Linköping Studies in Arts and Science No. 628

trans cinema AND ITS EXIT SCAPES

A Transfeminist Reading of
Utopian Sensibility and Gender Dissidence in Contemporary Film

Wibke Straube

Linköping University

Linköping Studies in Arts and Science, No. 628

TRANS CINEMA AND ITS EXIT SCAPES

A TRANSFEMINIST READING OF UTOPIAN SENSIBILITY AND GENDER DISSIDENCE IN CONTEMPORARY FILM

Wibke Straube

Academic dissertation

Academic dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Gender Studies at Linköping University to be publicly defended on 19 September 2014 at 13:15 in TEMCAS, TEMA building, Campus Valla by Wibke Straube.

Abstract

Trans Cinema and its Exit Scapes offers a critical and creative intervention into cultural representations of gendered body dissidence in contemporary film. The study argues for the possibility of finding spaces of "disidentification", so-called "exit scapes" within the films. Exit scapes disrupt the dominant cinematic regime set up for the trans character, which ties them into stories of discrimination, humiliation and violence. In Trans Cinema, for instance films such as *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001), *Transamerica* (2005), *Romeos* (2011) and *Laurence Anyways* (2012), scenes of singing, dancing and dreaming allow a different form of engagement with the films. As argued here, they allow a critical re-reading and an affirmative re-imagining of trans embodiment. The aim of this study is to investigate the utopian and hopeful potential within Trans Cinema from a critical transfeminist perspective. While focusing in particular on trans entrants as "spectators" or readers, this study draws on the work of a wide range of feminist and cultural scholars, such as Sara Ahmed, Susan Stryker, José Esteban Muñoz, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, Karen Barad and Donna Haraway.

The thesis etches out cinematic spatiotemporalities that unfold possibilities of utopian worlding and trans becoming through a set of conceptual innovations. By utilising a critical approach to audio-visuality and feminist film theory, the thesis re-conceptualises haptic spectatorship theory and its critique in western modernist ocularcentricism through a set of conceptual innovations. The methodological tools developed in this thesis, such as the "entrant", the "exit scape" and "sensible cinematic intra-activity", feature here as a multisensorial methodology for transdisciplinary transgender studies and feminist film theory as well as visual culture at large.

Keywords: transgender studies, transfeminism, queer, gender, feminism, multisensorial cinema, haptic spectatorship, touch, hearing, seeing, exit scapes, sensible cinematic intra-activity, Trans Cinema, visual cultural studies, film theory

Department of Thematic Studies: Gender Studies, Linköping University, SE-581 83 Linköping, Sweden

ISBN 978-91-7519-254-3 ISSN 0282-9800

Linköping Studies in Arts and Science, No. 628

TRANS CINEMA AND ITS EXIT SCAPES

A TRANSFEMINIST READING OF UTOPIAN SENSIBILITY AND GENDER DISSIDENCE IN CONTEMPORARY FILM

Wibke Straube

Akademisk avhandling

som för avläggande av doktorsexamen vid Linköpings universitet kommer att offentligt försvaras i sal TEMCAS, TEMA-huset, Universitetsområdet Valla, fredagen den 19 september 2014, kl. 13:15.

Abstract

Trans Cinema and its Exit Scapes är en kritisk och kreativ intervention med fokus på kulturella representationer av kroppar som bryter mot en könsbinär ordning i samtida film. Studien argumenterar för möjligheten att hitta utrymmen för "disidentification", så kallade "exit scapes" inom filmerna. Exit scapes stör den dominanta filmiska ordning som skapats för transkaraktären, en ordning som är förbunden med berättelser om diskriminering, förödmjukelse och våld. Inom *Trans Cinema*, i filmer som exempelvis *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001), *Transamerica* (2005), *Romeos* (2011) and *Laurence Anyways* (2012), öppnar scener med sång, dans och drömmar upp för andra former av engagemang med filmerna. Som det argumenteras för i avhandlingen tillåter dessa ett kritiskt omformulerande av, och ett nytt affirmativt sätt att föreställa sig, transkroppslighet. Syftet med den här studien är att undersöka den utopiska och hoppfulla potential som finns inom transfilm utifrån ett kritiskt transfeministiskt perspektiv. Även om studien främst riktar sig till trans entrants som "åskådare" eller läsare, så har den en bred teoretisk bas hämtad från verk av en lång rad feministiska forskare inom kulturfältet, såsom Sara Ahmed, Susan Stryker, José Esteban Muñoz, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, Karen Barad och Donna Haraway.

Denna avhandling skissar filmiska spatiotemporaliteter, vilka öppnar för möjligheter av utopiska värdsliga och transsubjektiva tillblivelser genom utvecklandet av olika teoretiska begrepp. Genom ett kritiskt förhållningssätt till audiovisualitet och feministisk filmteori, revideras och omformuleras haptisk åskådarskapsteori och dess kritik i en västerländsk okularcentrism genom olika teoretiska innovationer. De metodologiska verktygen som utvecklas i avhandlingen, såsom "the entrant", "the exit scape" samt "sensible cinematic intra-activity" utgör här funktionen som multisensorisk metodologi för transdisciplinära transstudier, feministisk filmteori samt för visuell kultur i stort.

Nyckelord: Transstudier, transfeminism, queer, genus, feminism, multisensorisk film, haptic spectatorship, beröring/känsel, hörsel, seende, exit scapes, sensible cinematic intra-activity, trans cinema, visuella kulturstudier, filmteori.

Tema Genus, TEMA - Institutionen för Tema, Linköpings universitet, 581 83 Linköping, Sverige

ISBN 978-91-7519-254-3 ISSN 0282-9800

TRANS CINEMA AND ITS EXIT SCAPES

A TRANSFEMINIST READING OF UTOPIAN SENSIBILITY AND GENDER DISSIDENCE IN CONTEMPORARY FILM

WIBKE STRAUBE

Linköping University
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Linköping Studies in Arts and Science, No. 628
Linköping University, Department of Thematic Studies - Gender Studies
Linköping 2014

Linköping Studies in Arts and Science, No. 628

At the Faculty of Arts and Science at Linköping University, research and doctoral studies are carried out within broad problem areas. Research is organised in interdisciplinary research environments and doctoral studies mainly in graduate schools. Jointly, they publish the series Linköping Studies in Arts and Science. The thesis comes from Tema Genus, the Department of Thematic Studies - Gender Studies.

Distributed by:
TEMA - the Department of Thematic Studies
Linköping University
581 83 Linköping
Sweden

Wibke Straube
Trans Cinema and its Exit Scapes: A Transfeminist Reading of Utopian Sensibility and Gender Dissidence in Contemporary Film

Edition 1:1
ISBN 978-91-7519-254-3
ISSN 0282-9800

Cover image: Tomka Weiss/Wibke Straube; www.tomka.tomec-weiss.de
Cover design: Ina Bär; www.inabear.com
Typesetting: kai_kerstin Donat; www.kai-mediendesign.de
Illustration: Grit Hachmeister; www.gritwirkriegendich.blogspot.de
Printed by: LIU-Tryck, Linköping, 2014

For copyright reasons the book contains film scene illustrations by artist Grit Hachmeister. The print version is published with photographic film stills.

For my grandmother Traudel Golz
(1925 - 2011)

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout this manuscript I have made reference to those who have helped me to think through arguments, who have inspired me, given me questions to ponder and ideas to integrate into my work. Your insights have been invaluable to me! To those whose names I have missed I offer sincere apologies.

Some of the people who have contributed most to this project are referenced the least as their influence is strung throughout the pages of this book; they are my three supervisors: Cecilia Åsberg and Nina Lykke from Tema Genus at Linköping University and Lann Hornscheidt from Gender Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin. I thank the three of you warmly for your ongoing support and generosity, your most patient (re-)reading of my chapters, the sharing of your thoughts, your criticism, your encouragement, manifold inspirations and the large amounts of time you continuously donated to me as your PhD student, helping me with my thinking and writing. These pages would not have taken on this shape and content without your time-intensive devotion and deep commitment to this project which helped me to materialise this piece of queer and transfeminist scholarly writing.

Another tremendous support that has been no less important to my work has come from my colleague, Magdalena Górska. From the very beginning, when we both started our positions at Linköping as PhDs in 2009, you have impressed me as an outstandingly smart, deeply reflective and kind-hearted person. Your continuous encouragement has not only supported me in shaping this project but also helped me to put my finger on what I was actually doing in it. I am glad that I can call you not only a colleague, but also one of my closest and dearest friends.

I would like to thank Tema Genus, the Gender Studies unit at Linköping University for being the place it is: nurturing, inspiring and welcoming. It has been a wonderful workplace with its aim of

and investment in producing knowledge in different ways, supporting creative writing and its awareness of the importance of creativity for academic work. It has been a stunningly encouraging place to develop this study and to engage in discussions on critical feminist, queerfeminist and transfeminist theory. I want to thank you, Alma Persson, Alp Biricik, Anna Lundberg, Anne-Charlott Callerstig, Anne-Li Lindgren, Berit Starkman, Björn Pernrud, Cecilia Åsberg, Dag Balkmar, Desireé Ljungcrantz, Edyta Just, Elisabeth Samuelsson, Emma Strollo, Helga Sadowski, Jami Weinstein, Katherine Harrison, Klara Goedecke, Line Henriksen, Linn Sandberg, Magdalena Górska, Malena Gustavson, Margrit Shildrick, Marie-Louise Holm, Marietta Radomska, Monica Obreja, Nina Lykke, Pia Laskar, Redi Koobak, Roger Klinth, Silje Lundgren, Stina Backman, Tanja Joelsson, Tanya Bureychak, Tara Mehrabi, Ulrica Engdahl, Victoria Kawesa, and Wera Grahn. For technical and administrative support thanks also to Ian Dickson, Eva Danielsson, Barbro Axelsson, Marie Arvidsson, Camilla Jungström Hammar, Micke Brandt and Beatrice Rågård. Warm thanks especially to you, Berit, for having made Tema Genus into an especially warm and homely place for so many years – your continuous patience, kind words and your joy in life has made the department not only a good place to work but also a place to live. I am sad to have missed you in my last year when your life took on the new and exciting course of a pensioner! And thank you, Björn, for taking over from Berit and having been such a pearl many times with your reliability and calm patience with the administrative tasks. A special thanks to Silje Lundgren for her ability to help each of us at Tema Genus to trace our paths through the system of funding applications. You are indispensible and wonderful.

I would like to especially thank those of you who have over the years become much more than colleagues: Thank you Tara, Marie-Louise, Redi, Silje, Monica, Alp, Edyta, and Ulrica for so many good conversations, your friendship, humour, laughter, advice and, through all of this, for not only making the small-town life of Linköping lively but making me miss it when I am away.

The years of writing this dissertation were divided by little milestone breaks, the so-called 60% and 90% seminars. I would like to thank the scholars who came to Linköping to attend these feedback seminars and

generously commented on my work. I would like to especially thank Julianne Pidduck for being such an encouraging, kind and inspirational commentator and opponent in my 60% seminar. Your invaluable and eloquent feedback has materialised in many parts in this dissertation. I also thank my student commentators, Line Henriksen and Marie-Louise Holm, for their thorough reading and commenting on my writing. My 90% seminar committee helped me to sharpen my arguments and concepts for the final revisions of this thesis. I would like to thank my opponent, Anu Koivunen, as well as the committee members, Susan Stryker, Eliza Steinbock and Frida Beckman, for their indispensable feedback. The discussions with you gave my dissertation the last ideas necessary for its completion.

Tema Genus holds regular research seminars and lectures. The opportunity to organise these seminars for several semesters allowed me and my co-organisers and colleagues, Tanja Joelsson and Magdalena Górska, to invite scholars who bridge the boundaries between academia, feminist politics and art and gave us the opportunity to meet scholars and artists who were equally invested in finding different forms of doing transfeminist and queerfeminist activism within and outside of academia. I especially thank Jackie Stacey, Malin Arnell, Anna-Stina Treumund, Paulina de los Reyes, Signe Bremer, Cecilia Dhejne, Axel Repka, Jannie Pranger, Kristin Zeiler, Domitilla Olivieri and Giulia Garofalo for accepting our invitations. The discussions with you have contributed to my thesis in many different ways.

I would also like to thank my three copy editors for their precise reading and eloquent tracking of changes in these pages. Thanks to Liz Sourbut for doing the work on the largest part of the book and to Oliver Fugler and Ashley Fortier from Queer Editing for the last two chapters! A special thanks to you, Oliver, for having contributed to the beginning of this work as a copy editor for my Linköping PhD application as well as returning for the last chapter of this finalised project five years later. I am grateful to have had kai_kerstin Donat taking care of the typesetting of this thesis as well as Tomka Weiss to design the cover image. Both of you have been so patient and more than reliable when I needed it. I am delighted that I met you, Grit Hachmeister, just in time to be able to include your illustrations into my

first and last chapter and to be able to get to know you during the last weeks of this project. Thanks, Ina Bär, for your motivation to develop a title font for the cover and an aesthetic that corresponds marvellously with the content of this study. Many thanks to Anna Siverskog for doing a superb job on the Swedish translation of the abstract and to Isak Edvardsson and Annika Persson for supplementing to hir work. It has been nothing short of a pleasure to work with all of you and to have your skills help me to make this thesis ready for publication.

I should also like to thank the Department of European Media Studies at the University of Applied Sciences, Potsdam, for welcoming me as a visiting scholar in January 2013. I am especially grateful to Simon Vincent for having invited me, as well as to Anne Quirynen and Jan Distelmeyer for welcoming me to their seminars and discussing my work with me.

I would also like to thank the Wallenberg Stiftelse for granting me a travel stipend to Norway in 2011 and the Erasmus Staff Training Award for supporting my stay at the University of Applied Sciences in Potsdam, Germany.

During the final years of my research I had the opportunity to present my work in progress research in several conference and seminar settings. I would like to especially thank the organisers of the Queer Seminarium Series at Stockholm University, in particular Janne Bromseth and Ingrid Rydberg for inviting me and also Signe Bremer and Katarina Sandström for sharing their thoughts on my work. I would also like to especially thank Aristea Fotopoulou for inviting me to discuss my first ideas on my conceptual framework at the NGender Series at Sussex University. Thanks for the supportive feedback from the excellent and engaged group of scholars who participated in the discussion of my work and in particular I thank Caroline Bassett, Olu Jenzen, Catherine Grant and Kate O'Riordan for contributing to my thinking process during the development stage of my methodological tools.

An important influence on my work came from Jack Halberstam. Their work on gender dissidence in film in general and in particular the discussions we had about their workshop on the history of Trans Cinema at the Queer Film Festival in Hamburg in 2005 laid the groundwork for my affirmative engagement with trans films and fuelled my reading

practice of these films through their exit scapes.

I benefited hugely from different courses organised by the Intergender Research School in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies. Thanks to all the teachers and participants for inspiring discussions on the course literature as well as on the different PhD projects. I am especially grateful for having had the opportunity to meet and discuss my work with Bettina Papenburg, Renita Sörensdotter, Jackie Stacey, Anu Koivunen and Rebecca Walker. The Intergender Research School also provided small and regular group meetings for early-stage PhDs headed by Nina Lykke and Cecilia Åsberg, and I am very grateful to have met and discussed my work in these meetings with Ingvil Hellstrand, Tove Solander, Anna Siverskog, Evelyn Hayn, Jay Keim, Alyosxa Tudor, Magda Górska and Lina Radžiūnienė.

I would also like to register my appreciation of the colloquium at the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies at Humboldt University, Berlin, chaired and organised by Lann Hornscheidt. The discussions on the different projects relating to feminist critical discourse analysis have been very conducive to this research project. Thanks to Lann Hornscheidt for hosting these meetings, and thanks to Jules Fuetty, Kasha Piepenstock, Julia Roßhart, Alanna Lockward, Delina Binaj, Ulrike Hamann, Jay Keim, Alyosxa Tudor and Izabela Dahl for collaborative discussions of our work.

Since I began this research, as well as during the previous years when I was starting to think about this project, I have met many people through conferences, seminars, PhD courses or in teaching who have had an influence on my work and my life. Many of you have become friends and I would like to thank especially Giulia Garofalo, Leslie Sherlock, Carolina Sven Orre, Aron Melz, Hanna Rahm, Pumin Kommattam, Åslög Enochsson, Sushila Mesquita, Suvi Lehtinen, Marianna Szczygielska, Ludo Foster, Anthony Wagner and Iwo Nord. Karin Thoresson, I thank you for making my life in Linköping so much sweeter with your wonderful cakes and hospitality. Giulia, during your visits you have made Linköping into a place of abundant warmth and joy. Special thanks also to Doro Wiese and Antke Engel, who both contributed to this dissertation at very different stages and provided me with encouraging words. Your writing and academic expertise has

been an inspiration as well as a generous background for discussing my ideas with you. I would also like to thank the participants of the Queer Art discussion and workshop group organised and hosted by Antke Engel and the Institute for Queer Theory in Berlin and Hamburg for having contributed to my work through these events.

I am happy that I had the opportunity to teach and tutor students, both online and in real-life settings, and our discussions on queer theory, film and trans studies have often set off important trajectories of thought for me that have nurtured and strengthened my arguments in this thesis.

Writing a PhD dissertation is perhaps sometimes a lonely task but having the best flatmates I could ever wish for in the different places where I have homes diminished the academic solitude with evenings around the dinner table full of laughter, serious conversations and the feeling of having a family in a new place. I warmly send my deep gratitude and love to my flatmates in Linköping and Berlin: Aistė, Tara, Magda, Marie-Louise, Tanya and, for much too short a time, also Monica. You made a new place into a home. And to you, Andrea, who endured my long absences while keeping my plants alive. The best part about living in a small city is the gratitude one feels for visitors. I especially appreciate having met you, Isa Dussauge, as our regular guest on our house mattress. You have become a dear friend to me in work as well as life.

