ depicted in late-90s romantic ‘coming-out’ films offered a form of ‘wish fulfilment’ for queer audiences (2006: 148). Drawing on Hennessy (2000) & Kelsh (2000) and the concept of Utopianism, Nowlan granted that ‘utopian dreaming can make a valuable and indeed necessary contribution to progressive social transformation’ (2006: 149). However, according to Nowlan, utopian visions must provide the basis for working toward actual realisation of these projections and in his opinions, this film genre leans in favour of a voluntarist conception of gay political praxis. These coming out stories were symptomatic of a larger problem with ‘mainstream’ texts that were forced to carry the mantle of being ‘overtly political’ as well as being art (Bronski, 2000). In response to broader political climates, artists felt that they had to promote ‘positive images’ of queer life on the ‘big screen (ibid). However, today streaming services and user-generated mediums allow artists to explore a wider range of queer stories than ever before. Whilst there may be common trends, as I have identified, these are more a sign of audience/community demand, a direct engagement with contemporary trends in political discourse made possible through online platforms. *Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho*, for example, was originally released as a short-film on YouTube. The short gained millions of views, and due to its popularity online Ribeiro was able to gain fundraising for a feature-length film.<sup>58</sup> Drastic changes in distribution models have altered not only the industry logistics and economics of queer cinema, but have made possible a new cinema space, in which artist and viewer may interact more directly. This too, aids in the feelings of intimacy for the youthful viewer who may feel more personally involved / connected with the production of queer media.

Furthermore, the spaces constructed within contemporary texts are no longer ‘impossible’. These intimate spaces are not constrained by age-restrictions, geographies, or institutionalised structures. They require no outside influence, or particularly privileged resources. These texts depict a diverse range of youthful queer protagonists who are able to construct *for themselves*; utopic queer spaces. They do not even mandate particular identity development scripts such as ‘coming out. This rejection of in/out binaries around closet epistemologies and public/private sphere can be found both in aesthetics of contemporary

---

<sup>58</sup> The original short *Eu Não Quero Voltar Sozinho* (Riberio, 2010), the success of which allowed Riberio to gain funding which he seeded into a feature project (Turner, 2015; Walker-Dack, 2014).



screen texts, and in the uses and functions of viewing spaces according to proxemic understandings. Youthful viewer's choices of identity management can now be met by the range of viewing spaces available. Based on one's own circumstance, one viewer may feel comfortable watching a queer film in their 'intimate cinema', but would not feel safe attending a public movie theatre or queer film festival. Intimate Cinema offers a unique intersubjective experience, that is; the lack of negotiation necessary in private and the affective draw of the cocoon. Rather than being met with the 'looking back' of shame, or of public 'others' in a movie theatre, or social setting, intersubjectivity occurs directly between the text/screen/viewer. Cocooned in bed, youth are safe and free to *formulate their own subjectivity* based on their personal experience and affective responses to the text and characters on screen. There is no 'identification assigned to the subject' by others (Ahmed, 1995). Thus, *this new Intimate Cinema space may provide, in a sense, the most neutral space in which to endogenously explore one's own identity.*<sup>59</sup>

## **'Let's Escape'**

Some, though not all, of these texts may utilise 'homonormative'/'romantic' tropes - in the sense that two individuals meet at the beginning of the story and come together to form a 'couple' by the end. However, even those that do so, explore these intimate connections in more nuanced ways that engage with contemporary youth discourse around sexuality and love, that have moved beyond the binaries of the closet and homo/hetero toward more intersubjective understandings of queer identity development. As I have discussed in relation to Eng's queer liberalism - youthful characters and audiences remain outside the structures of 'homonormative coupledness' as they cannot partake in marriage etc. Similarly, in both homo/heteronormative coupledness scripts, 'love' and sex are key markers of coupledness. However, the lack of public 'coming-out' love declarations or sex-acts in youthful narratives complicates this. Moreover, perhaps what reflective online cultures demonstrate, is the way that youth are 'continuously self-aware' - they do not simply 'take-up' these QYIDNs as expectations or paths for their futures, but instead employ Intimate Cinema as a tool, a space of escape in which they can enjoy a brief reprieve or reflect on their own experiences. Whilst 'homonormativity' in adult citizens may be viewed as the antithesis of queer activism, when considering youth, these same ideas become a vital form of what Jose Esteban Muñoz would call 'queer futurity' which

---

<sup>59</sup> Of course, as 'cocooned' as these spaces may be, they do not exist in a cultural vacuum, and I do not mean to suggest that these viewing experiences are completely disentangled from outside influence. However, the sense of safety and isolation is key, I believe, to the attraction and popularity of these new viewing modes.

offers in its viewing, an affective experience of hope, blissful escape, joy, and affirmation. Clare too draws on Muñoz, as well as Foucault's declaration; '*Let's escape as much as possible from the type of relations which society proposes for us and try to create in the empty space where we are new relational possibilities.*' (2000: 160). That is; 'the imaginary of a space that is at once separate from the public sphere and yet not lonely' (2013: 788-790). Certainly, contemporary texts have replicated this 'imaginary space', as I discussed, particularly through their use of intimate outside/inside spaces in which youthful queer friends/couples escape to the empty spaces of nature. The new intimate cinema of bedroom cocoons provides an escapist cinema space in which youth can develop new relations to screen texts and form new queer imaginaries.

The focus of these texts is on queer intimacy, in which individuals who have felt isolated may find safety, intimacy, and a connection outside the realms of heteronormativity. Thus, these stories appeal to a wider more 'fluid' desire for intimacy and human-connection for any queer audience member, regardless of gender or sexual identity.<sup>60</sup> As I have discussed in relation to proxemics and haptics, scenes of physical intimacy are focused on sensuality, for example, the feel of skin - or in *Moonlight*, the feel of sand. At the end of *Moonlight*, we learn that Kevin was 'the only man' Chiron 'ever touched'. Chiron's sexual identity is thus not defined by sex with men, but by his intimate connection with, and desire for, one man - Kevin. His desire and identity is built around the rare intimate connections he makes, with Juan in the water and with Kevin on the beach, these intimate connections profoundly shape his identity. The bullying that Chiron suffers as a child is also put down, by his mother, to his queerness - a queerness that comes to define his experience long before any sexual encounters. Youth, as queer figures before sexual development, thus throw particular foundational elements of queer theory into disarray. That is, a sex centred politics, as stipulated for example by Warner, tends to examine adult queer lives in isolation and overlooks youth entirely. We tend to forget that queer folk do not simply slide down the rainbow one day and sprout wings - we were all once queer children. The emerging genre of youthful queer texts reject this notion of queerness as an exclusively adult anti-child category. This recent trend in queer texts which focus on queer youth declares the existence of queer youth, who have so often been overlooked in queer theory. For how can 'the queer' and 'the child' stand in opposition