Thanks to you, Annika Persson, for being a wonderful companion during these years of writing. Sharing a workplace with you, typing away while overlooking the park in Kreuzberg and taking small breaks to hear your clever opinions on the latest film releases or art events has been illuminating. Being able to finalise both our book projects together makes you an unexpected and much appreciated "partner in crime".

I would like to thank Renate Lorenz for having been a wonderful friend during all these years of my PhD in which we shared our travel stories as well as our writing tracks. From the beginning, you have affirmed my earliest thoughts on the exit scapes, and our discussions on the importance of academic creative writing practices, queer art and many other aspects of queer theory and queer living mean a great deal to me. I would not want to have missed our meals at the various

newly sprouting dining places in Berlin. Thank you also for reading drafts of my chapters.

Thank you, Gesine Claus. You were an enormous support during the years before I started my PhD in Linköping. Your groundedness and your humour have sustained me through many difficult moments and I am very glad to have you in my life. I also thank my friends in Hamburg: Missy, Wibke, Therese, Karen, Hans, Agnes, Crischi, Isa, and Anke, for having been great companions during my years up in the German north. Thank you Lena for having come into my life during the last few years through your love for my brother. Missy Lopez, a special thanks to you for always keeping me updated on the newest trans film releases, the latest festival gossip and continuously supporting my quests to find copies of films. Warm thanks also to the Queer Film Festival, Hamburg, for hosting a beautiful and thriving international festival and for having enflamed my passion for the enthusiastic craziness of these events.

Thanks to my closest and oldest friends, many of you from Berlin. Most of you have been by my side for many years and I appreciate your friendship, which always makes me know where I belong: Thank you, Caro, Gysie, Kim, Mel, Iris, Jana, Maja, Tina, Lale, Hannah, Skadi, Andrea P., Andrea M., Katja, Sylvana – and our co-parented dog Faya, who has become a most special life companion, as well as three of my oldest friends, Ali, Juliane and Leon. Thank you Gysie, you have been an indispensable sweet and wise friend to me for so many years now. And I would like to grant a very special thanks to you, Caro. I am most appreciative of your friendship, your formidable reliability, your ability to continuously keep in touch with me over the years, send birthday champagne up North and consistently pick me up from airports and train stations upon my return south. The ritual of our shared arrival evenings has helped me to feel at home in Berlin over and over again. Thanks Mel, for always having been there, for many years close by, now for many years far too far away in Australia. Thanks for continuously sending love and laughter my way. And as a close friend since my time at Sussex University many thanks to you, Polly Benians, for many years of different intensities of friendship and for always having been such an unusual source of smart inspiration through your artwork as much

as in your way of thinking the world and life differently.

I was not only always able to rely on the support of my friends but also on the encouragement of my biological family, who have been wonderfully supportive to me. I would like to thank the three of you, Marlis, Reinhard and Arne, for having been one of the most reliable points in my life. You have not always understood what I am doing or why I am doing it, but you have nevertheless always been there when I needed you. That is what counts most for me and I thank you for this. I also thank my two late grandmothers, Traudel and Erika, for having provided me with models of strong will and affectionate openness. You are ancestors with faults, of course, yet far more strengths. Thank you for teaching me.

My last but not least small gratitude is owed to you, Fender. You have done more with your love, your wit, your caring words in desperate moments, and your devotion to this longtime long-distance love story than I could ever phrase in words.

Your smart insights into my research and our discussions on both of our projects, which meet in the field of trans studies, has not only taught me a lot about sound studies but in general has been a daily source of inspiration and motivation for me. Thank you.

Linköping, August 2014
Wibke Straube

NOTES ON TRANSING TERMINOLOGIES

I have decided to start this thesis with a glossary of terms that I use frequently in my writing. Trans language is contextual, constantly changing, not fixed and thus I find it important to emphasise the particular meanings I give to certain terms, derived from my interactions with trans and genderqueer politics, queerfeminism and other forms of feminist deconstructivist politics. Glossaries are unfortunately normative as much as helpful. So I would like to stress that the definitions below are partial and embedded in my own positioning and not intended to produce normative renderings. They are open terms, suggested definitions, and situated wordings. And they are also short, while perhaps not necessarily sweet, as in the form of a glossary they are only glimpses into larger debates that have negotiated each term in complex ways.

The following terms are "transing terminologies". They trans language; make it more able to adapt to the challenges and potentials trans politics engender within a conventionalised binary language paradigm.[1]

gender dissidence:

The term dissidence etymologically defines disagreement (with an official set of beliefs) but also a differing in feeling and thought (*sentire* = to feel, think, coming from the Latin *dissentire*). It embraces a range of gender non-normative embodiments that are rendered gender non-normative within a heterocisnormative, binary gender system.

transfeminist

A relatively recent term that underlines the binding movements between feminist and trans politics and scholarship – the deconstruction of gender essentialism, gender hierarchies and discrimination on the basis of one's gender identity.

queerfeminist

A term that defines activist and theoretical feminist endeavours with a queer, deconstructivist and anti-identitarian agenda. I also sometimes write queer as an abbreviation of queefeminist. A term that addresses in my writing an indeptedness to a de-naturalising and de-essentialising understanding of sex/gender.

heterocisnormative:

This is an extension of the term heteronormativity, coined by feminist scholar Judith Butler, which predominantly privileges in the terminology and its history (Rich 1986) the sexually dissident subject (Butler 1990) – to invite "cis" into this term allows additionally an emphasis on the normative paradigm of the gender binary, which enforces normative heterosexuality as much as the normative gender binary while disallowing and sanctioning dissident embodiments.

hir/ze/they/them

The problem with pronouns in English and many other languages is that they gender the person whom they address. Gender non-specifying language is currently being developed and different suggestions are ongoing. At the moment in the anglophone context the singular they (and them) is the most commonly used term for addressing a person gender-"neutrally" – I put the neutral into quotation marks in order to stress that neutrality in relation to gender-related language is per se utopian at this point but could be an aim, which is the reason I use this term "gender neutral" for pronouns. Additionally, in my writing I often use the pronouns ze/hir, as a common pronoun that has sprung up from trans pronoun activism (Feinberg 1998: 1). The singular they is much debated as grammatically wrong even though it also has a very long tradition of being used in literature and in addressing people (outside of the trans community) whose gender was unknown to the speaker.[2] In this book I use ze/hir to refer to those characters in the films who have not stated a particular pronoun preference for themselves. I use ze/hir as often as they when I refer to scholars who prefer gender-neutral pronouns, or when I am not familiar with their pronoun preference.

trans

Trans is a term for transgender as much as transsexuality and it is a term that does not make distinctions between transsexuality and transgender. While transsexuality is sometimes understood as referring to a person who is medically transitioning (and also has the medically authorised diagnosis of "gender dysphoria"), transgender is used to refer to persons who do not transition medically. In practice though, transgender stands for both – and in addition I find the distinguishing of these two practices unnecessary, essentialising and even redundant because medically and non-medically transitioning practices often blend into one another, substitute for each other, are repeated, refused, or queered in various ways. Thus, I mostly write trans without the ending of -gender or -sexuality in order to emphasise the multiple factors that make it unnecessary and problematic to differentiate between them. Trans with an asterisk, hyphen or underscore are forms of queering the term, of highlighting the connections between transsexuality and transgender (trans*) or otherwise to simply address the deficiencies of the English language (and many others) to express gender diversity, gender dissidence and the pluralities of gender positions that expand the gender binary imaginary in multiple ways.

cis

A term that I use to describe a person who has not altered the gender or sex to which they were assigned at birth. I use this term to address a position that is assumed to hold gender privilege in comparison to a trans position. Positions of privilege are often not named. The term cis allows a naming of this privilege and the increased transparency of social power relations. This avoids the situation where positions of privilege remain unnamed while those that "deviate" are highlighted through particular terms. Cis offers an intervention into this. Over the past few years, this term has been increasingly used within queerfeminist, trans and transfeminist communities. Apart from highlighting privilege, the term also has problematic sides that have accompanied the rise of its use since the beginning (AG Einleitung 2011; Enke 2012b: 60). In this critical discussion, cis is argued to maintain an essentialising dualism between trans positions and non-trans positions that present gender

as stable and coherent (cis as the position that has not changed since birth) and seem to ignore queerfeminist critiques of all genders as a "doing", a performative, embodied and continuously re-embodied practice.

genderqueer

This term signifies a gender position that resists a binary, male or female positioning. It is close friends with the term trans while being different. In my writing, genderqueer presents an embodiment that is neither cis nor trans, and disidentifies with male or female gender position. Yet also here, the distinctions between genderqueer and trans are blurred and shifting in continuously productive forms. Trans female blogger skysquids has formulated genderqueer as "very consciously created as a political project like 'transgender' or 'queer', aiming at bringing together a very mixed group of people, not on the basis of 'shared identity' but on the basis of an analysis of structural power" (Skysquids 2014). While this idea of a collective analysis of structural power is enticing, this definition also seems rationalising a very real experience for many. Genderqueer may be a political project, but foremost I regard it as a situatedness that is felt to be the right one for many – a position that is necessary, often continuously defended, maybe experienced as sometimes impossible, and embedded in an embodied disidentificaton with gender binary categories.

PRELUDE

KITTEN: If I wasn't a transvestite terrorist, would you marry me?

LUDO: Yes. We're going to get married once I'm not a boy.

DIL: Details, baby, details.

LUDO: I'm a girlboy.

LUKAS: I am NOT a girl!

BREE: My body may be a work-in-progress, but there is nothing wrong with my soul. Just because a person doesn't go around blabbing her entire biological history to everyone she meets doesn't make her a liar.

LUDO: To make a baby, parents play tic-tac-toe. When one wins, God sends Xs and Ys. XX for a girl, and XY for a boy. But my X for a girl fell in the trash, and I got a Y instead. See? A scientific error! But God will fix it and send me an and make me a girl and then we'll get married, okay?

BRANDON: It's insane. You gotta see shrinks, shoot hormones up your butt, and it costs a fuckin' fortune.[3]

I hear a conversation. You read it above. Their debate – an alternate reality – an exit scape. I hear a soft crushing of limits that were intended to prevail forever, narrated as a story of infinity, unchangeability and

natural origin. They speak of a traversing of cultural boundaries, shifting out of a gendered site of embodiment, into a place not yet established in language, a utopian place, a very real place; possibly roaming into a new definable location of gendered signification for which language might provide provisional terminologies, temporary fissures in the rhetorics of gender coherence and sexed dualism.

The conversing crowd is an assembly of film characters; inhabitants of the cinematic subgenre that I label here as Trans Cinema. Usually such a character is the only one in their film who questions their destined place within the gender dualism and expresses discomfort with their birth-certified sex. Their corporeal movements are radical, sometimes unintentionally so, yet they uproot supposedly fixed notions of gender in their transitions within the binary gender paradigm; they dream of the opportunity to choose – an ordinary life, *make me a girl and then we'll get married, ok?* – a radical life or just life itself.

Within the parameters of their respective cinematic contexts, these characters all claim themselves to be in dissonance with gender-normative assignments of gender embodiment. The speakers represent the fictional characters whom I call upon in this dissertation in order to discuss the rigidity of a binary and normative sex/gender system and the limits of these constraining and categorising structures within the films; their stories point me towards those spaces in the films that allow us to trace brief moments of utopian encounters within the films.

Trans characters in Trans Cinema usually appear without the company of other gender-dissident characters. Assembling them in this "collaged" conversation, which I will continue to do throughout the Interludes in this book, will provide them with a fantasy opportunity to find collectivity, community and friendship. It will enable them to get "in touch" with one another, if not on screen then at least on the page. Their friendly banter, their discussion about their future lives, worries, ideas and the social norms that they transgress are meant to suggest an imaginary community, cinematically largely futural at this stage, with the agenda of forming collective structures within the films in order to oppose the isolation of their representation.

The specific background and the gender story that threads itself throughout my writing is informed by many parts of my own life

and in large part is staged in Berlin, Germany, and supported by my attachments to the local transqueerfeminist communities. This city has, for me, always offered the cosiness of a small city compared to the otherwise large European metropoles. Yet, despite its smallness, it is an extremely diverse place with many parallel subcultures, various established cultural communities and a large radical queerfeminist and transfeminist scene that defines itself – in its better moments – through intra-sectional feminist politics.[4] There is a clear distinction between the different radical politics of this scene and the more established, "mainstream" lesbian, gay and trans community. This so-called queer scene is the place where I spent many years as a transqueerfeminist activist and over the past decade also increasingly as a scholar. It is also the context in which I first became aware of the term trans. It was a word, as much as a possibility, that instantly troubled my identity as queer and lesbian. I had just developed these terms for myself in the late 1990s and in those early stages of being a little boy dyke I had tried and badly failed to be butch. I just wasn't "tough" enough to pull off such a performance. Trans had no appeal to my butch friends, but for me it became a potential – a place that, unlike a lesbian identity, seemed more open when I looked upon the diversity of gender embodiment that it encompassed. Yet, in practice, trans is also regulated by its own set of norms, which sometimes lack a certain sense of queerness that I would still like this term to have for me – or otherwise it would simply not be my place. It is an ongoing and productive negotiation, which has led me to writing this dissertation from the position of a person who disidentifies with binary gender categories, who prefers gender-neutral pronouns, but can deal with a "she" pronoun, and who is critically engaged with the potentials of transfeminist, genderqueer and queerfeminist positions as well as the problems or exclusions that every (strategic) identity category perpetuates.[5]

I engage in this cine-cultural and transfeminist study through the sequences that I call exit scapes in Trans Cinema; moments that I discuss in this work as potentially opening up alternatives and, ultimately, utopian sensibilities. Reading these films through transfeminist "haptics" (rather than optics in order to emphasise their multisensoriality) means that this work seeks to spur a transpolitical engagement with Trans

Cinema that is anchored in radical anti-essentialist and intra-sectional politics; a notion of politics that renders it a world-making practice (Ahmed 2004: 12); politics that impel a mapping of circumstances and an imagining of how things could be otherwise (Haraway 2004: 323).

1

TOPOGRAPHIES OF TRANS CINEMA

"We create our bodies not by jumping out of our skins, but by taking up a stitch in our skins, by folding and tying a knot in ourselves."
Eva Hayward (2011)

This thesis investigates my scholarly as much as personal engagements with Trans Cinema and its exit scapes. With a transfeminist reading of these films and in particular of the exit scapes, scenes of dance, song and dream, I will argue for the importance of these often overlooked sequences for trans as well as genderqueer entrants.[6] I introduce them as scenes that for their entrants evoke an imagining of things otherwise and that draw on utopian imaginination as crucial for Trans Cinema.

The cover image leans on a film still of *Laurence Anyways* (CAN 2012). In the fourth chapter of this thesis, I will discuss in more detail this particular scene in which a troubled couple walks together and sets out on a journey, for the first time after many years of separation, and is showered in by flying, sunlit clothes. Tomka , a friend of mine, drew this image while I spent some early spring hours threading shades and imagining the folds of wind-blown clothes. Cultural scholar Eva Hayward writes about the stitches and knots made into one's own flesh, the creating of a trans body through its own body parts as well as the universalised "wrong-body" narrative. I utilise her quote to introduce the threads that not only went into the design of the cover image, but also the threads that made me entangled with Trans Cinema, the festivals I visited, the people I met and the films I encountered. Throughout this thesis I expect to turn myself inside out, tie and untie my own knots,

in order to be accountable and transparent. I aim for this as much as possible in order to re-appropriate Trans Cinema where it is problematic (like *The Crying Game,* 1992) or where it already critically aims for a differentiated representation (for example *Ma vie en rose*, 1998 or *Transamerica*, 2005) while still remaining limited.

In order to trace and discuss an affirmative and utopian reading of Trans Cinema, I will begin this study by mapping out Trans Cinema and walk its wider cultural topography of scholarly, cinematic and activist trails. In this context I will introduce a range of definitions of Trans Cinema and the particularities of such a subset of films. In the section "Scenes of Constraint", I will elaborate more on the problematic sides of trans films which became my starting point for this study. I follow this by introducing exit scapes as different reading possibilities for Trans Cinema. This first chapter also includes a section on the selection of material for this study, the main questions and aims as well as the method that I use for my analysis of the films. The final part of this introductory chapter presents a discussion of haptic spectatorship theory and cinema of the senses through which I have developed new conceptual terminologies for this work with Trans Cinema. I will discuss and explain them in detail before I present each chapter and the central narrative of this thesis.

APPROACHING TRANS CINEMA

I mobilise the term Trans Cinema by delimiting it temporally and contextually as films in which notions of gender dissidence are reworked and negotiated and in which at least one central character transgresses binary gender norms. Various definitions and naming practices exist in scholarly and activist communities, using the terms Trans Cinema, transgender cinema or transgender film. Similarly, definitions of the term trans or transgender itself are not universal or generalisable. I will define how I incorporate the term trans into my writing and follow this discussion with an introduction to and delimitation of what I understand in this thesis to be Trans Cinema.

Transgender

Transgender, or trans as I more often write, is a term that requires precise definition in relation to how I work with it as well as how I relate to it. "Transgender" is often problematically differentiated from "transsexuality" – the first describing people who do not use medical technologies in order to transition and the latter defining people who seek medical support through surgery and hormone treatment. As trans scholar Jonathan Williams also points out, such a distinction ignores the different factors that are involved in making such a decision to transition either medically or not (including medical, ethical, economic, cultural and political factors). I agree with the argument that such a distinction feeds into dominant trajectories that render trans as more "serious" when acted upon with medical support (Williams 2011: 39). To distinguish between transgender and transsexuality is to accept this history of transsexuality as a subject of the dominant medical practice and reproduces medical power over the definition of transgenderism (Halberstam 1998: 171; Stone 2006: 228; Cromwell 2006: 510; Williams 2011: 39). A guarding of the term transsexuality and an investment in distinguishing it from transgender, as trans scholars Jay Prosser and Henry Rubin perform it in their writing, also means to reproduce one of the main problems of trans studies nowadays: the acceptance of a westernised[7] notion of gender dissidence that is only considered to be real when medically diagnosed (Stryker 2011, conference paper).[8]

I am critical of these politics that guard unnecessary and sometimes nonexistent boundaries between transgender and transsexual positions; both positions can blend into one another and they have linkages as much as distinctions.[9] Thus, I write trans without the ending of –gender or –sexuality in order to emphasise the multiple factors that make it unnecessary, problematic and apolitical to differentiate between them. To use trans as a term that encompasses various trans positionings also means to include various self-identified positions of people within this embodiment.[10] Trans in my usage links it to the notion of a phenomenon rather than an identity. This definition relies partly on Susan Stryker's delimitation of transgender who addresses it as a phenomenon. In her understanding, trans becomes "anything that

disrupts and denaturalizes normative linkages between biological sex, sex role socialization, [and] between subjective experiences of being gendered" (Stryker 2011, conference paper). Trans is anything that breaks apart the normative linkages of sex, gender and subjective experience (Stryker 2011, conference paper).