---

<sup>60</sup> Not to be confused with 'universal' appeal, these stories remain distinctly queer. As discussed in relation to *Brokeback Mountain*, contemporary texts are not attempting to reach 'mainstream' heterosexual audiences - they are produced and distributed online, remaining for the most part (aside from *Moonlight* for example) within queer niche audiences.

when we consider the existence of ‘the queer child’? If queer theory wishes to make plans for queer futures, we must look to our youth and examine how they are engaging with queer politics in these important formative years.

## Queer Utopias

Intimate Queer Cinema practices represent just one element of youthful political engagement. Youth are creating for themselves intimate queer spaces in which they can engage with imaginary queer spaces in a cocoon of safety. And it is this intimate imaginary space that contemporary texts most consistently reproduce. Youth watching new queer screen texts in their cocoons, may ‘escape’ to use Foucault’s term, for the duration of the text, into a utopian world of queer intimacy. Utopian, not in the sense of ideal/perfect, but in Muñoz’s anti-death-drive sense of queerness as ‘a longing that propels us onward’. For Muñoz, ‘queerness is not yet here...We may never touch queerness. but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality.’ (2009: 1) These texts simultaneously engage in the present and the ‘social realities’ that confront queer youth on the ‘outside’, such as isolation, depression, bullying, and abuse, whilst constructing a utopic vision of queerness which offers an experience of closeness.

These alternate queer utopic spaces come in a range of forms; as memories, fantasies, virtual realities, and futures. In Sivan’s *Blue Neighbourhood*, these spaces were created in childhood and through the reflexive nature of the narrative’s temporal structure, they are reflected on as utopic memories of a time before their intimate bubble was broken by outside intruders, such as hateful homophobic fathers. Although the ending suggests the possibility of youth suicide, through the reflexive nature of the text itself, as well as those internet discourses which surround it (such as REACT videos), the text engages with youth suicide without simply propagating negative death-drive politics. Instead it is able to engage with the issue critically through the reflexive space of online discourse.

Utopic fantasies are also explored in Kiyoko’s work. Through her use of spatial relations, she is able to contrast fantasies of intimate queer spaces with realities of queer isolation. Kiyoko is able to engage critically with closet-epistemologies, both through the work itself and the way it is reflected upon by queer youth audiences online - who relate it to their own experiences and reflect critically upon the dissonance between queer desire and the limitations of structures such as school that constitute youthful queer experience. In *San Junipero* queer utopias are created in virtual reality, in which *youthful* queer intimacy

is held up as the penultimate utopia - achieved outside the restrictions of life circumstances such as age and disability. In *Girls like Girls*, *Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho* and *Jongens*, queer futures are opened up through the endings, in which the youthful queer characters ride off-screen on bicycles. This genre convention has not been lost on youth audiences, for whom these scenes are worthy of note and celebration [Fig.39].

## Open Endings

Among the screen texts I have discussed in this thesis, as well as the genre surveyed more broadly, *Blue Neighbourhood* is the only text which signals toward the *possibility* of an ‘unhappy ending’ (although this is only suggested, and the ending remains ambiguous). As the REACT subjects discuss, it touches on the issue of youth suicide without depicting it (FBR, 2015). Due to queer cinema’s deeply discursive place in queer politics, and the ‘survivors guilt’ that constituted post-AIDS queerness (Sedgwick, 1994: 3), death became the only possible ending for the queer subject. This narrative convention has been widely criticised by youth online - deemed the ‘bury your gays’<sup>61</sup> trope.

I saw *Moonlight* after its Oscar win and I *expected* it to end badly for everyone involved. My sister turned to me at the end and said, ‘I can’t believe Chiron didn’t die!’. A turning point to be sure, *Moonlight* did not espouse a queer ‘death drive’ (Edelman, 2004). It also did not shy away from depicting the hardships of youthful queer experience, whilst still providing the audience with hope in its ending and in the potentiality of queer intimacies. These intimate texts may play into some of the clichés of romance, but when we examine their *function* for youthful viewers, and contextualise them using a proxemic model of cinema, it becomes evident that these development scripts are not simply ‘taken up’ but are utilised for specific purposes, such as ‘coping through escapism’ (Craig et al, 2015a). The new Intimate genre of youthful texts I have outlined in this thesis, have *marked out an in-between space that can be both ‘cozy’ and political*. This space has blurred the binary distinctions between radical/normal, mainstream/margins, out/inside the closet, and private/public. They offer a new intimate space, queering even the expectations and tropes of ‘queer cinema’ itself. This space can be seen as a reaction, due to the selective function of these texts online, in which ‘romantic clichés’ meet the demands of youth viewers online. This is evident for example in posts such as [Fig.40] which express a self-aware irony, and critical capacity whilst still buying into cliché master narratives.

---

<sup>61</sup> See for example (TVTROPES, 2017) & (Williams, 2016).

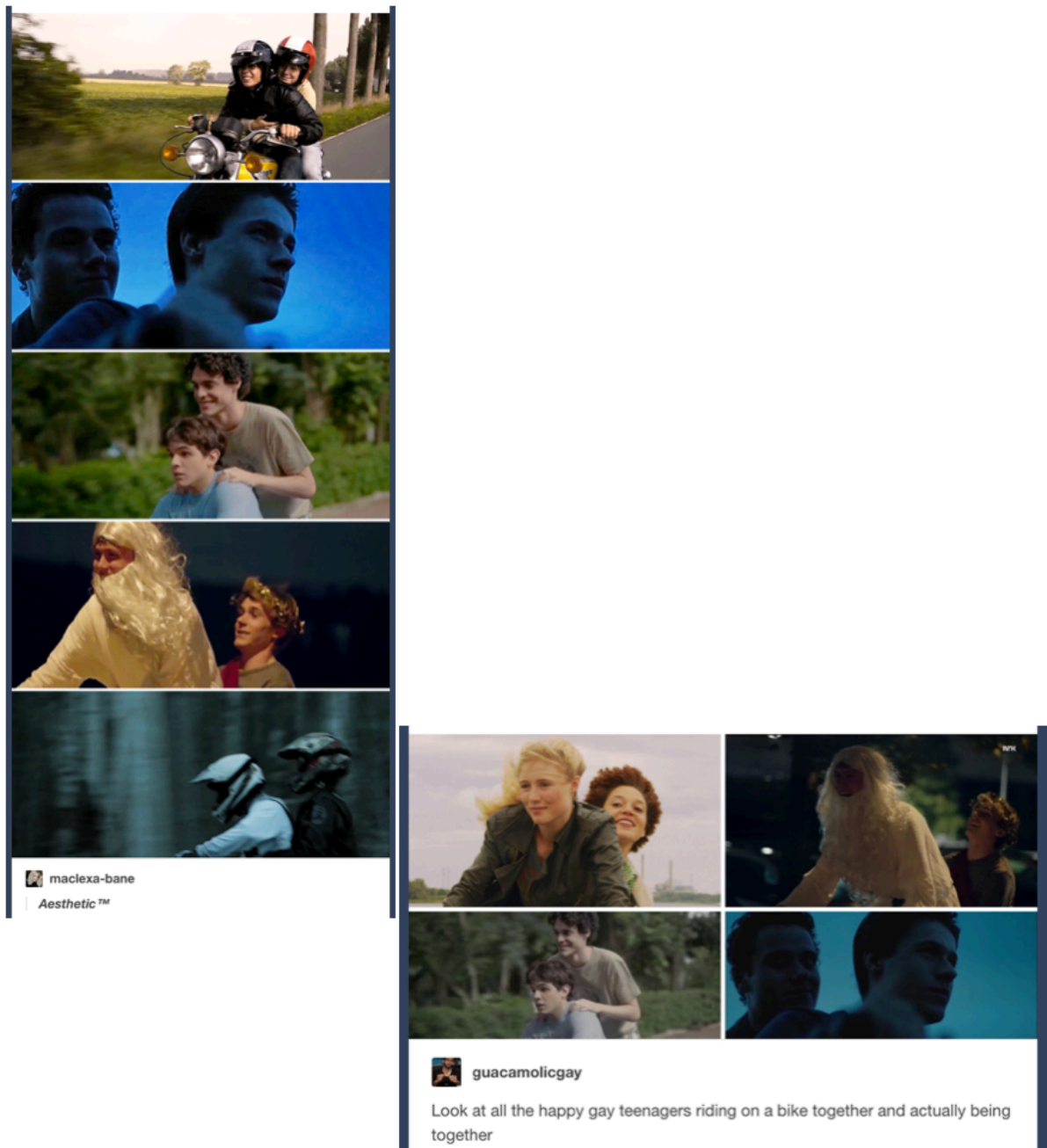


Figure 39. Celebration of a new queer youth 'aesthetic' experience.<sup>62</sup>

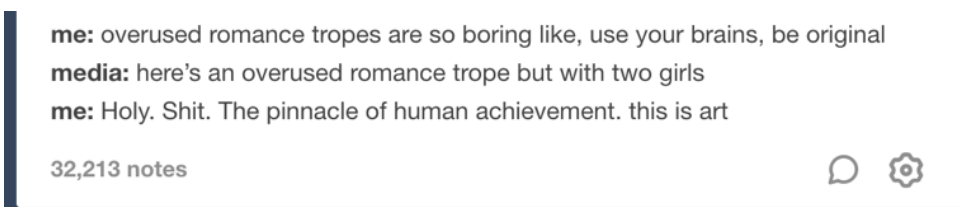


Figure 40. Audience awareness and the desire for cliché QYIDNs.

<sup>62</sup> Other than *Skam*, *Jongens*, & *HEQVS*, these posts include shots from - the features *Zomer* (Bothof, Netherlands, 2014)) and *North Sea Texas* (Defurne, Belgium, 2011) which align with this Intimate genre but fell outside the scope of this thesis - and the series *Øyevitne* (Larsen, Norway, 2014) which is not included in this new genre.

The endings of contemporary Intimate screen texts are not always typically cliché (there are no 'declarations of love' or 'declarations of coming out'). But they also reject the impossibility that death presents. Instead they present possibilities, simply the possibilities of queer futures. Rather than using death to declare the grief and hardship that may constitute queer experience, this newer genre tackles the hardships of queer life through; i) the endogenous display of personal struggle, ii) a spatially dependant form of identity management, and iii) an exploration of the dissonances that shape contemporary queer youth subject formation.

In her analysis of *Weekend's* final scene, Clare finds the film refuses the 'happy ending' of a heteronormative romance. As they part ways at the train station, Russell and Glen the film acknowledges a refusal on its part to offer the audience a cliché 'happy ending' (2013: 794). Unlike contemporary youth texts, *Weekend* brings shame back to the forefront in its endings - as the camera distances itself from the intimate space previously created in Russell's apartment. Instead the camera watches from behind a fence, and their final intimate moment of farewell is suddenly framed by the shame of their public setting and the sound of a stranger's homophobic derision [Fig.41]. The camera bursts the intimate bubble created between viewer/text, and forces the viewer back into a traditional voyeuristic subject position - starkly reminded of the act of watching/being watched (Laine, 2007). In contrast, contemporary youth texts have marked out their own endings, refusing the 'death-drive' conclusion of 'serious' texts, or the public declarative 'coming out' endings of 1990s films. These contemporary texts end with hopeful, optimistic indications toward the hope of queer futures. Leonardo and Gabrielle, and Marc and Sieger ride off on bicycles, and this venerable symbol of youth is co-opted as a vehicle for queer escape and liberation [Fig.42]. In these final moments, we ride along with them, floating beside them, we share this embodied experience - the feeling of freedom, gliding along an empty road. They drift off-screen, embracing an unknown vision of a future we cannot see - a 'not here', but somewhere queerness (Muñoz, 2009). These texts do not need to provide a utopic vision of the future, they simply suggest there is a future on the horizon, and that in itself may be enough for queer youth. Sharing intimate distance, youth may not yet touch this queerness through the screen, but it reaches out, embracing the viewer in its light. Cocooned inside a safe space away from shame, youth may indulge in the intimacy of a hopeful queer space, and may form a queer identity that is no longer constituted by the fear of death, or by the shame of the closet.