I define this term trans as a "doing" as well as a "becoming" instead of a non-processual static category. This means that I understand trans as a verb rather than a noun. I explain this idea of trans as a verb in more detail in the section on transfeminism in this introductory chapter. Trans in my work is an embodied gender positioning that transgresses conventionalised and socially enforced binary gender norms. Trans is not only a doing but also a movement, and this relates to trans scholar Finn Enke's explanation of trans as a moving *away* from the birth-assigned sex and gender (Enke 2012a: 5). Trans as a movement is not a new idea, it has often been problematically framed as a border crossing, a migration, a search for home. This is a problematic discussion that does not pay sufficient respect to the actual border crossings of refugees and migrants (Aizura 2006; 2012b) and that also reproduces a polarised notion of gender and transition – understood as a movement from one side of a "spectrum" to the other. To then approach it as a movement away, as Enke defines it, is radical as it stays clear of a binary gender trajectory and the problematics of the figuration of crossing. Trans as an "away from" is a queering phenomenon and not a point in time that leads to coherence. In addition, trans and queer feminist cultural studies scholar Judith Jack Halberstam supports this engagement with transgender as a widely framed phenomenon rather than an identity by keeping the definition of trans embodiment as open as possible, rather than fixed. Ze argues that a narrow definition would "proliferate an exoticization and fetishization and prevent trans (…) [from contesting] discourses of intelligibility and stabilization" (Halberstam 2006, conference paper). Following this presentation of transgender as a phenomenon rather than a stable and linear identity, it is neither a mobile nor a fixed position and encompasses medically transitioning and/or genderqueer, non-diagnosed, gender-nonconforming, gender variant, gender disidentifying as well as various non-medically transitioning trans positionings.[11]

Trans Cinema

In my approach, Trans Cinema offers a field of heterogeneous films, which in my definition is a subset of films that I define through the existence of one or several gender-dissident central characters (in fiction films). These films explore key aspects of trans embodiment, which can be multiple things, such as: the negotiation of (non-)passing embodiment; of transitioning and its repercussions within the social context as well as for the transitioning character; the negotiation of medical or non-medical investment; different approaches to the transing body, sexual orientation, and sexuality; and social pressures and the need to survive, to secure existential needs, and to be or become safe in the world. I would further argue that these films also feature social and political topics such as parenting, relationships and love, racism, mental "health"/ability, financial precarity, safety, coming-of-age, or professional success – to name just a few – in relation to a transing embodiment. These are key points in the negotiation of trans embodiment, socially as well as individually, and which are enacted in Trans Cinema in culturally telling ways. In this thesis I focus on feature-length fiction films. Long films in comparison to short films often allow multiple exit scapes to appear within one film, offering me a complex situating of the exit scapes within the wider context of a film. Trans Cinema also includes documentaries, short films and different experimental formats. However, I focus on the former due to the nature of my particular argument on Trans Cinema and its exit scapes in feature-length fiction films. Such a delimitation of Trans Cinema is textual as well as processual as I render it without intending to fix its meaning. Trans Cinema in my understanding is a mobile, changing and heterogeneous assemblage of films. I strategically define them through their textuality in order to provide a concise frame that allows me to make very particular arguments in relation to the films, their body politics and the possibilities of engaging with them.

A different rendering of Trans Cinema is outlined by web activist Hazel Freeman, who offers an extensive online archive of trans film references. Freeman does not use the term Trans Cinema but refers to a certain set of films as "transgender films", which I read as equivalent.

While arguing for transgender as an "umbrella" term, ze lists films that include "crossdressing, or transsexuality in one form or another" (Freeman, website reference). In hir approach, this delimits the content as "anything from a film devoted to the biography of a transgendered person, to a very brief shot of a drag queen in a bar" (H. Freeman).[12] Freeman's inclusion of minor characters and brief appearances in hir definition of "transgender films" might have its origins in the rarity of transgender films featuring trans main characters or a trans main plot – only since the early 1990s have more films that fulfil these criteria existed. Hir website also presents a valuable archive of many films from before this period which often had very limited integrations of trans characters, and mostly only as minor characters.

Film and trans studies scholar Jonathan Williams, in his interview-based study *Trans Cinema, Trans Viewers* (2012), also provides a compelling definition which argues for a delimitation that depends not on content but on the viewer.[13] He promotes the non-categorisability of trans films and the multiplicity of extra-textual factors such as "production, circulation, screening, contexts, the politics and identifications of the viewer" that determine a film as a trans film (Williams 2012: 45–6). He stresses that Trans Cinema is a practice defined through the viewing process and a socially embedded phenomenon that ultimately depends on the reading practices of the "viewers" (Williams 2012: 58, 64).

I agree with Williams that a film can be defined as trans through the reception process and that these specifications vary widely as each person who engages with these films interacts with them in particular ways.[14] Yet, this trajectory, that films which include no main trans plot or trans character can be extremely valuable for discussions on trans embodiment, addresses a wide array of films. I have chosen a more narrow focus with a contextual and temporary reading of the main character as trans in order to make very particular arguments about the importance of the exit scapes in Trans Cinema.

Trans Cinema presents itself not as a universal category but as an ongoing dialogue between activists, artists, filmmakers and scholars. This definition of Trans Cinema takes shape as enacted through the constant process of re-negotiation in different trans and queer communities of what trans can be, what it means for whom, *when* it means something

in particular and *where* it is situated. Additionally, in comparison with the past, the term trans is experiencing constant shifts and re-definitions – sometimes it is not at all a term that people use to describe gender-dissident embodiment. Thus, trans is a very particular term which often requires a specification of space and time in order to become approachable. Not all trans positions are translatable into the westernised definitions of transgender or transsexuality (Halberstam 1998: 173 ; Martin/Ho 2006; Leung 2012: 185). This also means that my writing about Trans Cinema is affected by fast-changing and rapidly meandering language shifts, in which trans activists and scholars constantly seek to grapple with the not-yet-established, non-gender-binary potential of language.[15]

The term Trans Cinema is intended to resist any essentialising or fixing notion of the identity of its protagonists. Across the spectrum of possible transgender nominations, popular, critical or medical, I have no interest in this cine-cultural and transfeminist study to fix the gender positionings of these characters. The naming of a group of films as Trans Cinema can only be temporary, especially since the field of trans studies is fast-changing and highly productive in its constant redefinition of terms, positions, words and materials (Leung 2012: 185). In this sense, to approach trans in writing presents a chronopolitical and spatial challenge; my language, defining and describing practices, and my choice of pronouns and categories might already be outdated by the time this thesis is published or when it is read at a later date.

trans films in research

The scholarly investment in Trans Cinema is so far very limited; there are only a few monographs and a small number of articles that centre on this subset of films. Jonathan Williams' dissertation, *Trans Cinema, Trans Viewers* (2011), is one of only four currently existing studies on Trans Cinema. In his dissertation, through interviews with trans audience members he investigates their viewing experiences of trans films. His study is the first to explore trans viewers and their interactions with these films. His focus, among other aspects, is on the negotiation of violence in the films by trans viewers, the effects of the trans characters'

institutional interactions on the viewers as well as how trans representations in films relate to trans community building. In parallel, Eliza Steinbock published *Shimmering Images: On Transgender Embodiment and Cinematic Aesthetics* (2011), in which she anchors Trans Cinema in a cultural analysis while drawing on phenomenology. Her work is mostly concerned with trans-produced pornography in film and video, with the exception of one chapter on literary work, which she reads cinematically through an "editing analysis". Her investigation weaves together philosophical and theoretical trajectories of film scholarship with trans studies and is concerned with the formatting of analytical and theoretical entrances to "transitionally gendered embodiments" within the field of image-making (Steinbock 2011: 253). Her study explores the ways in which transgender and Trans Cinema's "aesthetic" practices undermine scientific, pathologising knowledge about the trans body (Steinbock 2011: 253).

The third and fourth publications in the field are dissertations by Joel Ruby Ryan, *Reel Gender: Examining the Politics of Trans Images in Film and Media* (2009), and John Phillips' publication *Transgender Screen* (2006). Both investigate the (mis-)representations of trans characters, including cross-dressing and marginal characters, in their analysis. While Phillips deploys a psychoanalytical approach of textual analysis, summarising that certain representations of trans or cross-dressing correspond with certain film genres, Ryan approaches her material through ideology critique and an analysis of stereotypes that investigates the negative representations of trans characters. Further monographs on trans embodiment in film, such as Ludo Foster's *The Queer Tomboy: A Hidden History* and Anthony Clair Wagner's *Be(com)ing Other: Monsters, Transsexuals and the Alien Quadrilogy*, are forthcoming. Foster investigates tomboy and genderqueer representations through an exploration of the temporalities of childhood in contemporary popular culture. They focus on film as much as literature in their study and work with a queer conceptual framework of fluidity, mobilising in particular Haraway's concept of "permanently partial identities" (Haraway 1991: 154). Anthony Wagner's work draws on their own artistic practices as well as on a "trans* film criticism" of the Alien Quadrilogy of films. As the Alien films feature no trans characters, Wagner reads them for

positions of estrangement, transgression and transformation through the somatechnics of monstrosity in order to establish trans positions within them.

Only a few articles exist, the majority in relation to the more widely discussed films *The Crying Game* (1992) (Handler 1994; Kotsopoulos/Mills 1994; Edge 1995; Ayers 1997; DuttaAhmed 1998; Grist 2003; Yekani 2007) and *Boys don't Cry* (1999) (Aaron 2001; Halberstam 2001; Henderson 2001; Hird 2001; Swan 2001; White 2001; Brody 2002; Willox 2003; Yekani 2007). A few chapters in monographs are concerned with the same films (Halberstam 2005; Serano 2007) as well as a handful of other articles focusing on different films (Halberstam 2005; Jones 2006; Sypniewski 2008; Sandell 2010; Spitz 2011).

cinematic contextualisation

Trans Cinema consists of an assemblage of various films, genres and topics, which are sometimes motivated by community activism or political interest but also in some cases by the sensationalist aspect of trans and its potential to upgrade any random film topic. In a way it is impossible to claim a general definition of this subset of films. It ranges from melodrama, romantic comedy and tragicomedy to thematic genres such as martial arts, road movies, coming-of-age, thrillers and musicals.

Trans Cinema varies significantly in its structures of funding, circulation, production and reception. The context of production, the background knowledge of the trans community and activism, and the backgrounds of the production team, directors and acting staff differ enormously between films. Some films are community-based, low-budget productions, some have significant funding, many of them have little or no connection to trans communities or trans activism.[16]

The early 1990s were a landmark era not only for transfeminist and queer feminist politics, which brought new theoretical challenges and potentials but also for the new cinematic presence of trans characters (Phillips 2006; Kam Wai Kui 2009; Ryan 2009; Williams 2011). Trans Cinema began to grow, with more and more films being produced that featured trans main characters, and entering international film festivals as well as regular cinema programmes (Phillips 2006; Kam

Wai Kuim 2009; Ryan 2009). This shift towards a stronger cinematic representation of trans embodiment was taking place in parallel with global changes on a political and economic scale. During the late 1980s, both Europe and the U.S. experienced a significant political and economic transformation as a consequence of the Eastern European revolutions in 1989, the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of East European Socialism. According to the analysis by transgender historian Susan Stryker, the sex/gender[17] system at that time "deformed and reformed in tandem with new material circumstances" (Stryker 2006a: 8). Stryker claims that these large political transformations, alongside the development of the European Union into a multi-national federation, with the consequences of the acceleration of globalisation and global trade within neoliberal capitalism, had strong effects on gender and body politics at this time. In her introduction to the *Transgender Studies Reader 1*, Stryker argues for the importance of these political and economic global transformations in the development of trans studies (Stryker 2006a: 8), arguing that the sum of these changes effected a re-examination of multiple social binaries, and stressing that transgender studies were able to step into the "breach of that ruptured binary to reconceptualize gender for the NEW WORLD ORDER" (Stryker 2006a: 8). These reconceptualisations and renegotiations of the meanings of sex and gender find strong repercussions in the way in which films with trans characters begin to surface in cinema programmes and at film festivals from the early 1990s onwards.

trans masculinity and genderqueerness in trans cinema

Engaging with Trans Cinema usually means dealing with films featuring female trans characters. Films with trans male characters are in fact rare. Films such as the true-crime narrative of *Boys don't Cry* (1991), the coming-out story of *Romeos* (2011), the coming-of-age story of *Tomboy* (2011), the cinematic adaptation of Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando* (1992) as well as two smaller, trans-community-based productions, *By Hook or by Crook* (2001) and *Open* (2010), provide a few exceptions. Most recently these films are joined by *52 Tuesdays* (2013), a coming-out film about a middle-aged parent and his interactions with his teenage

daughter and the rest of his patchwork family.

Queer scholar and sociologist Jan Wickman stresses that the presence and "visibility" of trans masculinities in the mass media has increased since the queer and transgender movement began to strengthen over the last two decades (Wickman 2003: 48). I agree with Wickman, but even though trans masculinity has been more present in cinematic representations during the last 20 years it remains small compared to the larger range of trans feminine representations. Interestingly, trans embodiments that are explicitly neither female- nor male-identified (stated through dialogue or direct positionings) are fully absent in feature-length fiction films. This area of trans male/female/gender disidentifying representation in cinema, the imbalance of representational frequency and the forms of representation of these differently gendered positions have so far not been addressed within queer and trans studies, apart from Wickman's article.

The comparably smaller number of films featuring trans male characters is also accompanied by different forms of plot construction and narrative tension in these films. In films in which the trans male character is grown up, the character(s) are most often exposed to sexualised violence enacted by cis male characters and contextualised through the passing and the failing to pass of this character (*Romeos,* 2011; *Boys don't Cry,* 1999).[18] *Tomboy* (2011), featuring a child character, closely links its character to a continuous fear of being discovered as passing and for the "knowing entrants" this directly links to the fear that the character will become a victim of (sexualised) violence.[19] *Open* (2010), along with a few other films, presents an exception as it does not include physical/sexualised violence directed against the trans character. In the film *By Hook or By Crook* (2001), whose central character is beaten up, there is no sexualised violence. Also the recent *52 Tuesdays* (2013), along with *Orlando* (1992), present their trans characters without any connection to physical or sexualised violence. Interestingly, in *52 Tuesdays* the character is not shown in a situation of passing but rather in the process of establishing a trans identity, dealing with hormonal treatments and the body's intolerance towards the medical drugs. As there is no suspense enacted through passing/failing to pass, passing in this film is free of physical/sexualised violence

towards the trans character.

Sexualised violence seems to be a conventionalised narrative device in films with trans male protagonists that seems to be used to accentuate the over-stepping of cis male gender boundaries, to put the transing characters "in their place" and to re-establish and reinforce the gender hierarchy (Gay 2014). It also links to the overly dominant use of rape as a narrative tool in both television series and cinema, where rape is used in order to victimise a cis female character and create drama and higher ratings (Gay 2014). The contextualisation of the trans male character with sexualised violence that is otherwise conventionally deployed against cis female characters works to undermine the masculinity of the male trans character and effects an intra-diegetic feminising of the character (Halberstam 2005: 90). In contrast to the representation of trans masculinity in films, sexualised violence is not central to the representation of trans female characters, who experience discrimination and violence in other forms.[20,21]

a transfeminist approach to trans cinema

The issues I raise around Trans Cinema are stirred by my transdisciplinary and transactivist scholarship, with which I aim to add to the new and emerging field of transgender studies (Stryker 2006a ; Lykke 2010b). My political background and my social and intellectual influences have been shaped through my own involvement in these transfeminist, queerfeminist contexts. I reflexively position myself in this research field as a genderqueer entrant, living in a setting in which discussions on trans embodiment are present and part of everyday discussions. I write this thesis from an academically unconventional angle as I aim for a self-reflexive and situated position in relation to the subject of this study, not only in order to make clear my own entanglements with trans politics and cinema but also in order to deconstruct any authoritative claim of definition over a research subject (Richardson 1997; 2007). I am using this contextualisation of myself as a starting point for an affective, embodied transfeminist close reading of the films in which I investigate Trans Cinema for the possibilities it offers to unfold joyful scapes that open out towards a trajectory of utopian sensibility. Such

an engagement with film is definitely inspired by the recent trend in film studies that approaches multi-sensorial affects and identification via affect (Marks 2000; Sobchack 2004; Barker 2009; Papenburg 2010; Koivunen 2010b; Lindner 2012; Papenburg/Zarzycka 2013). In general, my dissertation is traced by footsteps that aim to outline my intended path towards particularity, situatedness and accountability (Haraway 1988; Flax 1992). The ethics of this project are derived from my own self-situatedness within my research, which I try to make as accessible as possible by writing differently and being conscious of the exclusions that academic writing can produce. The writing ethics of this project are embedded in responsability (Åsberg 2014b), a working trajectory towards a dialogical interaction with research objects as entangled and co-constitutive of subjectivities rather than an objectifying and authoritarian approach.