Figure 41. Shame in *Weekend's* ending (Haigh, 2011).

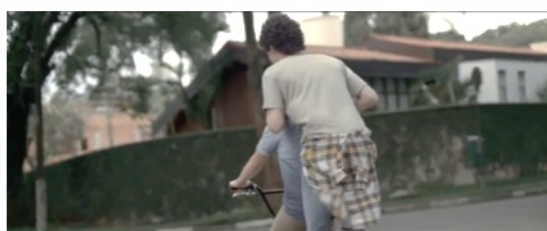
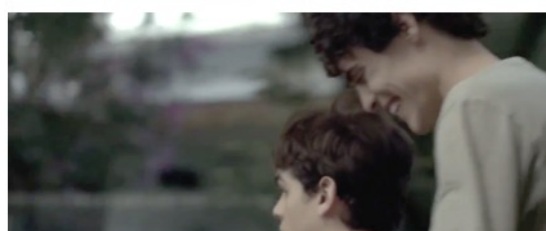
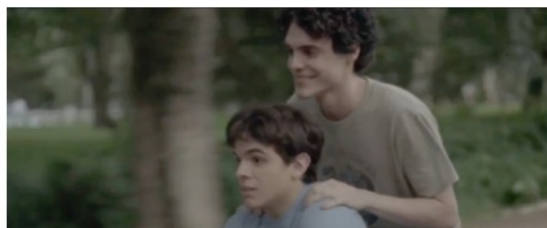


Figure 42. Riding off into queer horizons. (Ribiero, 2014) (Kamp, 2014)



## References

- Ahmed, S. (1995). Theorising sexual identification: Exploring the limits of psychoanalytic and postmodern models. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 10(22), 9-29.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010). *The Promise of Happiness*. Duke University Press.
- Angelides, Steven. (2005). The emergence of the paedophile in the late twentieth century. *Australian Historical Studies*, 36(126), 272-295.
- Antunes, L.R. (2016). *The Multisensory Film Experience: A Cognitive Model of Experiential Film Aesthetics*. Intellect.
- Aveyard, K. (2016). Film consumption in the 21st century: engaging with non-theatrical viewing. *Media International Australia*, 160(1), 140–149.
- Bargh, J. A., McKenna, K. Y., & Fitzsimons, G. M. (2002). Can you see the real me? Activation and expression of the “true self” on the Internet. *Journal of social issues*, 58(1), 33-48.
- Barthes, R. (1995). Leaving the Movie Theater. in Lopate, P. (Ed.). *The art of the personal essay: An anthology from the classical era to the present*. Anchor.
- Batty, C., & Dyer, A. (2016) 'Seeing Animated Worlds Eye Tracking and the Spectator's Experience of Narrative' in Reinhard, C., & Olson, C. *Making Sense of Cinema : Empirical Studies into Film Spectators and Spectatorship*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional. (PP)
- Bell, D., Binnie, J., Cream, J., & Valentine, G. (1994) 'All hyped up and nowhere to go', *Gender, Place, & Culture*, 1: 31-47.
- Bell, D., & Binnie, J. (2000). *The sexual citizen: Queer politics and beyond*. Polity.
- Blumer, H. (1980). Mead and Blumer: The convergent methodological perspectives of social behaviorism and symbolic interactionism. *American Sociological Review*, 409-419.
- Bond, B. J., Hefner, V., & Drogos, K. L. (2009). Information-seeking practices during the sexual development of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals: The influence and effects of coming out in a mediated environment. *Sexuality & Culture*, 13, 32-50.
- boyd, d. (2014). *It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens*. Yale University Press.
- Bronski, M. (2000). Positive Images & the Coming Out Film: THE ART AND POLITICS OF GAY AND LESBIAN CINEMA. *Cineaste*, 26(1), 20.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2008). From The Celluloid Closet to Brokeback Mountain: The changing nature of Queer Film Criticism. *Cineaste*, 33(2), 22-26,83.
- Bryson, M., & Macintosh, L. (2010). Can we play Fun Gay? Disjuncture and difference, and the precarious mobilities of millennial queer youth narratives. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(1), 101-124.



- Buckland, W. (2015) 'Cognitive Semiotics Revisited: Reframing the Frame' in Coëgnarts, M., & Kravanja, Peter. (2015). Embodied cognition and cinema.
- Butler, J. (1993). Critically queer. *GLQ: A journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 1(1), 17-32.
- Byron, Paul, & Hunt, Jessie. (2017). "That Happened to Me Too": Young People's Informal Knowledge of Diverse Genders and Sexualities. *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning*, 17(3), 319-332.
- Clare, S. D. (2013). (Homo) normativity's romance: happiness and indigestion in Andrew Haigh's *Weekend*. *Continuum*, 27(6), 785-798.
- Coëgnarts, M., & Kravanja, Peter. (2015). Embodied cognition and cinema / edited by Maarten Coëgnarts and Peter Kravanja ; with a foreword by Mark Johnson.
- Cohler, B. J., & Hammack, P. L. (2007). The psychological world of the gay teenager: Social change, narrative, and "normality". *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 36(1), 47-59.
- Couldry N (2012) *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*. Malden, MA: Polity.
- Cover, R. (2000). First contact: Queer theory, sexual identity, and "mainstream" film. *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, 5(1), 71-89.
- \_\_\_\_\_(2016). *Queer youth suicide, culture and identity: Unliveable lives?*. Routledge.
- Craig, S. L., & McInroy, L. (2014). You Can Form a Part of Yourself Online: The Influence of New Media on Identity Development and Coming Out for LGBTQ Youth. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 18(1), 95–109.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2013.777007>
- Craig, S. L., McInroy, L., McCready, L. T., & Alaggia, R. (2015). Media: A Catalyst for Resilience in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 12(3), 254–275.
- Craig, S., McInroy, L., McCready, L., Cesare, D., & Pettaway, L. (2015). Connecting Without Fear: Clinical Implications of the Consumption of Information and Communication Technologies by Sexual Minority Youth and Young Adults. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 43(2), 159–168. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-014-0505-2>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford law review*, 1241-1299.
- De Lauretis, T. (1988) 'Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction'. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Mason, Derritt. (2012). On children's literature and the (Im)possibility of It Gets Better.(Essay). *English Studies in Canada*, 38(3-4), 83-104.
- Dinsmore-Tuli, U. (2000). The pleasures of 'home cinema', or watching movies on telly: an audience study of cinephiliac VCR use.
- Dhoest, A., & Szulc, L. (2016). Navigating Online Selves: Social, Cultural, and Material Contexts of Social Media Use by Diasporic Gay Men. *Social Media + Society*, 2(4).  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116672485>

- Doherty, D., Morrison, D., & Tracey, M. (1987) *The Last Picture Show: Britain's Changing Film Audience*. London. British Film Institute.
- Downing, G. (2013). Virtual youth: non-heterosexual young people's use of the internet to negotiate their identities and socio-sexual relations. *Children's Geographies*, 11(1), 44–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2013.743280>
- Duggan, L. (2002). The new homonormativity: The sexual politics of neoliberalism. *Materializing democracy: Toward a revitalized cultural politics*, 175-94.
- Edelman, L. (2004). *No future: Queer theory and the death drive*. Duke University Press.
- Ellis, J. (1992). *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television and Video*. London Routledge.
- Eng, D.L, Halberstam, J. & Munoz, H.E. (2005). 'Introduction: What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?' *Social Text* 23, no. 5.1–17.
- Eng, D. L. (2010). *The feeling of kinship: Queer liberalism and the racialization of intimacy*. Duke University Press.
- Epstein, J. (1921) 'Magnification'. Translated by Liebman, S. (1977). *Magnification and other writings*. October, MIT Press. 9-25.
- Everett, A. (2003) 'Digitextuality and Click Theory: Theses on Convergence Media in the Digital Age', in Everett, A and Caldwell, J.T. (eds), *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 3–28.
- Fahlenbrach, K., & Ebooks Corporation. (2015). *Embodied metaphors in film, television, and video games : Cognitive approaches / edited by K. Fahlenbrach*. Routledge research in cultural and media studies; 76.
- Farman, J. (2013). *Mobile interface theory: Embodied space and locative media*. Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (2000). Translated by Hurley, R. 'Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth; the Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984. London. Penguin.
- Gauntlett, D. (1998) *Ten things wrong with the 'effects model'*. in Roger Dickinson, Ramaswani Harindranath & Olga Linné, eds (1998), *Approaches to Audiences – A Reader*. Arnold, London.
- \_\_\_\_ (2002) *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*. Routledge.
- Gever, M. (1990). The names we give ourselves. *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, 191-202.
- Giddens, A. (1992) *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Stanford University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. (Doubleday Anchor books ; A174). Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.
- Gorman-Murray, A. 2008. Queering the Family Home: Narratives from Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth Coming Out in Supportive Family Homes in Australia. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 15(1): 31–44.

- Gray, M. L. 2009. "Negotiating Identities/Queering Desires: Coming Out Online and the Remediation of the Coming-Out Story." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 14: 1162–1189.
- Grodal, T. (2009). *Embodied visions: Evolution, emotion, culture, and film*. Oxford University Press.
- Grosser, M. (1951) *The Painter's Eye*. Rinehart.
- Hall, E.T. (1966). *The Hidden Dimension*. Anchor Books.
- Hall, S. (1993). Encoding/Decoding. in During, S. (ed.) *The cultural studies reader*. Routledge.
- Hammack, P., Thompson, E., & Pilecki, A. (2009). Configurations of Identity Among Sexual Minority Youth: Context, Desire, and Narrative. *A Multidisciplinary Research Publication*, 38(7), 867–883. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-008-9342-3>
- Haraway, D. (2006). A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late 20th century. *The international handbook of virtual learning environments*, 117-158.
- Heath, S. (1976). On screen, in frame: Film and ideology. *Quarterly Review of Film & Video*, 1(3), 251-265.
- Hennessy, R. (2017). *Profit and pleasure: Sexual identities in late capitalism*. Routledge.
- Hanckel, B., & Morris, A. (2014). Finding community and contesting heteronormativity: queer young people's engagement in an Australian online community. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2013.878792>
- Hilderbrand, L. (2013). *Paris is Burning: A Queer Film Classic*. Arsenal Pulp Press.
- Hillier, L., Mitchell, K. J., & Ybarra, M. L. (2012). The Internet as a Safety Net: Findings from a Series of Online Focus Groups with LGB and Non-LGB Young People in the United States. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 9(3), 225–246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2012.684642>
- Hobbes, M. (2 March 2017) 'Together Alone: The Epidemic of Gay Loneliness'. Highline. Retrieved from <<http://highline.huffingtonpost.com/articles/en/gay-loneliness/>>
- Horton, D., & Richard Wohl, R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, 19(3), 215-229.
- Hynes, E. (27 September 2011) 'Andrew Haigh', *Reverse Shot*. Retrieved from <<http://reverseshot.org/interviews/entry/1429/andrew-haigh>>
- Ito, M., Okabe, D., & Anderson, K. (2009). Portable objects in three global cities: The personalization of urban places. *The reconstruction of space and time: mobile communication practices*, 67-87.
- Jancovich, M., Faire, L., & Stubbings, S. (2003). *The Place of the Audience: Cultural Geographies of Film Consumption*. British Film Institute.