In my take on Trans Cinema, as well as in all instances where I write "trans" or "transing", I mobilise trans as a verb and not as a noun or adjective. This definition of trans draws upon, amongst other influences, gender and trans studies scholar Lucas Crawford's designation of trans as an "operation that works (like 'queer') against the very imperative to maintain strict propriety in relation to the identity categories, bodies, lives, and movements that gather around the concepts of gender and sexuality" (Currah/Stryker/Moore 2008: 13; Crawford 2012: 60; Leung 2012). To use trans in this grammatical form emphasises the movement, the non-determining and non-essentialising meaning that I would like this notion to enact for the trans-affirmative politics of my text and my engagement with Trans Cinema.

Using *trans* as a verb also introduces Donna Haraway's critique of fixed, bounded categories into my text through her investment in "getting at the world as a verb, which throws us into worlds in the making" (Haraway 2004: 330). Transing is a worlding, it makes new meaning, opens up the reading to multiple meanings (Dyer 2013: 2) and ultimately generates possibilities to imagine alternate worlds. Following Haraway's intervention on "worlding", transing as a reading strategy for Trans Cinema becomes a term that allows processuality, the constant becoming and changing in the practices of embodiment. Trans as a verb also emphasises that, in my writing, it is not an identity category, but a

movement away from sex as assigned by birth and towards a state that is self-determined (Enke 2012a: 5). The notion of *transing* in my work also draws on trans feminist linguist Lann Hornscheidt's suggestion of "transxing" which emphasises the reworkings and crossings of different embodiments that are strongly intersectional (Hornscheidt 2012: 367).[22] Trans as a verb comprises a transing of character construction, of reception politics, of possible identification tableaus for trans entrants as well as my own transcorporeal involvement with these films.[23] The term entrant that I use here presents an alternative wording for "viewer" based on a particular conceptualisation of cinematic engagement and a terminology that does not privilege a visual approach to cinema. I will explain both this particular access to cinema and the notion of entrant in the final section of this introductory chapter. Transing cinema in my definition in this study means to read it through a trans feminist lens and to discuss gender dissidence through a politicised notion of transing and certainly not through a medicalised definition.

Transing also draws on the anti-identitarian and anti-essentialist politics of queer feminist theory (Butler 1990, 2005; Sedgwick 1993a; Jagose 1996). I agree with trans studies scholar Aren Aizura that trans theory needs to acknowledge its debts to intersectional feminist and queer theory. Intersectional feminist and queer theory critique heteronormativity, and this finds resonances in the critiques of cisnormativity developed by trans scholarship and activism; this combination "turns 'trans' (…) [in] an anti-identitarian direction" (Aizura 2012a: 135). To use trans as a verb, meaning a temporary, processual and de-essentialising movement or phenomenon rather than an identity, highlights how such an approach is affected and informed by queer feminist politics and theory. Following trans studies scholar Paisley Currah, queer is conventionally understood as referring to sexuality alone, yet queer can also be deployed to tackle embodiment as queering also refers to the practices that denaturalise gender boundaries and problematise asymmetrical hierarchies (Currah/Stryker/Moore 2008: 13).[24] Yet, despite the fact that I stress trans as a movement, a verb, and especially as anti-essentialist in my take on it, I would also like to emphasise the additional importance of trans as an identity category that enables political negotiations and the articulation of repression. Trans as a verb

balances these ambivalences of anti-identitarian trajectories while also being a "strategic" identity category (Spivak 1987).[25]

Transing relates strongly to a movement in time and space. Conventionally, trans is understood as a one-directional, horizontal movement between two genders. Trans scholars Stryker, Currah and Moore argue for it as a circular movement within "a capillary space of connection" through which the transing bodies are enmeshed with nation and the state as well as temporal practices and techniques such as race, gender and class that interpellate bodies into particular existences (Currah/Stryker/Moore 2008: 14).

Transing draws upon Sedgwick's definition of queer as an "open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning" in which neither gender nor sexual embodiment are monolithic (Sedgwick 1993: 8). It also extends this definition through its particular shift towards gendered body politics rather than the conventionally privileged focus on sexual orientation in queer theory and politics. Yet, I also engage with a track of trans studies that links trans with queer rather than opposing it. This is not to say that trans and queer are the same – instead trans presents a particular position that has specific forms of negotiating gender embodiment and social constraints. In my own approach, it is the queer and feminist elements within critical strands of trans theory and politics in particular that resonate with my own positioning within trans scholarship, and which propel its socially transformative and critical potential.

Gender-dissident embodiment, whether in a medical transition, post-transition or without medical transition, can always also be a queer position just like any other gendered position if its politics are radically intersectional and intra-dependently aiming for a de-hierarchising transformation of social structures (Engel 2002: 199; 2003: 181); a political investment into anti-essentialist, ethical and intra-dependent

practices working towards a political trajectory of alliances between multiple differences. Only when trans is affected by queer politics as well as queerfeminism can a critical investment in the constitutions of sexuality, sexual orientation and most of all gender embodiment and the transgression of its normative, categorical, binary boundaries take place and generate socially transformative trajectories. This not only takes up what Aizura calls feminist and queer politics but also draws on angry, disidentificatory and anti-assimilationist positions that set the foundations of trans studies, such as Sandy Stone's notion of the "posttranssexual" (Stone 2006) or Susan Stryker's "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage" (2006a, orig. 1994). Stone's article presents a masterful critique of feminist scholar Janice Raymond's transphobic attacks in her volume *The Transsexual Empire* (1974, republished 1994). "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage" (2006a, orig. 1994), written in support of Stone's position, further elaborates on a dissident trans figure through Stryker's discussion of the figure of the monster as well as her notion of transgender rage. These texts, as the building blocks of transgender Studies, create a critical, self-reflexive and situated trans studies and link it to queer and queerfeminist politics. These early endeavours have more recently been further discussed by, amongst others, artist and trans scholar Anthony Wagner in their series of monster workshops and their disidentificatory politics that claim a position as "elf" (as well as a "beast") in order to voice a dissident gender embodiment and to reappropriate and embrace a positioning as "non-human" or not quite human (Wagner 2011; 2010a).

The positionings of these three scholars, and others like them, open up a trajectory of wider political alliances across multiple groups, who are rendered social "deviants" from the norm, in dissidence with normative expectations about racialised and gendered embodiment, sexual orientation, age and ability. As Susan Stryker asserts, one goal of trans studies is to disseminate not only epistemological frameworks that consider sex/gender embodiment without assumptions about the truth of binarism but also frameworks through which anti-transgender violence is becoming understood as linked to other forms of systemic

forms of violence, such as poverty or racism (Stryker 2006a: 10).

Transing presents a trajectory that explains not only my engagement with Trans Cinema but also my embeddedness in a field of transdisciplinary gender studies. Transing, as a practice, "takes place within, as well as across or between, gendered spaces" (Stryker/Currah/Moore 2008: 13) and also, I would argue, across and between disciplines.

SCENES OF CONSTRAINT

Trans Cinema often works through an overarching feeling of fear and impending danger. Results from Jonathan Williams' reception study on the responses of trans entrants to "anti-trans violence" in Trans Cinema show that these scenes produce an increased feeling of risk, trauma, shock and fear in the "viewers" (Williams 2011: 111, 123). In relation to the everyday fact of anti-trans violence for trans people, a white, Australian trans participant in Williams's study describes how "[y]ou're constantly afraid of being assaulted, you're constantly afraid of being *killed*" (Williams 2011: 115). Yet, these violent scenes also seem to include a degree of ambivalence. Williams stresses that the watching of anti-trans violence not only leads to an increased feeling of fear but also is partly experienced as pedagogical and informative by the trans entrants in his study (Williams 2011: 112), as well as leading to collective risk management strategies (Williams 2011: 112). To define this term, he draws on a health survey on risk management by a gender and sexually diverse population in Australia. In this context, the respondents' risk management strategies include the altering of behaviour, the avoidance of particular spaces and areas, attempting to pass as cis, trying to become unnoticeable, and avoiding flirting with strangers (Williams 2011: 117). In addition, queer film scholar Julianne Pidduck argues on violence in trans films, in particular in relation to *Boys don't Cry*, that "[a]ctual attacks, threats and near misses, a familiarity with the continuum of hatred and violence, can intensify the disturbing recognition ('that could have been me') of watching such an event" (Pidduck 2001: 101).

This means that Trans Cinema and its violent scenes are discussed

as disturbing, traumatic and troubling (Pidduck 2001: 101; Williams 2011: 123). The forms of violence to which I refer in particular in this thesis range from sexualised violence, through non-sexualised, physical violence to verbal assault. I also include the everyday experiences of misgendering and disrespect of one's gender expression in the large range of anti-trans violence in Trans Cinema. Partly feeding into the overarching effects of fear is the representation of these characters as existing without larger support networks, as isolated from other trans characters or supportive characters in their daily lives as well as a voyeuristic depiction of the trans character's nakedness, e.g. in *Transamerica* (2005), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001) and *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005). They are also often embedded in a structure that experiences their passing as deceptive. The potential of being "found out", losing the passing, perpetuates the perception of the character's life as being in danger, such as in the films *Boys don't Cry* (1999), *Tomboy* (2011), *Romeos (*2011), *The Crying Game* (1992) and *Transamerica* (2005). Apart from the depiction of physical and verbal violence, I also refer to particular representational dynamics as constraining, such as the representation of the trans character as usually singular and isolated in the films, as well as often voyeuristically exposed as naked. This notion of constraint emphasises the element of gendered control and restraint in relation to the limiting and oppressive forms of gender normativity directed towards the trans characters.[26]

Often connected to the theme of deception, approaching violence and isolation, is the fact that in particular situations the trans character is shown as partly naked, exposing breasts, a flat chest or genitals that are in "discrepancy" with the gender identity of the character. These "naked-body shots", as I call them, appear in a large number of films (e.g. *The Crying Game* 1992; *Transamerica* 2005; *Romeos* 2011; *Tomboy* 2011). They conceptualise the trans characters as untruthful, deceptive and fake (Hornscheidt 2005; Stryker 2006a). According to Susan Stryker, transgender people are often assumed to "make a false representation of an underlying material truth, through the wilful distortion of surface appearance. Their gender presentation is seen as a lie rather than as an expression of a deep, essential truth" (Styker 2006: 9). This visual strategy inscribes "truth" about gender onto the body

and produces a separation between gender positioning and the body, thus reinscribing a problematic body/mind separation (Hornscheidt 2005; Stryker 2006a). In my understanding such a representational economy reproduces a pathologising definition of trans embodiment as this embodiment becomes reduced to bodily difference and at the same time is also exoticised, sensationalised and made into a spectacle even as it is being erased. This overshadows the political agenda of trans activists and scholars who target the depathologisation of trans embodiment as well as the right to self-definition.

Apart from their consequences for trans entrants (Williams 2011), in terms of the informative as well as the traumatic elements, the scenes of constraint often address the trans characters through registers of fascination, disgust, shame and humiliation. Hence, rather than challenging gender normativity, these films often unfold an audio-visual economy of objectification that stabilises and reinforces assumptions about a cis-normative gender binary. The objectification of trans characters acts through cinematographic techniques such as the camera's perspectives on trans characters, the voyeuristic exploitation of the danger connected with passing (and its possible failure), and exploitative naked-body shots. These representational techniques of framing and editing and their somapolitical consequences for the representation of the character, as well as for the entrants, are established in parallel with exoticising and spectacularising representations that include but are not limited to class, ability, race and mental health (Halberstam 2005). Queer and trans scholar Judith Jack Halberstam has elaborated on this idea using the concept of the transgender gaze and its different forms of supporting or destabilising the trans character(s).

Whereas these scenes occur in many films, I would like to argue with Williams that the way in which they are carried out and their effects on the entrants vary (Williams 2011). The constraining scenes in a film such as *The Crying Game* (1992), which uses the trans character in order to produce shock effects and feelings of disgust and deception in the cis entrants when the naked body of Dil is shown, differ in their depictions of violence from *Ma vie en rose* (1997) or *Laurence Anyways* (2012). These later films show anti-trans violence in order to problematise it and the wider cis-normative circumstances rather than to use it for

sensationalising effects. For example, the film *52 Tuesdays* (2013) also depicts the trans protagonist without a shirt, yet the naked-body shot in this film appears to collaborate with the trans character rather than being exploitative.

Yet, despite the existence of great complexity in the different forms of violence, with the different emotional consequences they might have for their entrants, the overall presence of violence and constraint urges me to question whether these films offer alternative possibilities to engage with them affectively. Do the films include scenes which offer the entrant a moment of rest, a pause, a space of calmness from the continuous presence of threat, in order to regain strength to deal with these representations as well as their resonance in everyday life?

It has been a productive starting point to begin this project by thinking about its constraining scenes in order to turn intentionally to the affirmative and hopeful spaces and times in the films that provide cinematic "strategies of coping", as literary scholar Tove Solander referred to them when discussing my research.[27] Without saying that these scenes are generally problematic or should be excluded from Trans Cinema, I find them only bearable or productive when connected to further scenes that also offer different degrees of affirmation as alternatives. Consequently I direct the focus of this study towards those sequences in the films that arouse feelings of hope, joy and ultimately provoke imaginaries of alternate worldings: the exit scapes.

EXIT SCAPES

Exit scapes provide moments of intense filmic engagement that temporarily allow an escape from the cinematic dominance of the negative affects of constraining scenes that, as trans film scholar Jonathan Williams concludes from his audience research study, create fear and trauma for the trans entrants (Williams 2011: 123).[28] Exit scapes are scenes in which the trans character experiences a break from feeling afraid or being exposed to (potential) violence. I found these scenes in the moments when the trans character dreams, is absorbed in listening to a song, or is immersed in a dance or the imaginary world of fantasy

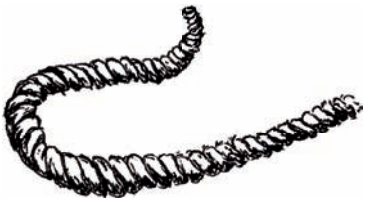
and dreams.

The term scape calls to mind the concepts of ethnoscape, mediascape, financoscape, ideoscape and technoscape coined by the ethnographer Arjun Appadurai. He works with these five global scapes, defined as those landscapes that produce global cultural flow and counteract any idea of cultural homogenisation (Appadurai 2006: 588). My notion of exit scapes also speaks of a cultural flow and is inspired by Appadurai's emphasis on imagination as a force for social transformation (Appadurai 2006: 587); yet the concept of exit scapes speaks of a very particular event within Trans Cinema where an opportunity arises to disidentify with the scenes of constraint. My notion of the exit scape also finds resonances in film scholar Helen Hok-Sze Leung's "queerscapes" (Leung 2001: 425). Leung uses this term to define how cinematic scapes of queerness also relate to non-cinematic negotiations of queerness. She uses queerscapes in this way as she is inspired by geographer Gordon Brent Ingram's study of public spaces and how they stage heteronormativity (Ingram 1997). I regard cinema as part of a mass negotiation of meaning, which in this sense is part of such an area in which homo-, cis-, trans- and heteronormativity are negotiated. I developed the term exit scape without knowing of Leung's concept of queerscapes yet it resonates in the overlay she elaborates of geographical and cinematic space, and the blending of different interplays on gender embodiment that take place in these areas.

The scenes of constraint and the violence that is often included in their dynamics, have often been critiqued for constructing the films' entrants as cisnormative (Halberstam 2005: 80; Williams 2011: 114). I would like to suggest that the exit scapes, with the possibilities they offer for positive and affective identification with the trans character, allow all entrants to be temporarily constructed as trans – they become transing subjects in their feelings for and with the character. Film scholar Helen Hok-Sze Leung refers in an article on Trans Cinema to how important it is to "burst transgender wide open" (Stryker/Currah/Moore, referenced in Leung 2012: 184; 189).[29] The exit scapes explicitly shape a trans entrant as the subject being addressed in these scenes as well as propagating a cinematic imaginary[30] in which it is not a trans entrant who is constructed as trans but rather each entrant is temporarily and

within that space transed.[31]

To engage with Trans Cinema through exit scapes presents a strategy that is anchored in a mode of disidentificatory film reading. Disidentification presents a level of agency in the confrontation with cultural material in which the existence of culturally marginalised subjectivity is silenced. In *Disidentification: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (1999), cultural and queer studies scholar José E. Muñoz discusses the practices of queer Latino and Afro-American performance artists. Disidentification presents a mode of negotiating with the dominant ideology that is embedded within dominant structures – it is a strategy "that works on and against dominant ideology" and aims to "transform cultural logic from within". It is a cultural practice that holds onto problematic objects despite everything and tries to change and "invest it with new life" (Muñoz 1999: 12). In the forthcoming article "Passionate Disidentifications as Intersectional Writing Strategy" (2014), queer feminist scholar Nina Lykke draws on José Muñoz as well as Judith Butler's discussion of disidentification (1993). Through analysing the writing strategies of postcolonial studies scholar Chandra T. Mohanty and trans studies scholar Sandy Stone, she investigates how their anti-identitarian and intersectional writing provides the opportunity to claim a voice, to become a subject through a position of speaking, which is otherwise denied to the marginalised subject. In this vein, a disidentificatory mode of engaging with Trans Cinema enables the possibility of shaping exit scapes into them and engaging in a passionate, anti-identitarian and transformative exchange with these films.



In *Girl Meets Boy: The Myth of Iphis*, the Scottish fiction writer Ali Smith revisits Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. A few sentences in her book beautifully conceptualise the imaginative strength of the film sequences that I call exit scapes: "(...) it was always the stories that needed the telling that gave us the rope we could cross any river with. They bal-

anced us high above any crevasse. They made us be natural acrobats. They made us brave. They met us well. They changed us" (Smith 2007: 160). I intend in my writing on Trans Cinema to engage with the exit scapes as such a "rope" to assist me as an entrant in getting through many other parts of films that are sometimes hard to bear in their implicit sensationalising, spectacularising, explicit exploitation and objectification of the trans characters.

The exit scapes are "through" spaces, not "outside" spaces. They refuse the idea of being able to claim a space outside of normative interaction. The exit scapes are entering spaces into a permeable world of "becoming with" (Haraway 2006: 113) the film. In this sense, they are not counter-narratives but extensions of a story – a story within a story (Cixous 1993: 28) and throughout. The exit scapes enable part of the film to grow into places of contemplation, to sprout worlding sites within the film that can enact an alternative mode of being with the film and becoming with the film.