- Jenkins, H. (2006) *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York University Press.
- Johnson, M. (1987). *The body in the mind : The bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason* / Mark Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kant, I. (2000). *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kelsh, D. (1998). Desire and class: The knowledge industry in the wake of poststructuralism. *Cultural Logic*, 1(2), 1-2.
- Klinger, B. (2006). *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies and The Home*. University of California Press.
- Kluss, T., Bateman, J., & Schill, K. (2016) 'Exploring the Role of Narrative Contextualization in Film Interpretation Issues and Challenges for Eye-Tracking Methodology' in Reinhard, C., & Olson, C. *Making Sense of Cinema : Empirical Studies into Film Spectators and Spectatorship*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Kuper, L. E., & Mustanski, B. S. (2014). Using Narrative Analysis to Identify Patterns of Internet Influence on the Identity Development of Same-Sex Attracted Youth. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 29(4), 499–532.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, Mark. (1980). *Metaphors we live by* / George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. (New edition], with a new afterword. ed.).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh : The embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought* / Lakoff and Johnson. New York: Basic Books.
- Laine, T. (2007). *Shame and desire: Emotion, Intersubjectivity, Cinema* (No. 3). Peter Lang. Chicago
- Lim, D (21 August 2012). 'Weekend: The Space Between Two People', *The Criterion Collection*. Retrieved from <<https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/2426-weekend-the-space-between-two-people>>
- MacDougall, D. (2005). *The corporeal image: Film, ethnography, and the senses*. Princeton University Press.
- Majkowski, T. (2011). The “It Gets Better campaign”: An unfortunate use of queer futurity. *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 21(1), 163-165.
- Manovich, L. (1999). What is digital cinema. Retrieved from <[https://wp.nyu.edu/novak-mm13/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2013/09/Lev-Manovich\\_-\\_Essays\\_-\\_What-is-Digital-Cinema\\_.pdf](https://wp.nyu.edu/novak-mm13/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2013/09/Lev-Manovich_-_Essays_-_What-is-Digital-Cinema_.pdf)>
- Marks, L. (2000). *The skin of the film : Intercultural cinema, embodiment, and the senses* / by Laura U. Marks. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.  
 \_\_\_\_ (2002) *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,
- McKinnon, S. (2016) *Gay Men at the movies: cinema, memory and the history of a gay male community*. Intellect. FIX - AUS city ? - Sydney?
- McRuer, R. (2006). Queer/Disabled Existence. *The disability studies reader*, 301-309.

- Meyer, I. H. (2007). Prejudice and discrimination as social stressors. In *The health of sexual minorities* (pp. 242-267). Springer US.
- Meyrowitz, J. (1986). 'Television and Interpersonal Behavior: Codes of Perception and Response'. *Inter/media: Interpersonal communication in a media world* 253: 272.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2009). *Medium theory: An alternative to the dominant paradigm of media effects*.
- Mulvey, L. (1989). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. In *Visual and other pleasures* (pp. 14-26). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Muñoz, J. E. (2009). *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. NYU Press.
- Ng, J. (2007). Virtual Cinematography and the Digital Real: (dis)placing the moving image between reality and simulacra. in Sutton, D., Brind, S., & McKenzie, R. (Eds.). *The state of the real: aesthetics in the digital age*. IB Tauris.13: 172-180.
- Ng, E. (2013). A "Post-Gay" Era? Media Gaystreaming, Homonormativity, and the Politics of LGBT Integration. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 6(2), 258-283.
- Nowlan, B. (2006). The Politics of Love in Three Recent U.S. and U.K. Films of Young Gay Romance. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 50(4), 141-184.
- Narduzzi, D. (2011). *(Un) natural Bodies: Reproduction, Disability, Queerness*.
- Ong, W., Hartley, John, & Ebooks Corporation. (2012). *Orality and literacy: The technologizing of the word* / Walter J. Ong, with additional chapters by John Hartley. (30th anniversary; 3rd ed., New accents. Routledge.
- Pedullà, G. (2012). *In broad daylight: Movies and spectators after the cinema*. Verso Books.
- Persson, P. (2003). *Understanding Cinema: A Psychological Theory of Moving Imagery*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pidduck, J. (2003). After 1980: Margins & Mainstreams. Dyer, R. *Now You See It: studies in lesbian and gay film*. (2nd ed). 7: 265-294.
- Plato. (1973). *Phaedrus* (extract) Plato (pp. Plato Phaedrus & Letters VII and VIII p. 49-61). Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Prince, S. (1996). True Lies: Perceptual Realism, Digital Images and Film Theory. *Film Quarterly*, 49 (3), 27-37.
- Probyn, E. (2003). The spatial imperative of subjectivity. *Handbook of Cultural Geography*, 290–299.
- Pullen, C. (2010). Introduction. in Pullen, C. & Cooper, M. *LGBT identity and online new media*. Routledge. 1-13.
- Q&A (24 July 2017), 'School Special Victoria' [TV Program] Aired on ABC, Australia.
- Rassell, A., Robinson, J., Verhagen, D., & Pink, S., (2016) 'Seeing, Sensing Sound Eye-Tracking Soundscapes in Saving Private Ryan and Monsters, Inc'. in Reinhard, C.,

& Olson, C. *Making Sense of Cinema : Empirical Studies into Film Spectators and Spectatorship*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic

- Rich, B. R. (2013). *New queer cinema: The director's cut*. Duke University Press.
- Richardson, I. (2010). Faces, interfaces, screens: Relational ontologies of framing, attention and distraction. *Transformations: Journal of Media and Culture*, (18).
- Rogers, A. (2012). " You Don't So Much Watch It As Download It": Conceptualizations of Digital Spectatorship. *Film History: An International Journal*, 24(2), 221-234.
- Roughton, R. (2014). The Significance of *Brokeback Mountain*. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 18(1), 83-94.
- Russo, V. (1987). *The celluloid closet: Homosexuality in the movies*. Harper Collins.
- Schneider, R. (2006). Not quitting *Brokeback*. *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*, 13(3), 10.
- Sedgwick, E. K. (1993). Epistemology of the Closet. *The lesbian and gay studies reader*, 45-61.  
\_\_\_\_\_. (1994). 'Queer & Now' in *Tendencies*. Routledge. 1-7
- Seidman, S. (2004). *Beyond the closet : The transformation of gay and lesbian life / Steven Seidman*. New York ; London: Routledge.
- Smith, M. (1997). Imagining from the Inside. In Richard Allen & Murray Smith (eds.), *Film Theory and Philosophy*. Oxford University Press. 412-430
- Sobchack, V. (1992). *The address of the eye : A phenomenology of film experience / Vivian Sobchack*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Sontag, S. (1977). *On photography / Susan Sontag*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.  
\_\_\_\_\_. (1996). The decay of cinema. *New York Times*, 25, 60.
- Kashubeck-West, S., Szymanski, D., & Meyer, J. (2008). Internalized heterosexism: Clinical implications and training considerations. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 36(4), 615-630.
- Turkle, S. (2007). Introduction: The things that matter. *Evocative objects: things we think with*, 3-10.  
\_\_\_\_\_. (2011). *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. Basic books.
- Turner, M. (9 February 2015). Interview: Daniel Riberio (*The Way He Looks*). [vodzilla.com](http://vodzilla.com)  
<<http://vodzilla.co/interviews/interview-daniel-ribeiro-the-way-he-looks/>>
- [TVTROPES] (2017) 'Bury your Gays' Retrieved from  
<<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/BuryYourGays>>
- Walker-Dack, R (19 November 2014). INTERVIEW: Daniel Ribeiro: On *The Way He Looks*. [TheGayUK.com](http://www.thegayuk.com) <<http://www.thegayuk.com/interview-daniel-ribeiro-on-the-way-he-looks/>>

- Walters, S. D. (1996). From here to queer: Radical feminism, postmodernism, and the lesbian menace (Or, why can't a woman be more like a fag?). *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 21(4), 830-869.
- Warner, M. (2000). *The trouble with normal : Sex, politics, and the ethics of queer life* / Michael Warner. (1st Harvard University Press pbk. ed.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- \_\_\_\_ (2002). *Publics and Counterpublics*. Zone Books.
- Watson, L (18 March 2017). 'Youtube Restricted Mode is Hiding Some LGBT Content' on [gizmodo.com](https://www.gizmodo.com.au/2017/03/youtubes-restricted-mode-is-hiding-some-lgbt-content/). <<https://www.gizmodo.com.au/2017/03/youtubes-restricted-mode-is-hiding-some-lgbt-content/>>
- White, P. (1999). Queer publicity-A dossier on lesbian and gay film festivals. *GLQ-A JOURNAL OF LESBIAN AND GAY STUDIES*, 5(1), 73-78.
- Williams, R. (07 July 2016) ' How Kids On The Internet Are Rejecting The "Bury Your Gays" Trope' Huffpost. <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rachel-williams/kids-internet-queer-media\\_b\\_10822912.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rachel-williams/kids-internet-queer-media_b_10822912.html)>
- Wolfe, K. (25 April 2012). The New New Queer Cinema, Huffpost Queer Voices.
- Wood, R. (2007). On and around Brokeback Mountain. *Film Quarterly*, 60(3), 28-31.

## Screen Texts

Almeida, D. (Producer) & Ribeiro, D (Director). (2010) *Eu Não Quero Voltar Sozinho* [Short Film / Video File] Brazil. Lacuna Films. Re-Uploaded to YouTube (29 Jan 2011) <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Wav5KjBHbl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Wav5KjBHbl)>

---

(2014) *Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho* [Motion Picture] Brazil. Lacuna Films.

Andem, J. (Creator) & Furevold-Boland, M. (Producer). (2015-2017) *Skam* [Digital Series] Selected scenes from Season 3 (2016). Norway. NRK.

Bose, S. (Producer/Director) & Maniyar, N. (Producer). (2014). *Margarita with a Straw* [Motion Picture] India. Viacom 18 Motion Pictures.

Chaiken, I. (Executive Producer). (2004-2009) *The L Word* [TV Series]. USA. Showtime.

Elsley, B. (Producer/Creator). (2007-2013) *Skins* [TV Series]. UK. E4.

Eun, L (Producer) & Ki-Duk, K. (Director). (2000). *The Isle* [Motion Picture]. South Korea. Myung Films.

Gardner, D., Kleiner, J., Romanski, A. (Producers) & Jenkins, B. (Director) (2016) *Moonlight* [Motion Picture]. USA. A24.

Garnett, T. (Producer) & MacDonald, H. (Director). (1996). *Beautiful Thing* [Motion Picture]. UK. Film4 Productions.

Goligher, T. (Producer) & Haigh, A. (Director). (2011) *Weekend* [Motion Picture]. UK. Synchronicity Films.

Harris, O. (Director) & Brooker, C. (Creator/Producer). (2016). *San Junipero*. [Episode 3x04 of anthology *Black Mirror*] UK/USA. Netflix.

Hockin, S. (Producer). (2000-2005) *Queer As Folk* [TV Series]. USA. Showtime.

Ichikawa, K., Ôno, T. (Producer) & Teshigahara, H. (1964) *Suna no Onna* [Motion Picture]. Japan. Toho Films.

[i-D], Thomas, L.R. (Director). (21 June 2016) 'i-D Meets: Troye Sivan' Retrieved from <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPJ6NT2RXk4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPJ6NT2RXk4)>

Kamp, M. (Director) & Kuijpers, P., Otten, I., Van Meurs, S. (Producers). (2014) *Jongens* [Made-for-Streaming/TV Movie]. Netherlands. Pupkin Films for NPO Zapp.

Kar-Wai, W. (Producer/Director). (1997) *Happy Together* [Motion Picture] Hong Kong. Kino International.



Kenneally, C. (Director). (2012) *Side by Side* [Documentary]. USA. Company Films.

Kiyoko, H. [Hayley Kiyoko] (4 Nov 2015) *Cliff's Edge* [Music Video] Retrieved from <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZfCUM1uyvw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZfCUM1uyvw)>

\_\_\_\_\_ (24 Jun 2015) *Girls Like Girls* [Music Video] Retrieved from

<[www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0MT8SwNa\\_U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0MT8SwNa_U)>

\_\_\_\_\_ (5 Aug 2016) *Gravel to Tempo* [Music Video] Retrieved from

<[www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOm2rGwmhWg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOm2rGwmhWg)>

\_\_\_\_\_ (2 Mar 2017) *Sleepover* [Music Video] Retrieved from <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6jxPFtIAw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6jxPFtIAw)>

Lee, A. (Producer/Director). (1993) *The Wedding Banquet* [Motion Picture] Taiwan/USA. Good Machine.

Livingston, J. (Director/Producer). (1990) *Paris is Burning* [Documentary]. USA. Miramax.

Luhrmann, B. (Producer/Director) & Martinelli, G. (Producer) (1996). *Romeo + Juliet* [Motion Picture] USA. Bazmark Productions.

Moreton, D. (Director/Producer) & Stephens, T. (Producer). (1998). *Edge of Seventeen* [Motion Picture]. USA. Luna Pictures.

Ossana, D., Schamus, J. (Producers) & Lee, A. (Director). (2005) *Brokeback Mountain* [Motion Picture]. USA. River Road Entertainment.

Parker, L. (Producer) & Van Sant, G. (Director). (1991) *My Own Private Idaho* [Motion Picture]. USA. Fine Line Features.