Exit scape is a spatial metaphor that also links to the spatialising term of the entrant. A story, such as a film, in my understanding also presents an imaginary landscape, a place of becoming with and through. The exit scape picks up on this idea of cinema as an imaginary space and time. The entrant is invited into the particularly hopeful scapes of the dance, song and dream. As spatialising metaphors, the entrant and the exit scapes are connected to the movements that are enabled within and through them, the rope that helps across a stream of constraining story parts, and the entrant who is moving away from a denomination of gender that is laden with constraint.

In my research on Trans Cinema I am interested in what these exit scapes do and the question of what feelings they unfold in contrast to the scenes of constraint and their affects of fear. Exit scapes have an impact on trans identities and are embedded in narratives of pleasure, vulnerability, strength and joy. I argue here for an affirmative approach, for the transformation of "negative into positive passions" (Braidotti 2006: 201) in order to produce a different film involvement that allows us to write passionate and joyful moments into the films so that we can cope with the troublesome and traumatic sequences. According to feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti, this "situates sensuality, affectivity,

empathy and desire as core values in the discussion about the ethics of contemporary non-unitary subjects" (Braidotti 2006: 28)[32]. I am inspired here by Braidotti, who always situates her claim of joyful ethics within an idea of political transformation. She explains, "[i]t is the empowerment of the positive side that marks the ethical moment of transformation" (Braidotti 2006: 202). For her, film specifically, as well as art, literature and theatre, are not illustrative but are places of application for a "conceptual creativity" (Braidotti 2006: 202). The exit scapes and an affirmative engagement with film make it possible for me to trans the cultural imaginaries of Trans Cinema.

Dance, Song and Dream

In the exit scapes that I will discuss in the next three chapters on dance, song and dream sequences in Trans Cinema, I will address, among other scenes: a child dancing with hir grandmother, who is hir only ally apart from hir fantasy friend, the fairy; a young trans boy who listens to a queer performer sing a falsetto piece that speaks of despair but also of hope; and a sequence in which pieces of clothing fall out of the sky like snowflakes, freshly touching the faces of a lonely trans woman and her ex-lover who seems to be unable to handle her partner's transition.

Sometimes the exit scapes blend into one another, a dance takes place within a dream, or a song is sung while someone dances. Some films also include a range of scenes of singing and dancing, such as *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001) or *20 Centimetros* (2005), or dreaming as in *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* (2006) or *Ma vie en rose* (1997). This is sometimes explained through their genre structure; a musical includes several song and dance sequences for example. Yet often it appears to be a structure of Trans Cinema that the character experiences at least one of these sequences in a film: a dance, or a daydream, sings themselves or listens to someone else singing.

Exit scapes present spaces as much as temporalities within Trans Cinema – they present a particular setting, for example a club or a garden party. Also, for the entrant, they offer a certain place to locate themselves within the film. Time is embedded in space and undetachable from it – a certain place also means a certain time, within the diegesis

as much as extra-diegetically for the entrant. Space and time are always spacetime – a concept I will discuss in depth in the dream scape chapter in relation to critical feminist geographer Doreen Massey (Massey 1992) and queer feminist physicist Karen Barad (Barad 2007).

Trans films also include further exit scapes apart from song, dream and dance. These three exit scapes present just one way of reading Trans Cinema affirmatively and I chose them because of their power to draw the entrant into the films. Further aspects which I decided not to follow up further but which can also be conceptualised through the notion of exit scape present elements such as lighting and editing, editing rhythm or film colour.

Not all parts of an exit scape disrupt every norm of embodiment – they are not universally "good" or free from ambivalence. Or sometimes they might even be moments of which we should be suspicious in their promises of safety and comfort. Nonetheless, the transing and reappropriating of Trans Cinema through a reading of exit scapes is motivated by an affirmative engagement with these films that, in consideration of the ambivalences also embedded in the exit scapes, conceptualises them as modes that temporarily disrupt the constraints directed towards trans embodiment in film. The exit scapes present a methodology to find fissures in the trans cinematic scenes of constraint and a way of conceptualising these films as providing scenes that allow a short slipping into a different world, imaginative but nonetheless important.

Affective Relationality

Approaching Trans Cinema not through the idea of critique but instead through an affirmative lens finds an echoe in Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick's notion of "reparative reading", which she developed in 1997 in her anthology *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings of Fiction* (1997) and continues to argue in her monograph *Touching Feeling* (2003). Sedgwick's notion of reparative reading rejects the mode of "paranoid reader" as suspicious and defensive and "over-invested in the power of knowledge", as film scholar and philosopher Anu Koivunen states in reference to Sedgwick in her article on queer affect studies (Koivunen 2010a: 47). Reparative

reading instead fosters hope, surprise and wonder and allows an openness to vulnerability (Koivunen 2010a: 48).

The affirmative interaction with Trans Cinema, my development of the notion of the entrant as well as my embodied and affective engagement with these films and their exit scapes are all indebted to the field of affect studies, its validation of an embodied response to cultural texts and thus transcorporeal relationalities with the world (Massumi 2002; Cvetkovich 2003; Ahmed 2004; Deleuze/Guattari 2004; Probyn 2005; Manning 2007; Berlant 2011).

Affect is often defined as the grip that an event or experience has on the body before it becomes conceptualised (Manning 2007: xxi). Following this line of thought, affect is not the same as emotions or feeling. Here, affect means a first corporeal response to an event – according to Erin Manning it is the "with-ness of the movement of the world" (Manning 2007: xxi). "Affect is an ontogenetic power of existence. Emotion is the backgridding of affect" (Manning 2007: xxi). Yet the boundary between affect and emotion is blurred and I work with the notion of affect as an emotional (conceptionalised) as well as physical response to representation. In my work it means the "ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another" (Deleuze/Guattari 2004: xvii). Affect in this sense means an emotional "becoming with" between film and entrant. It stresses the feelings that are evoked between the entrant and the material as much as how these feelings influence the reading of the material.

Gender studies researchers Marianne Liljeström and Susanna Paasonen, in their anthology *Working with Affect in Feminist Readings* (2010), explain that affect has become a non-unitary site that combines different approaches. They meet on the site at which they problematise a body-mind dualism, remain anti-identitarian and address critical reading practices (Liljeström/Paasonen 2010: 1). Affect theory among others draws upon embodiment, phenomenology, biology and history (Koivunen 2010b: 22). This trajectory de-authorises the mastery of the text, and "interpretation becomes a question of contagious affects" as well as the reflexive encounters between the reader and the subject of a study (Liljeström/Paasonen 2010: 2). Film scholar Anu Koivunen

argues in her essay "Yes we Can? The promise of affect for Queer scholarship" that this approach coincides with the contemporary ethics of feminist research, which is influenced by situated politics and particularity (Koivunen 2010a: 50). Affect theory refuses a neutral, disembodied position and reverberates in an ontoepistemological pursuit to performativity (Butler 1990; 1993). Instead of expressing a "yearning for reparation or comfort" (Koivunen 2010a: 59) an affective approach embraces a methodology that allows to see connections between embodiment, identity and subjectivity and the importance of this intra-connectedness for transqueerfeminist scholarship.

Utopian Sensibility

So far, I have sketched out my criticism towards the sensationalising or objectifying dimensions of Trans Cinema and the overall problematics of Trans Cinema's scenes of constraint. The exit scapes present an entrant with a strategy to cope with the film's negative affects and scenes of constraint. Their strength unfolds in the moments and spaces that they offer the entrant to experience a disruption of the constraining elements. But I am interested in more than just theorising them as coping strategies – I would also like to draw out in this part how the exit scapes engender opportunities for the entrants to reimagine trans embodiment as well as strengthen hope for transformation and a different becoming and existing.

In the following chapters I discuss exit scapes as moments and spaces within the films that offer utopian futurities and hope as much as sequences that work through a notion of escape.[33] I follow this not as a term that conceptualises denial but rather fosters escape as a movement of resistance. I suggest understanding escape here as a protest against norms, as a temporary refusal within a short sequence of film, and thus as an ethical element in transfeminist and queer cultural politics (Muñoz 2006: 172). In this movement of refusal, the exit scapes also relate to Enke's notion of trans as an "away from", as I discussed earlier (Enke 2012a: 5). Trans is often conventionally perceived as a movement from one gender pole to the other. By understanding it as an "away from" (Enke 2012a), the notion of exit scapes converses with

a trans position that refuses the birth-assigned position of gender and escapes its authority. As a distancing notion, trans is always also a "near-ing" – which I understand as moving closer to a paradigm of possible embodiments and shifting towards a different paradigm of gendered existence.

The exit scapes provide a world-making spirit in their temporary escapes from normative appellation (Muñoz 1999: ix). I understand hope and utopian becoming as the driving force behind social transformation and the foundation of any form of social change (Bammer 1991; Dolan 2005; Muñoz 2006, 2009; Ahmed 2010). The exit scapes present an entrant strategy into Trans Cinema that focuses on the futurities, the utopian and joyful moments that open up in the trans imaginaries of the exit scapes and which allow me to experience a film affirmatively. Their spacetimes even stress the imaginative force of film (Ferri 2007) and the utopian potential that this space of imagining things differently entails for the entrant. As spaces of imagination and trans temporalities (instead of queer temporalities) of anticipatory fantasies, these scapes are guides for the entrant's sense of being in and of the world (Åsberg and Lum 2009; Åsberg 2014a, 2014b). Their imaginaries unfold into the collective dreaming made possible in Trans Cinema and the entanglements of the entrants with these films.

To conceptualise the exit scapes as utopian moments of escape and through their potential of new worldings, leads me to think of these scapes as providing profound moments of strength that can be vital for transqueerfeminist deconstructivist politics and formative for an agenda that aims at the problematisation of asymmetrical, gender-binary hierarchies and the denaturalisation of sex/gender (Engel 2002: 199; 2003: 181; Aizura 2012a: 135). In this transing movement towards Trans Cinema and its exit scapes, these sequences present utopian elsewheres and elsewhens. In *Undoing Gender* (2005), Judith Butler takes up the notion of elsewhere and brings it together with fantasy and the power of imagination; imagination as the driving force to conceive of the world differently, the elsewhere as a political motor, as the need to develop a different vision of reality. It is imagination that "points elsewhere and when it is embodied it brings the elsewhere home" (Butler 2005: 29). The exit scapes are in this sense escapes for the

trans characters in the films as much as for the entrants; they are the elsewheres and elsewhens and the "away-froms" of a heteropatriarchal, cisgender paradigm. For the characters, they allow the experience of feelings of, for example, reassurance, comfort or belonging, that for a short duration stop reproducing the continuous flow of danger and constraint. Hence, for the entrants, these scapes work not only as a coping strategy towards the otherwise violent elements of these films but also, and most importantly, as a space as well as a time within the film that allows them to relax, to gain strength, a short moment of cinematic enjoyment without fear of discovery, violence or threat; a moment that enables the envisioning of the world otherwise.

In the previous sections, I laid out my conceptual approach to Trans Cinema and my personal and scholarly investment in transfeminist politics and theory. In the following sections I would like to describe in more detail my selection of material, the films that I chose for the discussions in the upcoming chapters and the central question that I pose to them. I will follow this by outlining my motivation for undertaking this study, then I will present the central questions and elaborate upon the method of transfeminist reading that I apply to the films.

MATERIAL: THE SELECTION OF FILMS IN THIS BOOK

In this book I engage with material taken from a selection of films from a larger group of Trans Cinema films produced after 1990 which, as I argued above, was a social and political turning point for queer, trans and feminist politics. The films that I discuss in this dissertation are contemporary in the sense that they are recent productions; none of the films is older than 1992.

I started to assemble my material led by curiosity about how political changes affected the production and aesthetics of trans representation within the cinema. Accordingly, I watched documentaries as much as feature-length fiction films starting from this period, with a stronger emphasis on fictional accounts. The main body of films to which I was able to gain access were produced in Western European and North American contexts.

I began watching films that featured gender-dissident characters many years ago, and started to approach them more extensively with them once my research intensified in 2009. I watched the same films repeatedly, at festivals, at home, on my computer, in cinemas, pointed towards them via festival programmes, by friends, the trans community, trans and queer websites or articles. The material included in this study is derived from my engagement with international queerfeminist and transfeminist contexts. The exit scapes that I chose for the analysis in the following chapters present films that in general include very significant and complex dance, song and dream sequences, which enabled me to make substantial analyses of them.

Questions and Aims

In this dissertation I aim for an affirmative approach to Trans Cinema and to the selected films. This started through my desire to find entrances into the films that allowed me a gesture of reappropriation. Rather than remaining in the ever-repetitive and vast dimensions of critique in these films and their representations of trans embodiment, I followed my curiosity about why in fact they interested me and what moments seemed to have the capacity to carry me through the scenes of constraint.

Why do I engage with these films at all when they contain such problematic sequences or overall are drawing upon feelings of fear or threat? One could argue that there is a growing pool of alternative representations of trans embodiment available in trans art or community-based productions (Steinbock 2011: 253) that is involved in finding new and different ways to represent trans embodiment without embedding it in constraint. Yet, I turn towards these films, with their scenes of constraint, firstly in order to try to find alternatives in them, the particular spacetimes in them that produce elsewheres and elsewhens and open into utopian worldings. Also, films present as a multisensorial and engaging medium of trans representation, a popcultural archive of trans embodiment that I aim to reclaim through different forms of engaging with them. Instead of emphasising their scenes of constraint, I concentrate on their affirmative sequences. This also means that it is important to analyse Trans Cinema, both creatively and critically,

because it provides a cultural set of reference points for trans communities as much as cis contexts to talk about, visualise, imagine and possibly re-imagine transgender embodiment. And, lastly, film presents a negotiation of reality that has various consequences and impacts on people's lives and sense of self (Dyer 2013: 3). Representational images "delimit and enable what people can be in a given society" (Dyer 2013: 3). This makes it relevant to approach these films through multiple channels and, as I suggest here in particular, through an affirmative and transfeminist reading.

I am fully aware that negative images are not always received negatively, as William's eloquent study on trans "viewers" outlines (Williams 2011: 2012; Dyer 2013: 3). Yet, the critique of these films as being problematic in either their representation of the trans character or the surrounding characters or story-line (Halberstam 2005; Jones 2006; Serano 2007; Kam Wai 2009; Ryan 2009) remains vital and provides a motor for my investment in Trans Cinema. In fact, a central aim of this study is to suggest ways in which to engage with these films differently, to propose entrances that allow us to intra-act with their potential and the niches they open up for trans becoming.

Secondly, in this book I aim to undertake an examination of Trans Cinema in which an affectively affirmative, trans-corporeal and passionate engagement with these films can suggest new ways of engaging with them. I intend to lay out an entrance into Trans Cinema that understands these films as a cultural text and is open to transfeminist intervention, disidentification and re-imaginings of gender embodiment. With this aim in mind, I found the term exit scapes, which presents a conceptual term for my film involvement as much as a method for investigating Trans Cinema. In reading these films through exit scapes, I aspire to an affirmative and trans-corporeal engagement with these films that treats film as an object of intra-action (Barad 2001: 97). My intra-action with these films through exit scapes allows a movement of reappropriation and an alternative opportunity to deal with the constraining representations of trans embodiment.[34] In doing this I make use of transdisciplinary references to queer, feminist and trans studies, to cultural studies of literature (Hall 1997; Ahmed 1998; Sturken/Cartwright 2001; Lukic/Espinoza 2011; Dyer 2013) and film studies

(Marks 2000; Sobchack 2004; Barker 2009). Furthermore I explore transing itself as a scholarly methodology. An affective approach that supports my aim of tracing the intimate intra-relationalities between the film and myself, or any other hypothetical entrant.

Apart from the aims to reappropriate trans representation in the cinema through an affirmative reading, and suggest ways to approach them through a transfeminist reading, my third trajectory is to achieve a reformulation of occularcentric film terminology that is linked to my understanding of film as not only an object of intra-action but also a multi-sensorial, haptic experience (Marks 2000; Sobchack 2004; Barker 2009).

This project revolves around four central questions, which take the lead in my intra-action with Trans Cinema and my reading of the films:

1. In what ways can dance, song and dream sequences, as so-called exit scapes in Trans Cinema, provide spaces and times of disidentification as well as of re-imagination of trans becoming?
2. In what ways can the exit scapes provide a "pause" from scenes of constraint and even transform into worlding spaces and utopian temporalities?
3. What analytical tools can I develop through trans, feminist and queer cultural scholarship in order to investigate the medium of film beyond an audio-visual approach, and how does an altered methodology change the understanding and potential of these films?
4. How can the analysis of exit scapes be productive for transfeminist, transdisiplinary engagements with Trans Cinema at large?

METHOD, AND HOW I ENGAGE WITH THE MATERIAL

The trajectory of my work is that I write and research through a self-situated and intra-active engagement with the films and connect the personal with the "cultural, social, and political" (Ellis 2004: xix).

Writing through a position of subjective entanglement does not mean that such a pursuit is individualised – instead it holds out the opportunity to "see how lived experience is the basis for investigation of more generalizable forms" (Hayward 2012: 92, in reference to Sobchack 2006). I intra-act with the films as a trans-corporeal entrant, drawing on my own situatedness in feminist, queer and trans contexts. Drawing upon feminist cultural studies scholar Redi Koobak's discussion of relationality (Koobak 2013: 65) between images and their entrants, I locate my analysis through such relationality as I perform a transfeminist reading of Trans Cinema. In this transfeminist (or transing) reading I mobilise the exit scapes as a suggestion for how to intra-act with these films in a mode that *transes* the films. Why do I refer to this reading as a transing or transfeminist instead of a queer reading? Queer scholarship often silences trans positions and privileges a focus on sexuality in its research. Despite the fact that my transfeminist approach is linked to a queer feminist trajectory, I find it important to emphasise the focus on gender embodiment and to problematise this void in some areas of queer scholarship. As film studies scholar Jonathan Williams' research reveals, wider academic debates on queer, and in particular in relation to queer cinema studies, silence trans films or trans characters by reading them as butch lesbians, feminine gay men and/or as cross-dressing characters without acknowledging the possibility of reading transing characters as trans (Williams 2011: 7).[35] In this sense, transing as a reading with its link to queerfeminist politics, in contrast to queering, offers a strategic emphasis on gender embodiment. This emphasis on gender rather than sexuality conceptually grants a central position to transing embodiments. Such a transing and transfeminist reading allows utopian, affirmative and pleasurable fissures to open up in the films and produces the possibility of reading the films through exit scapes of song, dance and dream. In this sense, this transing reading strategy not only means that in my writing I offer a reading of these characters as trans but it also presents a "tool" that allows me to produce a reappropriation of these films by approaching them through an affirmative lens.

Close Reading

The transfeminist reading that I apply to Trans Cinema in this dissertation is anchored in the method of close reading (Ahmed 1998; Shor 2007; Lukic/Espinoza 2011). This method draws on cultural studies (Hall 1997; Sturken/Cartwright 2001; Lukic/Espinoza 2011; Dyer 2013) as much as on visual analysis (Sturken/Cartwright 2001; Jones 2012) and film theory (DeLauretis 1985, 1987; Marks 2000; Gledhill/Williams 2000; Sobchack 2004). Yet it also transes these approaches as it moves away from disciplinary methodological conventions. This study presents a transdisciplinary endeavour, working with film through textual analysis that draws on transgender studies as well as queer feminist theory.

I investigate Trans Cinema as a "cultural text" that in its stories and character constructions provides particular reference points for identification and disidentification. I read it as a social landscape that produces a range of meanings, depending on the background and self-situation of the "reader" (Lukic/Espinoza 2011: 116). In this way, the films present a negotiation of reality yet not a reflection (Hall 1997: 3; Sturken/Cartwright 2001; Winter 2006; Dyer 2013: 3). The entrant of this dissertation is derived from textual analysis and personal introspection (Hermes 2005: 92; Lukic/Espinoza 2011; Hayward 2012: 92) instead of being taken from audience studies or reception studies (Fiske 1992; Stacey 1994; Turner 1999; Jenkins 2000).

Working with a textual approach towards cinema and film analysis means being aware of the multiple reading possibilities of cinematic text (Turner 1996: 81; Hermes 2005: 151; Dyer 2013: 3). An entrance into Trans Cinema through its exit scapes presents a subjective reading and a suggestion for how to engage with these films if one experiences their violent and constraining sequences as unbearable or troubling. I approach cultural texts as affecting the reading possibilities but not ultimately determining them (Fiske 1992: 127; Turner 1996: 99), which makes it possible to apply a transfeminist reading to a constraining or violent film text. These readings are based on a discursive trajectory that is invested in the effects and consequences of representations (Hall 1997: 6) as well as motivated by aesthetic reflexivity (Lash/Urry

1994: 5). Aesthetic reflexivity, originally a literary concept, is based in practices of aesthetic modernism, not in "monitoring of self and of social roles, but in perpetuating self-reflexivity and situatedness of social background practices entailed in the reading" (Lash/Urry 1994: 5). In approaching Trans Cinema through close reading, I analyse particular sequences in detail while also providing an overview of the wider context of these sequences.

CONCEPTUAL TERMINOLOGY

In conversation with both feminist cinema and art theory, I develop terminologies that are unconventional for writings about films. I have already introduced the term exit scape in earlier parts of this introductory chapter. It is a productive term that also partly resonates with DeLauretis' term of the *gap* (DeLauretis 1985), or the literary/television studies term of the *blanks* ("Leerstelle") (Neuss 2002), yet it also differs from these through its utopian trajectory. Further terms that I have not discussed so far, or have only briefly mentioned, include the entrant and sensible cinematic intra-activity. The entrant is a different phrasing of "spectator" while sensible cinematic intra-activity is an alternative to "spectatorship".

The Entrant

This particular form of relationality between the film scenes and those who get involved with them, the entrants, led me to rethink the definitions of conventionally used terms such as "spectator", "viewer" or "audience", which all convey occularcentric meanings. As a consequence, the term entrant represents a proposition to rethink conventionalised terminologies and not only to theorise film engagement as multisensorial but also to phrase it through a term that seeks to reach out to the embodied, affective and multisensorial identifications of the entanglements between an entrant and a film. The entrant emphasises close intra-action with a film, stepping inside a film, becoming with a film, living *through* it as well as *within* it. The idea of "entering" into

a film, becoming entangled with it, rather than "watching" it, appeals to the whole-body experience of cinematic intra-action (Marks 2000; Sobchack 2004; Barker 2009). A person who engages with film, watching it, becoming *through* it, experiencing feelings, memories and affects stops being simply a "viewer". According to media studies scholars Bettina Papenburg and Marta Zarzycka, such a viewer becomes a "subject of an embodied encounter" (Papenburg/Zarzycka 2013: 4). This means that the entrant becomes a permeable body, multi-sensorial rather than optical, touched and interpellated by music, other bodies and objects while touching upon different futures. The entrant body in these exit scapes is a hearing body and a moving body, a seeing body that is not hailed by words but by sounds, kinaesthetics, imagination, vision and tactility as well as the permeabilities and ambivalences between the polarisations of real and imagination, future and past, reality and fiction.

My argument concerning the entrant also draws on art historian and curator Irit Rogoff's notion of "being implicated".[36] Rogoff discusses this approach to engaging with images through the idea of implication as a foundationally critical and politicised notion (Rogoff 2008: 165); a term that refers to both "the condition in which you are embedded, and [through which] you see (…) in a critical and theoretical way" (Rogoff 2008: 165). In correspondence with this argument, the entrant takes shape as an active part of the image and is "fully implicated in the lived conditions [of images]" (Verwoert 2008: 346). Thinking of images as both inviting their entrants and *implying* them poses a form of critical intra-action with visual culture that fertilises my thinking and my examination of the exit scapes in Trans Cinema (Cramerotti 2011). Implication, in its Latin meaning of "entanglement", nurtures the term entrant as it emphasises the entrant as being entangled with the film. To think of the entrant and film as interwoven agents allows me to point here to the political trajectory of this thesis – a theorising of film as an active part of this world, called into life through its entrants; neither film nor entrant exists without the other – and in their mutual engagement with one another they enact worlds, alter images and life. Exit scapes facilitate a different vision of embodiment for their entrants. Images are not representations – they are part of this world, intra-actively embedded co-inhabitants that culturally intervene and

possibly transform.

The spectator in my writing has now become the entrant. This implies a different take on film involvement and the embodied subject who intra-acts with a film. To phrase this intra-action more precisely and in order to grasp the dynamic between a film, the exit scape and the entrant, I developed the phrase sensible cinematic intra-activity – a concept that is grounded in haptic visuality (Marks 2000: xi) and that I conceptually shift through engaging with physicist Karen Barad's notion of intra-activity (Barad 2001: 97) as well as sensibility (Dyer 1985: 222).

Sensible Cinematic Intra-Activity

"Why should our bodies end at the skin?" Feminist biologist Donna Haraway asks this question in her "Cyborg Manifesto". There she questions the limits of bodies, their naturalness, their essence, and their humanness (Haraway 1991: 96 in Probyn 1996: 6). In this well-circulated text, she reconceptualises bodies as being always technologically shaped, never natural, anti-essential, and as constantly in-between units. Cultural studies scholar Elspeth Probyn, in her introduction to *Outside Belongings* (1996) picks up Haraway's question and takes it further by inquiring, why should skin "end at our individual bodies?" (Probyn 1996: 6). Her understanding of belonging is exactly this "yearning to make skin stretch" (Probyn 1996: 6); to reach out, to connect, through bodies, objects, space and time. This yearning to stretch, to find a grip, to extend one's body towards other bodies, suggests a search for community. It not only presents an important entrance to how I engage with Trans Cinema through exit scapes but also foregrounds the notion of sensible cinematic intra-action.

This figuration of "skin" that extends the body implies sensitivity and leans towards the notion of touch that feminist film scholar Laura U. Marks takes up in her monograph *The Skin of the Film* (2000). Marks renders what I call "the entrant" of film through the notion of "haptic spectatorship" (Marks 2000: xi) and together with Vivian Sobchack (2004) makes important interventions into how cinema is theorised. In *The Skin of the Film*, Marks examines the importance of

literal and figurative tactility in film viewing. This approach presents a critique of the privileging of visuality in spectatorship theory and offers an alternative engagement with film that considers touch along with the audio and the visual.[37] Marks addresses the way in which visual culture leaves in place the sensory hierarchy, in which "only the distance senses are vehicles of knowledge, and Western aesthetics, in which only vision and hearing can be vehicles of beauty" (Marks 2008: 123). Marks proposes that film viewing presents a corporeal practice.

She shares some of her main points on "haptic visuality" (Marks 2000: xi) with feminist film scholar Vivian Sobchack. In her writing, Sobchack draws on the viewer as a "cinesthetic subject" (Sobchack 2004: 67) – deeply entangled with a multisensorial film perception. As Sobchack argues, the "cinesthetic subject both touches and is touched by the screen – able to commute seeing to touching and back again *without a thought* and, through sensual and cross-modal activity, able to experience the movie as both here and there rather than clearly locating the site of cinematic experience as onscreen or offscreen" (Sobchack 2004: 71). These two scholars, Marks and Sobchack, meet at the site of a multisensorial spectator and the importance of the notion of touch and hapticity within cinematic participation. Sobchack and Marks, along with film scholar Jennifer Barker's conceptualisation of cinematic engagement as a multisensorial experience, challenge the sense of vision that until recently was privileged in cinema theory (Elsaesser 2010: 109). Until their contributions, feminist film theory was preoccupied with notions of voyeurism, fetishism and the male gaze (Mulvey 1975; Doane 1999a; DeLauretis 1999), and did not account for the corporeality and affectivity of the entrant (Elsaesser 2010: 109).

In psychoanalytic, semiotic or structuralist approaches, film remains a visual medium, an external object, which can and should be considered rationally, decoded, and interpreted. In an embodied investigation of film, the entrant is rendered as neither passive, nor projective (Marks 2000: 149). Such a methodology thinks of cinema as an extension of the entrant's embodied existence (Marks 2000: 149) and interacts with film as reciprocally co-constituting and co-constituted with the entrants. This stance of being and becoming through a multisensorial experience of film opposes the idea of the Cartesian objective and distanced film "viewer" or the perpetuation of a screen–"viewer" dualism. This multisensorial take on film critiques cinematic theory for its optical focus, which reproduces an object–subject separation while establishing an ocularcentric normativity. According to Laura Marks, such an approach to multisensorial cinema theory critiques the idea of Cartesian ocularcentricism as a form of thinking the visual subject that is associated with capitalism, consumerism, surveillance and ethnography: "[a] sort of instrumental vision that uses the thing seen as an object for knowledge and control" (Marks 2000: 131). Optical visuality, as Marks refers to the one-dimensional model of looking, relies on militarism and other forms of social control, which act through vision (Marks 2000: 133). Drawing on gender studies scholar and filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-Ha's critique of the specificity of western visuality, Marks claims that visuality objectifies others and deprivileges speech, hearing and the other senses involved in the film experience (Marks 2000: 133). The relationship between an optical "viewer" and an image is built on mastery. In haptic visuality, the relationship is built on mutuality (Marks 2000: 184)

Haptic visuality (Marks 2000), cineaesthetic spectatorship (Sobchack 2004) and kinaesthetic empathy (Barker 2009) are feminist responses to such an understanding of visuality as optical, disembodied and ocularcentric (Marks 2000: 163). They resonate within a phenomenological methodology and support me in my theorisation of the entrant as entangled and mutually co-constituted through its practices, story-tellings and its surrounding objects and beings. Cinema becomes a space of mutual co-becomings. The body and the image are no longer separate entities but instead become reciprocally entangled (Sobchack

2004: 65). This methodology of sensual cinema theory presents a productive point of departure for thinking about exit scapes in Trans Cinema.[38] This approach invites me to think of entrant and film as deeply entangled and reciprocally becoming with each other (Haraway 2006: 35). This mutuality in particular allows for an affirmative co-becoming with the film for the entrant in the exit scapes.

This multisensorial understanding of cinema results from a wider feminist critique in the scopic regime of euroamerican societies and their privileging of the sense of sight, including the imperialist, capitalist and objectifying implications that the power of this sense has gained in these contexts (McClintock 1995; Haraway 2008; Shildrick 2009; Jones 2012). Within the western paradigm and its hierarchy of senses, sight is rendered the highest and most eloquent; it is also a sense that allows a distance from its object and avoids closeness to the seen object (Shildrick 2009). The proximal senses, which require nearness, such as taste, touch and smell, are regarded as unable to judge, as emotional and too close to the body to allow the gathering of "neutral", "objective" knowledge. The senses that involve contact are rendered as "minor" (McClintock 1995; Jay 1995; Marks 2000; Sobchak 2004; Mirzoeff 2006).

Historically, visual media have been scientific devices that were believed to deliver a truthful and "objective" reproduction of reality (McClintock 1995: 37). From the beginnings of visual media, visual technologies have been collaborators in normalising and disciplining discourses of institutionalised racism. Until today, photography and film have been used in medical and psychiatric discourses to exploit and objectify bodies that cross categorical boundaries of gender norms.

Cultural scholar Anne McClintock, among others (Irigaray 1974; Haraway 1988, 2008; Pollock 1998; Shildrick 2009), debates the impact of vision on the visual medium and its complex relationship with discourses of objectification in terms of gender, class and race. She connects visual technologies with the production of categories of class, gender and race during the militarist and political colonisation of the Caribbean Islands and many parts of the African continent by the British Empire. McClintock describes several highly problematic implications produced by this privileging of vision and its materialisation as visual technologies. Vision in the euroamerican context is perceived

as the most objective and most truthful sense (Jay 1995).

McClintock argues that photography and film are used to provide scientific support for the truth of the sciences owing to the fact that they are perceived to be objective (McClintock 1995: 37). Visual apparatuses and their images participate strongly in the formation of race, class, sexuality and gender categories. The sciences and visual technologies are deeply entangled with the regulation of categories and the consequences for those who transgress them (McClintock 1995: 37). In my research on Trans Cinema I am sensitive to those footprints of categorisation that are immanent in the medium of film and that I find recurring in many problematic representations of trans characters that surface not only within the naked-body shots but also in the instances in which the trans character becomes a spectacle, objectified and isolated within the film as a singular, pathologised, "deviant" character.

I am critical of the privileging of vision and the reproduction of modernity's ocularcentrism in a project that works with both film and dissident embodiments. Yet, I am also critical of the complete neglect of the visual as promoted by Laura Mulvey, an early feminist film scholar, who propagated the disruption of images as an attempt to destroy the patriarchal identifications and viewing pleasures that she argues expose the female viewer to a male gaze (Mulvey 1975). My project is influenced by Teresa deLauretis' attempt, instead of "disrupting man-centered vision", to look at the "gaps" in order to ground another form of vision and a different treatment of the visual medium (deLauretis 1985: 163). In spite of looking at the representational gaps in the visual, I set out in this thesis to discuss touch and hearing in particular as equally important senses for the engagement with cinema as vision and seeing – in particular the seeing of things that others cannot see.

I would like to suggest a terminology that shifts the focus from hapticity and tactility as I find it in Sobchack, Marks and Barker towards a stronger emphasis on multisensoriality, which privileges neither tactility nor visuality. I propose the notion of sensible cinematic intra-activity as a term that remains ocular-critical towards film engagement and its entrants and emphasises the film–entrant reciprocity. I agree strongly with the theory of haptic cinema outlined by, among others, Barker, Sobchack and Marks, yet their terminological focus remains directed

by conventional cinema theory, which originates in discourses that privilege the sense of sight.[39] In order to shift the politics of film involvement towards a multisensorial approach I find that the rhetorics also need to be revised.

I change the notion of Mark's *haptic* spectatorship to a "sensible intra-activity", as sensibility refers to the dimension of multi-sensoriality as well as locatedness within film engagement. Sensibility is a reappropriative term that refers to emotion, embodiment and marginalised subjectivity, which refuses the Cartesian body/mind split. Cultural studies and film scholar Richard Dyer, in his key text on "Entertainment and Utopia", understands sensibility as "an effective code that is characteristic of, and largely specific to, a given mode of cultural production" (Dyer 1985: 222). He refers here to sensibility in Hollywood musicals and a notion of sensibility that looks back at a long history within medicine as much as within literary movements into the 18th century. Sensibility refers to the emotional responsiveness of a person (or an object) to an event, an object, or another person. Sensibility denotes a raised awareness of the senses, the nerves and in its medical history is related to "illnesses" of the 18th century, such as hysteria. The experiences of fits, fainting and weakness of the nerves are all part of the conventional definition of sensibility, which is closely connected to contagion as this illness was perceived as infectious (Gordon 2009: 19). This particular history of sensibility shapes it as an illness of a body rendered as marginalised within cisnormative contexts. In my writing, I would like to make an attempt to apply and reappropriate this notion of sensibility to aid in an understanding of trans sensibility within film entrantship because it critiques the conceptualisation of embodiment as contained and healthy, bounded and rationalist.

The concept of intra-activity has been developed by queer feminist physicist and philosopher Karen Barad, who uses this notion to argue for the connectedness and inseparability of the objects, apparatuses, and different bodies that are part of a certain situation (Barad 2001: 97, 104, 106).[40] Drawing upon her concept of "agential realism" (Barad 2007), I understand film as well as the entrant to be active agents, which mutually and intra-actively co-constitute one another. Film is active and agential in its material semiotic effects and affects on the

entrant. This approach to film as producing the entrant draws on a long tradition within cultural studies and reflexive reception theory (Lash/Urry 1994; Hall 1997; Dyer 2013). Yet Barad provides an extension to this trajectory through her emphasis on material-discursive phenomena, which allow the film and entrant to be not only discursively constituted through one another but also materialised through one another. I work with film as material that matters; that acts, moves, and challenges. I understand mattering here as the production of meaning, the formation of itself as an active element that materialises meaning, bodies, objects, differently in different contexts. Intra-activity and sensibility emphasise the entrant's entanglement with film narratives and exit scapes. Sensible cinematic intra-activity presents a methodological examination of cinema that emphasises its multisensoriality along with a strong critique of optical terminology and thus the continuation of ocularcentric engagement with film.