RuPaul. (Exec. Producer) & Murray, N. (Director). (2009-). *Ru Paul's Drag Race* [TV Series]. USA. Logo.

Schaeffer, E. (Producer/Director). (2014) *Boy Meets Girl* [Motion Picture] USA. Wolfe Video.

Shore, S. (Director). (1998). *Get Real* [Motion Picture]. UK. Distant Horizons.

Sivan, T. [TroyeSivanVEVO]. Bonfiglio, B. (Producer) & Mattia, T. (Director). (9 Aug 2016) *Blue Neighbourhood Trilogy (Director's Cut)* [Music Video] Retrieved from <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xCMF7jsDJl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xCMF7jsDJl)>

(3 Sep 2015) *WILD (Blue Neighbourhood Part 1/3)* [Music Video] Retrieved from <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdXNNveYOfU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdXNNveYOfU)>

(25 Sep 2015) *FOOLS (Blue Neighbourhood Part 2/3)* [Music Video] Retrieved from <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxg222-hWWc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxg222-hWWc)>

(20 Oct 2015) *TALK ME DOWN (Blue Neighbourhood Part 3/3)* [Music Video] Retrieved from <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lo3lxS-6joY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lo3lxS-6joY)>

## Figures

Figure 1. Proxemic Table. Created by Lelli, R. from Hall, E.T. (1966)

Figure 2. Selected shots from *Suna no Onna*. See: Teshigahara (1964)

Figure 3. Table from Meyrowitz, J. (1986: 259)

Figure 4. Diagram by Lelli, R.

Figure 5. [revolutionarygays] (2016). [Tumblr Thread] Comment by [plain-flavoured-english] (23 May 2016). Retrieved from <<http://plain-flavoured-english.tumblr.com/post/144820747239/revolutionarygays-pretty-fucked-up-that>>

Figure 6-7. Selected shots from *Brokeback Mountain*. See: Ossana, D., Schamus, J. (Producers) & Lee, A. (Director). (2005)

Figure 8. Selected shots from *Paris is Burning*. See: Livingstone (1990)

Figure 9. [sexedplus] (11 October 2015) [Tumblr Post] Retrieved from <<http://sexedplus.tumblr.com/post/113311413361/version-3-published-march-2015-follow-sexedplus>>

Figure 10. Selected shots from *Weekend*. See: Haigh (2011)

Figure 11. Selected shots. See: Kiyoko (2015), Ribiero (2014), Kamp (2014), Bose (2014).

Figure 12. Selected shots. See: Kiyoko (2015-2017)

Figure 13. Selected shots. See: Sivan & Mattia (2015)

Figure 14. Selection shots from *Moonlight*. See Jenkins (2016)

Figure 15. Selected shots from:

Marsh-Edwards, N. (Producer) & Julien, I. (Director). (1991) *Young Soul Rebels* [Motion Picture] UK.

Clark-Hall, S., Root, A. (Producers) & Jarman, D. (Director) (1991) *Edward II* [Motion Picture] UK. BBC Films.

Parker, L. (Producer) & Van Sant, G. (Director). (1991) *My Own Private Idaho* [Motion Picture]. USA. Fine Line Features.

Figure 16. Hue comparisons by Lelli, R.

Figure 17. [PhannyOtaku] [YouTube Comment Thread] Reply from [martine lenisaquaak] Retrieved from <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0MT8SwNa\\_U&index=29&list=PLm8JpggloRsrUDW0tYsfV3mAyx\\_inTnkc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0MT8SwNa_U&index=29&list=PLm8JpggloRsrUDW0tYsfV3mAyx_inTnkc)>

Figure 18. Selected sequence. See Kiyoko (2016).

Figure 19. Selected sequence. See Kiyoko (2015)

Figure 20. Selected sequence. See Sivan & Mattia (2015)

Figure 21. Selected shots with captions. [FBE] (15 May 2016) 'Teens React to Troye Sivan (Blue Neighbourhood Trilogy)' REACT S7 E42. Retrieved from <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyKktxNjrJE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyKktxNjrJE)>

Figure 22. Selected shots from *Blue Neighborhood*. See Sivan & Mattia (2015)

Figure 23-24. Selected sequences from *Skam*. See Andem, & Furevold-Boland (2016).

Figure 25. [valttersen] )14 February 2017. Translated Gifset from *Skam* (2016). Retrieved from <<https://valttersen.tumblr.com/post/157246633954/i-think-that-i-think-that-until-youve-fought>>

Figure 26. [htmlskamlayouts] (3 July 2017) 'Tarjei & Carl in Oslo Pride 2017'. Collection of social media posts. Retrieved from <<https://htmlskamlayouts.tumblr.com/post/162568390271/tarjei-carl-in-oslo-pride-2017>>

Figure 27. Selected Sequence from *San Junipero*. See Harri (2016)

Figure 28. Selected Shots from *Jongens*. See Kamp (2014).

Figure 29-31. Selections from *Moonlight*. See: Jenkins (2016)

Figure 32. Leutwyler, H.(January 2017) [Photograph/Cover Image] 'Special Issue: The Shifting Landscape of Gender'. National Geographic. Vol 231 No 1.

Figure 33. Selected Sequence from *Margarita with a Straw*. See: Bose (2014)

Figure 34-35. Selected Shots from *Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho*. See: Ribiero (2014)

Figure 36. Selected Shots from *Jongens*. See Kamp (2014).

Figure 37-38. Selections from *Kiyoko* (2015-2017).

Figure 39. [kellymarietran] (2 August 2017) [Tumblr Post] Retrieved from <<http://kellymarietran.tumblr.com/post/163724562120/me-overused-romance-tropes-are-so-boring-like>>

Figure 40. [maclexa-bane] (10 November 2016) 'Aesthetic™' [Tumblr Post] Retrieved from <<http://maclexa-bane.tumblr.com/post/153005102233/aesthetic>>

[guacamolicgay] (29th November 2016) 'Look at all the happy gay teens...' [Tumblr Post] Retrieved from <<http://guacamolicgay.tumblr.com/post/153814573692/look-at-all-the-happy-gay-teenagers-riding-on-a>>

Figure 41. Selected Sequence from *Weekend*, see: Haigh (2011).

Figure 42. Selected Sequences from *Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho*. See: Ribiero (2014) & *Jongens* (Kamp, 2014)