This methodology of sensible cinematic intra-activity provides me with the tools to theorise myself as an embodied entrant when engaging with Trans Cinema. It offers me an analytical-conceptual framework through which films can become a space where identification goes beyond the question of the gaze, plot or character identification and actually stretches further to a sensatory, affective level (Lindner 2012). Sensible cinematic intra-activity offers a suggestion for an embodied approach to film, a sensatorial and sensible reception and a perspective that focuses specifically on the affective elements in the images and sounds. It composits a multisensory audio-visuality. The notion of sensible cinematic intra-activity grasps the multiple corporeal affects that the trans character experiences within the exit scapes, as well as the effects of the film on the entrant.

I propose sensible cinematic intra-activity as the political foundation that rests within my argument on the exit scapes and their notions of touch, movement, listening, seeing, dancing, singing and dreaming. This perception is a mutual process between multiple agents in the entrant process. It is a complex geology composed of the cinematic apparatus and cinematic technologies, including technologies of gender and sexuality (DeLauretis 1987; Stryker 2006a; Sullivan/Murray 2009).

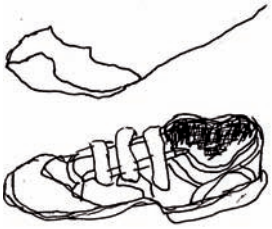
To access Trans Cinema through a methodology of sensible cin-

ematic intra-action draws upon affect theory (Massumi 2002; Deleuze/Guattari 2004; Koivunen 2010a, 2010b) and phenomenology (Marks 2000; Merleau-Ponty 2005; Ahmed 2006; Shildrick 2009) as much as the theoretical strands of "cinema of the senses" (Marks 2000; Sobchack 2004; Barker 2009). But it also proposes a novel approach to film, which leads into an affective, reciprocal and embodied entrant theory. Such a conceptualisation of film allows us to engage with it as a mutual co-constituting object as much as an agential medium. The conceptual briccolage of these theoretical trajectories, their common emphasis on mutuality, locatedness and embodiment, inspire me to theorise film as something that involves the entrant on a level that goes beyond ocularcentric theories of identification and supports me in conceptualising film engagement as fundamentally an affective, embodied intra-action. Film drags me in: it is a story that transports me into a different space for the duration of the film, and introduces me to people I have not met before – of course they are characters and it is a written script; nevertheless the emotional and multi-sensorial scapes that a film allows me to feel, and become a part of, are graspable through this approach.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This first chapter, "Topographies of Trans Cinema", which presents an introduction to the field of Trans Cinema scholarship, to my conceptual engagement, my situatedness and my suggestions for a revision of cinematic terminology, is followed by three analytical chapters. I devote each of these chapters to one specific form of exit scape: dance, song and dream. In each chapter I focus on one human sense in the analysis of the exit scapes. Each chapter builds on three to four films. I start the film discussions with a general introduction to the particular film before I "zoom in" to a selected exit scape within this film. I do this by providing a plot summary followed by a detailed description of the exit scape. I relate the discussion of each exit scape to its potential for the entrants as well as to the trans embodiment of the central character. A central element is the affective strength of the exit scapes and their

utopian potential and sensibilities. Thinking of the exit scapes via notions of utopian becoming, hope and possibility leads me to the spatiotemporalities of the exit scapes as another crucial element within this study; the discussion of spacetime mattering, the reworking of time and space and the trans chronopolitics in and through film engagement.



In the first analytical chapter, "Dancing Dissidence: Touch, Contact and Contagion", I analyse dance through the sense of touch. I discuss this sense in terms of its etymological connection with both contagion and contact, and discuss its intra-actions with the physical movements in dance and the connections drawn through these movements and the movement of the trans character towards new orientations and new belongings. Central theoretical concepts that I invoke in this discussion include Sara Ahmed's notion of "disorientation" (2006) and Elspeth Probyn's discussion of belongings (1996). I am unfolding the debate on these issues through the question of how the dance scapes, movement and touch produce a trans body that is poised between vulnerability and possibility. I will provide close readings of central exit scapes in the films *Ma vie en rose* (1997), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001) and *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005).

The second analytical chapter, "Song and the Politics of Listening", is devoted to song sequences in Trans Cinema. I discuss the films *Romeos* (GER 2011), *Transamerica* (USA 2005) and *The Crying Game* (UK/JPN 1992) by connecting the debate on song, lyrics and song interpretation to the sense of hearing and sensible attentiveness.

Hearing presents an important element in transgender becoming and trans politics as well as in cinematic intra-activity because trans is often not a visible position. Thematically I am guided in this chapter by the concept of "embodied listening" (Ouzounian 2006), through which I investigate the question: how do songs sung by characters within the films enable a different trans becoming for the trans characters? In what

ways do these songs, their interpretation and listening to them relate to possibility and futurity?

The last analytical chapter, "Dreams, Utopias and Spacetime Mattering", takes up dream scapes in Trans Cinema through a discussion of seeing differently, seeing things that cannot be seen by others and transed spacetimes in the films *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* (South Korea 2006), *Ma vie en rose* (FR/B/JAP 1997) and *Laurence Anyways* (CAN 2012). In this chapter, I follow the audio-visually animated dreams, fantasies and imaginations of the trans character. I investigate the norm-transgressing potential of the imagination in cinema as well as the strengths of its integration within Trans Cinema. Sensorially, this chapter takes up the sense of sight as a central sense in cinematic engagement and focuses on its subversive potential, and its power to disrupt the categorising power of vision. Seeing and being seen or "read" or "misread" visually has great significance within trans becoming. Seeing in itself is bound to fail in the decoding processes of many trans people – some trans people can pass, many can't, while others do not aim or wish to do so. This chapter takes a critical stance towards sight, drawing on the strength of vision, and utilising it in its potential to disrupt normative visual discourses. The chapter asks what it can mean to see things differently – as the protagonists of this chapter do. I ask in the discussion: how does seeing and the imagining of alternative futures inter-relate? And in what ways do the dream scapes enact the boundaries of fantasy and reality? How does this translate to questions of space, time and utopia? This chapter in particular draws on a discussion of queer temporalities (Halberstam 2005; Boudry/Lorenz 2011; Freeman 2010; Lorenz 2012) and politics of spacetime mattering (Barad 2007) as well as utopian sensibility (Bammer 1991; Dolan 2005; Ahmed 2010; Mu.oz 2009).

I close the discussion on exit scapes and Trans Cinema in the chapter entitled "Please Bring Strange Things: A Conclusion", followed by an Afterword. In these chapters I summarise the different discussions, assemble my results and point out further research trajectories in the field of Trans Cinema by drawing on feminist author Ursula LeGuin's poem *Always Coming Home* and relating her figure of the "thing" to the strange, beautiful and slippery things that exit scapes can be. You will see…

INTERLUDE

BREE – *sitting at the bar; in front of her a glass of gin and tonic, next to her* BRANDON. *They are chatting, occasionally watching the documentary featured on the bar television opposite them. The channel is screening a documentary about the fin-de-siècle dancer Polaire. The TV is in silent mode. The night is early, the bar quiet.*

BREE *comments on the film, shaking her head in wonder:*
…she dances so strangely. It's crazy!

BRANDON: Look, it says this is the epileptic dances. I wonder what they're saying about this strange dance style. It looks old fashioned, black and white images. Strange woman. The people back then must have thought she was insane.

BREE: Yes, one could assume so. It's interesting though… Look, the subtitles say that she copied the movements of patients with hysteria at a French hospital. It was thought that to imitate the movements led to the contraction of hysteria. *Shaking her head again:* That is a bizarre idea!

HEDWIG, KITTEN *and* DIL *enter the bar.* HEDWIG *is scheduled to play with her band later in the evening.* KITTEN *and* DIL *came to join her for a drink beforehand. Everyone greets each other, kisses, hugs.*

KITTEN to BREE and BRANDON: Look who's here tonight. Didn't I hear a little bird telling me we will see you here this evening? How are you both?

The whole group begins talking and chatting at the same time with each other… Hours later, HEDWIG *plays with her band, the evening is getting late.* DIL *– putting down her glass, looking at* BRANDON, BREE *and* KITTEN. *HEDWIG is still in the backstage area with her band:*

DIL: I wouldn't mind a bit of dancing now.[41]

2

DANCING DISSIDENCE: TOUCH, CONTACT, AND CONTAGION

Contact:
contingere "to touch, seize," from *com-* "together"
+ *tangere* "to touch".

Contagion:
from Latin *contagionem* "a touching, contact,
contagion," related to *contingere* "to touch closely",
"to have contact with", "pollute".[42]

In her book *April Witch*, the author Majgull Axelsson develops a character who is a benandanti, a human able to shape-shift into other beings. In her human form the main protagonist Desirée is physically unable to move by herself and spends most of her time in hospital beds. In the shapes she chooses, her abilities are not restricted by the human form, its physical disability, the strong medication against epilepsy and pain, and the vulnerabilities of her body; when she shape-shifts she breathes through the beak of a bird, the gills of a fish, sees with the eyes of flies, over and over renegotiating her belonging to the category of humanness, from which others seem to render her almost an outsider. Only her friend and long-time medical practitioner Hubertsson seems to be able to understand her, know her, yet his connection to her remains intellectual as much as platonic. Despite her longing for him to touch her, he never does. She loves him desperately but her love is unrequited. Defeated, she thinks about these and other limits of their relationship and about herself as a benandanti – a shape-shifter. In her thoughts

addressing Hubertsson: "You're almost like us, but not one of us. I allow my conveyor – a seagull or a magpie, a crow or a raven – to spread its wings and take an ironic bow. I know. I'm almost like them, but not one of them" (Axelsson 2003: 85).

Touch plays an important role in this novel as it also does in the films discussed in this chapter. It is about the vulnerable body of Desirée, who is never embraced in kindness, always exceptionally touched by others during clinical caretaking. She never feels a gentle hand patting her back, stroking her head, touching her tenderly. She is alone; even in the company of birds, she is different and separate – "almost like them, but not one of them".

The characters in the films that I engage with in this chapter have much in common with Desirée. Each of them in their own film is "almost like" these beings in their surroundings, these other humans, yet they are also not "one of them". Despite everything, they sometimes find a friend in a moment of desperation, someone who is almost like them, but not quite the same. In part they find what Desirée is longing for – friendly contact, the haptics of belonging in an embrace, a dance, a common movement, yet they also struggle with the limits of what this touch can provide for them. Similarly to Desirée, their bodies also seem to evoke revulsion in those who surround them, sometimes in those whom they most desire to be touched by; as in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001), where the main character Hedwig meditates at the beginning of the dance scape about her lover's refusal to kiss her, or to touch her angry-inch genitals, which are all that remain after a botched surgery. Also Ludo (*Ma vie en rose*) and Kitten (*Breakfast on Pluto*), the two protagonists in the other films featured in this chapter, struggle with similar ambivalences that entangle them with arms, hands, bodies that reach for them, sometimes in friendship but just as often in violent action.

STORIES OF TOUCH

In this chapter I focus on the dance scapes in Trans Cinema in which I trace the stories of potential agency, the refusal of normative appel-

lation, affection and trans-generational friendships, belonging as well as vulnerability and openness. The very notion of a dance scape is here used to signify not simply a specific cinematic convention pertaining to the staging of dancing people on film. The suffix *scape*, as pointed out by cultural scholar Arjun Appadurai (1996), works here to emphasise the uneven terrain of landscapes. This applies particularly well to Trans Cinema, and its uneven – both potentially liberatory and repressive – terrain of representing trans embodiment through the frequent use of scenes in which central characters dance. Stories of touch, dance, time and space, with their perspective on utopian politics, are the central issues in this debate. I suggest an engagement with the films via the multi-sensorial entrant strategy that I introduced in the first chapter, through a particular focus on touch and tactility. I investigate touch in this chapter on two levels: how it affects the trans embodiment of the characters, and touch as part of the sensible cinematic intra-activity – the tactility as part of a multisensorial register that is enacted when engaging with film. The sensual focus on touch in the dance sequences of these films likens it to the historical association of dance with contact and even contagion. I will discuss this largely in relation to the first dance scape in this chapter. Dance, in the cinema and off-screen, draws on issues of contact between bodies and spaces as well as movement and links them to an understanding of becoming embodied through space and through temporalities.

This chapter revolves around the question: can dance scenes as forms of exit scapes within Trans Cinema provide particular spacetimes that allow a transing of the violent and constraining representations of the trans characters within Trans Cinema? And further, how do the dance scapes and their enactments of movement, proximity and touch shift the trans body between vulnerability, agency and possibility? And in what ways can dance scapes in Trans Cinema provide utopian becomings and transcorporeal intra-activity between entrants and characters? I address three dance scapes from three different films in this chapter. Since many Trans Cinema films include dance sequences, I had a large pool of dance scapes to choose from. Those scenes that I selected elaborate dance scapes in their connection with tactility as well as the ambivalences of contact in relation to the gender-dissident body.

The first film I discuss is the French/Belgian/Japanese film and TV co-production *Ma vie en rose* (1997). It tells the story of the child Ludo, who defines hirself as a "girlboy". This discussion is followed by the analysis of a dance scape in the US-American production and musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001), which features the rock singer Hedwig, who passes as a woman after a simplistic genital surgery and who sings out her anger against a gender-binary world in her rock songs. For the third film in this chapter I will analyse the Irish/UK film *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005), which features the female-identified character Kitten who, after finishing high school in a small Irish town, searches for hir biological mother in London. The film follows hir search from the small town into the big city, tracing hir search for belonging, hir lostness and the struggles to establish hir integrity.

The dance scapes often act as catalysts for the characters' kinaesthetic evaluation of the meaning of touch and contact. Touch, which outside of dance in the films is sometimes hateful, aggressive and threatening, in the dance sequences becomes embedded in the affective registers of hope and possibility, sometimes immediately pursued by failure and loss at the moment the dance ends. Yet, independently of the story outside the dance, the dance itself conjures hope and the utopian imaginary of becoming differently, which I will discuss here as utopian. In dance, the bodies of the trans characters express unruly genders, find love or belonging, temporary safety and integrity. It is these bodies which are considered by cultural norms to be untouchable; bodies that are often in the dominant norms rendered old, ugly, crippled, poor, black and/or gender deviant.

Ludo, the gender-dissident child, dances with her grandmother (*Ma vie en rose*, 1997), Hedwig dances without normative genitals (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, 2001) and Kitten dances with hir friend Lawrence, who has Down Syndrome (*Breakfast on Pluto*, 2005); all these trans bodies and their friendly comrades present transing bodies in their effortless implosion of normative belongings. It is these bodies who become what feminist postcolonial scholar Trinh T. Minh-Ha refers to as "inappropriate/d others" (Minh-Ha 2012). Their dance is the embrace that Desirée longs for; they are, like her, "not quite other, not quite the same" (Minh-Ha: 2012). They are the inappropriate/d,

untouchable subjects and yet they find their own strategies to resist appropriation and maintain a subjectivity "whom you cannot appropriate" (Minh-Ha: 2012). Desirée and the trans characters solve their status as inappropriate/d others through different strategies. Desirée shape-shifts into creatures that have abilities humans often seem to long for: to fly, to have superhuman capacities. The trans characters in these films choose to dance, in reality at a garden party, in a trailer or in their fantasy. The dance and the contact it includes becomes their opportunity to find affinities: the warm smile of another dancer, or the contact with other dancers that allows connection and temporarily disrupts the constant stream of normative judgement and constraint. The trans characters, like Desirée, shape-shift out of a position that is culturally associated with rationality, the verbally speaking subject. They dancingly glide into kinaesthetic positions, speaking without words, using movements, culturally coded and dismissed as emotional and sensual. In their dance movements, their hands hold each other or, if not touching directly, their bodies remain indirectly in contact through the shared "looks, movement, sound, touch and spatial manipulation" of the dance dynamics (Desmond 2001: 21). Dance, as a particular form of movement, resonates with its own history that links intimately not only to motion but also to emotion and to sensual embodiment that has culturally been historicised as a body in contact with others, with the world, and open towards its surrounding (Desmond 2001: 5); a body in contact becomes a touching body. And touch, in cultural theorist Erin Manning's definition, presents an "act of reaching toward, of creating space-time through the worlding that occurs when bodies move" (Manning 2007: xiv). Touch enables the becoming of bodies alongside the temporal politics of repetition, rhythm and extension. It creates spaces, bodies and their environments that become etched into worlds of emotional movement and the sensibilities of bodily contact, openness and vulnerability. Touch as a proximal sense is a highly neglected human sense in western cultures – sight as the privileged one, is the "clean" sense, the one that is supposed to promise objective evaluation via detachment and the autonomy of the "viewer" (Jay 1993; Classen 1997; Marks 2002; Sobchack 2004; Mirzoeff 2006).

In the film *Ma vie en rose*, in which Ludo joins hir grandmother Elisa-

beth on the dance floor, their dance resonates within these connections of contact, proximity and vulnerability. Both have experienced Ludo's parents' powerfully applied critiques of age- and gender-appropriate behaviour and find strategies to refuse these norms as well as build alliances in dance.

THE POLITICS OF DISORIENTATION IN *MA VIE EN ROSE* (1997)

The dance scene that I would like to discuss here takes place shortly after the beginning of the film. The film opens with a house-warming party hosted by Ludo's parents in their new white, upper-middle-class neighbourhood in Clermont-Ferrand, France. The 7-year-old Ludo, defining hirself as a "boygirl" – *garconfille* – yet misunderstood by hir parents as their "son", prepares carefully for hir entrance to the garden party. Ludo's family, the Fabres, have just moved back to Clermont-Ferrand. When Ludo's name is called in order to introduce hir to the new neigbourhood, Ludo steps through the curtains out onto the terrace, clothed in a pink princess dress, smiling gracefully. Ze obviously feels very beautiful and confident in hir carefully prepared shining outfit and hir mother's makeup. The scene that follows, filled with people's embarrassed laughter and hir parents' anger, crushes hir confidence and stirs hir with confusion. In the continuation of the film, Ludo increasingly experiences isolation from hir family, who first look upon hir behaviour as a "phase" but who later on, with intensified force, will try to persuade and pressure hir into a conventional boy's appearance. Ludo's life in the family home and at school is marked by increased isolation. Ludo has only one ally, not one of hir two brothers or hir teenage sister, but hir energetic maternal grandmother, Elisabeth. Elisabeth is portrayed as an extravagant and youthful woman in her early 60s who, in contrast to Ludo's parents, is proud to perform an eccentric counterpart to their bourgeois lifestyle. Elisabeth has not seen Ludo since ze was a toddler and their reunion on the day of the garden party introduces them as almost strangers to each other.

Ludo calls her granny and Elisabeth refuses this title, saying that she feels too young to be called "granny" and asks her grandchildren to

address her as Elisabeth. Elisabeth's reaction towards Ludo's appearance at the garden party speaks of slight astonishment about her grandchild, yet also seems to be filled with a curious openness. She listens attentively to Ludo's confident announcements of hir future as a woman, believing hir body has just one slight, temporary mistake, explaining that God forgot to give hir another X chromosome but will repair this error in the near future.

During the course of the film, Ludo's family is forced to leave the neighbourhood after Ludo's gender expression produces too much trouble within the narrow-minded co-inhabitants of the suburb. Ludo's father has lost his job. The film ends with the Fabres trying to re-establish themselves in a new neighbourhood. They have now descended socially into a lower-middle-class area and Ludo's mother, formerly only mildly disappreciative of Ludo's self expression, now blames her child. In her opinion, it was Ludo's "playing" with gender roles that led the family into this awkward situation. Yet, of course, Ludo's behaviour has been anything but "play". Hir family's lack of support has even initiated hir to attempt suicide and ze desperately anticipates the moment when ze will finally grow into a female shape. As Ludo says: "I'm a boy now but one day I'll be a girl."

Ma vie en rose is a French/Belgian/Japanese co-production that was written by Chris Vander Stappen, a lesbian scriptwriter who based this story on her own experience of growing up as a tomboy. The team of producer Carole Scotta, Chris Vander Stappen and director Alain Berliner explain that they wanted to examine through this film how neighbours and families react to a gender-dissident child and how this experience of growing up in an ignorant social context can be challenging for a child. Their film reached wide audiences. It played at festivals, winning numerous prizes, including the Golden Globe award for "Best Foreign Language Film". In general, the movie was also screened and positively received at many non-LGBT festivals just as much as at LGBT festivals worldwide. French and German television channels still screen the film regularly to this day.

The dance scene takes place during the course of the garden party that the family Fabre gives as a house-warming party in order to introduce themselves to the new neighbourhood.

Elisabeth stands next to Ludo's older brother who is DJing for the party guests. With an impatient gesture while looking through some CDs, she throws her cigarette butt onto the grass; a few grey streaks colour her blonde hair, her dress is bright red. Soft lines carve the skin of Elisabeth's face. After her theatrical cigarette gesture, she brusquely slides a new CD into the disk player and delivers an instant change of atmosphere to the event – the slow instrumental tune now becomes a rhythmic, fast-beating electro-pop song.

I can see how relieved Elisabeth is to hear this different beat. Her energy contrasts with that of the quietly protesting guests, who had been dancing together slightly drunkenly, clumsy and a little bored. The camera stays close to Elisabeth's face. Her eyes are fixated on the dance floor, which is on the other side of the garden. She dances through the scattered party crowd who stand drinking, eating and chatting quietly in the garden. It is a late summer evening; the guests are tipsy and starting to consider saying farewell to their hosts. But Ludo's grandmother bristles with energy. She spins across the garden towards the little pavilion that is functioning as the dance floor. She passes Ludo and hir parents, who are standing next to each other on the lawn. At the same moment, Ludo's mother makes an appreciative comment about Ludo's change of clothes – from hir sister's dress back to pants – while Ludo's father ignores hir and instead observes the grandmother as she swishes past. Disapprovingly, he comments: "She's really crazy, your mother!" – "Oh, she just stayed young," is his wife's attempt to cast off his unfriendly remark. But he is not willing to give in so easily and insists: "Well, she pretendsto be young, that´s the difference!" Ludo flashes a quick, angry look at hir father and runs up to Elisabeth, who is on the dance floor, swaying expressively in the little pavilion; her arms outstretched and her body bending to the rhythm. Her body becomes music; together with the tune she seems to take up the space, her presence extending across the dance floor. Ludo does the same. Their eyes meet and they smile warmly at each other while moving to the music.

Film stills
Ma vie en rose
(1997)

The crowd of former party dancers stands around and frowns at them. These people stopped dancing when the music changed. But then, seeing the enthusiasm of Ludo and hir grandmother and their joy in their movements, the wary group joins in, dancing just like them; slightly

disordered, a bit funny, a bit weird, and a bit "out of control". The whole crowd suddenly seems "lighter", easier, less inhibited by convention, maybe moved by different conventions: beats and choreography begin to determine them now. I participate in this scene, I become its entrant, smiling to myself as though I am watching the group dance on the lawn from the place where the camera is positioned, maybe the place near the buffet; maybe I hold a glass of champagne, I want to dance with them. I am amused by the outburst of intense joy and the end of them "holding back", the disruption of their boredom or their concerned and judgemental ideas about etiquette, presentation and bodily expression. Those who have been embarrassed about Ludo's appearance in a dress seem to let go of it, for a moment they become hir dance partners, together they are a crowd, a group of amused people moving together to the same beat. They dance weirdly, make strange funny dance movements, joke with each other on the dance floor, jump, stretch and throw their arms up, bumping gently into each other, touching.

It becomes almost a "mad" dance, and those with the staring gazes and their double bind of fascination and disgust become contagiously affected by Ludo and Elisabeth. Both dancers share their status as outcasts through their movements. Before the dance, they had both already been perceived as a bit "strange", extravagant or weird in reference to their gender and age behaviour. In the dance, their difference is clearer, more physical, and the audience is forced to acknowledge them. Ludo and Elisabeth move their bodies intentionally in a way that disrupts the conventional, well-mannered dance moves. It appears to be an act of freedom for them. They openly display pleasure, which they find together, regardless of the hostile looks from the other party members. In this film scene, Ludo and Elisabeth do not remain alone in their "freaky" behaviour. After some moments, they are followed by the watching crowd, who seem to be almost compelled by the dance moves of Ludo and Elisabeth. Their dance has become contagious.

It strikes me that the terms *touch* and *contact* share etymological roots with the term *contagion*. The history of the word "contact", as I mentioned earlier, is closely connected through its etymological history with the notion of "contagion". Contagion in Latin means "to come into touch with", from *com* – together, and *tangere* – to touch. The idea

of people who start to dance with absurd movements connects to the 19th century psychiatric discussion about dance as an "epidemic" and "contagious". This debate associated specific "strange" movements with mental "illness" and thus with the idea of physical permeability – of an infection that can enter the body due to its vulnerability. Both these connections, firstly of dance with illness and, secondly, with a "leaky" body boundary are highly gendered, sexualised and raced. The video artists and queer theorists Renate Lorenz and Pauline Boudry have taken up and reworked this historical connection between dance and "illness" in their queer and race-critical installations *Salomenia* (2009) and *Contagious!* (2010). As Lorenz and Boudry argue, at the *fin-de-siècle*, a dance style named "epileptic dances" became fashionable in the underground clubs of Paris (Boudry/Lorenz 2010). One famous performer was the female dancer Polaire, whose performance was known for its "nervous and sexually aggressive […] style" (Boudry/Lorenz 2010). At the same time, epilepsy and hysteria were also becoming medical research fields in psychiatric institutions, for example in the medical practice and research of Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot at the Hospital de la Salpetrière, Paris. The artist duo explains this connection by arguing that "the epileptic dances copied, appropriated and subverted representations of the female 'sick' body" (Boudry/Lorenz 2010). The female body, signified as "sick", was always understood as contagious. It has had a long history of being understood as "polluting and close to nature rather than rational, as well as generally 'unclean'" (Shildrick 2009: 11). The medical discourse at that time understood the imitation of movements and gestures as leading to the same illness in those who copy the physical acts (Gordon 2009: 19).[43]

The imaginary threat of contracting an illness from somebody connects to the deep-seated cultural anxieties around bodily permeability and toxic contact. As a reading of this scene, I would suggest that we understand the gestures that Ludo and Elisabeth make here as potentially polluting and temporarily threatening to the cis-gendered party-goers; polluting and threatening since the subjectivities of these people are the result of the labour of stabilising and constructing a contained and normative subjectivity. I find this evidenced in the bodily gestures and facial expressions of dislike, such as frowning faces, but also in

the fascinated looks in the eyes of the staring crowd, who eventually become urged to join in and dance along.

As bodies are constituted through contact with others and the potentiality of being open to others (Diprose 1994: 15), so dancing means the constant negotiation of proximity and openness as well as the constant negotiation of opening up the construction of containment and impermeability. The decreased distance on a dance floor is not only physical and affected by body contact and collective movement, but also formed through gestures and looks. Hence, on a crowded dance floor, dancing also becomes a touch that resonates with "being in touch" (Bollen 2001: 293). Dancing is the collectivity of touch and movement in which proximity, permeability and vulnerability present constantly discussed and challenged moments.

This connection between dance, contact and pollution is particularly interesting in relation to the gender-dissident, trans subject. The dissident embodiment of the trans character and the ageing body of the grandmother in this scene appropriate dance as a site of agency. Their re-enactment of dance moves and their inappropriate/d embodiments become sites of claiming otherness as a position of strength, defying social norms and the abjection (Kristeva 1982: 2) that they experience at the same time. In this scene, their bodies become meeting points for a discourse on permeability, threat and contact. They are dancing "crazily", the onlookers feeling their openness, their appropriation of vulnerability. The watching crowd seems to temporarily experience fear of the potentiality of this openness and of possibly becoming "contaminated" through contact on the dance floor.

This cultural association between dance and threats to mental and physical health has a long-standing historical relevance. Following feminist philosopher and queer crip scholar Margrit Shildrick, I argue here that the dissident subject becomes associated with threat through the display of corporeal difference and vulnerability (Shildrick 2005: 330). This threat is fuelled by the fear of becoming rendered equally vulnerable. Despite the connection between dissident embodiment and movement, the onlookers become dancers as well, joining Ludo and Elisabeth.

I chose to begin this chapter with the film *Ma vie en rose* because this

film, in particular, highlights the significance of experiencing dancing through the sense of touch and connects tactility with the potential of threat and vulnerability, but also with belonging and reorientation. It demonstrates how dance can be contagious, affective and can draw people into movement, emotionally as much as physically. And, as I would like to suggest in the next paragraphs, dance allows bodies to become permeable and interconnected with other bodies, spaces and objects through its movements of reorientation and belonging.

Disorientation and Belonging

After the party crowd has joined Ludo and Elisabeth, Ludo's mother also comes to dance alongside hir. Ludo reaches up to her, stretching out hir arms as kids do when they want to be picked up. The mother lifts hir up. Ludo, a child still, has only a short time left before growing too tall to be carried like this by hir mother. They dance together.

Film still
Ma vie en rose
(1997)

Elisabeth dances towards them, embraces them together. They both kiss Ludo's cheeks and hir head. It appears comforting and also seems to be an apology for the trouble Ludo's mother has caused her child during the afternoon. This is a scene that seems to speak of Ludo's longing for parental attention and safety, as well as showing Ludo's mother's care for her child. It refers to the trans-generational, feminine-coded alliances within the family between Elisabeth, Ludo's mother and Ludo.

The theory of orientation and disorientation developed by cultural

studies scholar Sara Ahmed provides a useful framework through which to read Ludo's experiences at the beginning of the film. Ahmed describes disorientation in her book *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006) as the loss of conventional "orientations" – those "orientations" through which a person normatively constructs their identity and feelings towards their embodiment. The notion of orientation itself is developed as a spatial figuration in her writing, as much as a spatial experience, a directedness towards specific norms, places, people and objects. Translated to the film scene, I propose here that Ludo experiences a vanishing of these stable "coordinates" in hir world at the moment of being scolded and punished for dressing in a way that is regarded as gender inappropriate. Ludo's relation to the world starts to differ from this moment in the film from those "coordinates" of hir straight, cis-gendered neighbours. During this day, Ludo undergoes a loss of stability, the vanishing of formerly stable "reference points", the withdrawal of social support and acceptance. Ahmed mobilises in particular the figuration of sexual orientation as a spatial orientation. She argues for it as something that is deeply cut out through spatial interaction and experience. Ahmed is mostly speaking of queer sexuality here, but I think it is possible to also extend the figuration of orientation and disorientation to gender positioning and thus to trans experiences. In my understanding, gender, like sexuality, becomes sketched out by the influences that surround someone. With reference to a phenomenological understanding of bodily intra-relationalities, Ahmed declares that "[b]odies are […] shaped by contact with object[s] and with others, with what is near enough to be reached" (Ahmed 2006: 54). She explains that bodies constitute themselves through the way in which they inhabit space. She stresses that "space is not a container for the body; it does not contain the body as if the body were 'in it'" but instead it "become[s] the space they inhabit" (Ahmed 2006: 53). Ahmed's notion of orientation expresses the movement of the body through space – and not only space, but also, inseparably, through time. Bodies are shaped by how they experience space, how they are linked to temporality and how they "take up time" (Ahmed 2006: 5). She argues that, "in taking up space, bodies move through space and are affected by the 'where' of that movement" (Ahmed 2006: 53). In the dance scene,

the formative identities of Ludo and hir grandmother are re-constituted and re-conciliated through their physical embrace in the dance scene. This movement through specific "spaces" has an effect on the person who does it. The space influences the materialisation of a person, their body, their sense of self, in relation to their sexual orientation as much as their gender positioning. In addition, the space takes shape in specific ways through contact between the people within it (Ahmed 2006: 107). The argument about becoming queer in relation to space and time has also been brought forward in recent debates in queer studies, which have less explicit links to a phenomenological trajectory. The queer historian Elizabeth Freeman explains in her introduction to the special GLQ issue on queer temporalities that queer can be rendered as a "set of possibilities produces out of temporal and historical differences" (Freeman 2007: 159). In this, she relates strongly to Ahmed's argument. Both sexual orientation and gender positioning are shaped by what surrounds a body, a subject, at a specific time in history and in a particular context. Ahmed argues that social and political surroundings figuratively and literally constitute bodies and subjectivity (Ahmed 2006: 9). Both orientation and disorientation refer to the mutual process of embodied space-time intra-action and how the constitution of subjectivity is strongly embedded in spatio-temporal experiences. I find these two notions of disorientation and orientation especially interesting to apply to the dance scapes in trans films as they allow a conceptualisation of the interdependencies between movement, tactility and subjectivity, which in my reading are significant in these scapes.

On the day of the garden party, Ludo experiences for the first time in hir life that hir "coordinates" in this world have shifted and become different from those of the cis-gendered party guests. Ze obviously enters a world that is no longer clearly understandable to hir. The people around hir react with anger or embarrassment at hir choice of clothes and makeup. Ludo cannot understand why the others seem so disturbed by hir. Ze reacts by becoming lost and confused. I would like to propose here that from that moment on, Ludo's world takes on a different shape. And Ludo hirself begins to be shaped differently by the world. This experience, of losing hir "orientation", of suddenly questioning values and behaviours that ze has formerly taken for granted,

creates a feeling of physical disorientation. Hir body and self no longer fit into the surrounding social order.

This experience becomes tactile at the moment when disorientation begins to mark the body with new impressions, which map new questions onto it and re-trace its demarcations. Disorientation becomes the experience of the body's surface being reformed. As Ahmed asserts, the surface, or the skin, of the social body is a border that feels and is "shaped by the impressions" left by others (Ahmed 2006: 9). She argues that we should think of disorientation as a productive and inherent part of queer experiences. Disorientations are "bodily experiences that throw the world up, or throw the body from its ground" (Ahmed 2006: 157). Disorientation is an unsettling feeling. It shakes foundations that have been taken for granted, it disturbs, and leaves one feeling lost. However, falling out of orientation, of not knowing where and what your world consists of and where to focus on, does not mean instantly becoming part of a new dimension. This is what disorientation is; a place in-between, a place in limbo, a space of questioning and a space that contains possibilities of new directions. For Sara Ahmed, the place of "disorientations" is a place with potentiality. It contains the possibility for new "views" and for a new perception of "orientation" itself. And yet Ahmed steers clear of an idealisation of disorientation as a progressive concept. Instead she clarifies it as an experience that many people, if they are unable or unwilling to adjust to the norms of gender and embodiment, will go through. Her discussion on disorientation is vital, as it embraces an experience of failure (to conform to norms) or exclusion and discrimination that is otherwise individualised. Instead, she develops an affirmative and supportive take on it. Although for Ahmed disorientation is a part of becoming queer, disorientations can also be defensive, or conservative. They are productive and politically progressive only when they are put in motion by way of connecting them to questions that challenge how these moments can be productive and what "new directions" they promise to offer. Experiences of disorientation, of feeling lost, of having departed from stable ground and traditional definitions, trouble the taken-for-granted reference point and lead to a temporarily or continuously troubled perception of space and time. Only in this stumbling does it become possible to re-think one's former

position as a normalised direction (Ahmed 2006: 158).

The day of the garden party is pivotal for Ludo as ze encounters the loss of orientation. Ludo stands on shaking ground in the aftermath of having dressed in a skirt and begins to search for a new "reference point". Ze is filled with questions about the strange behaviour of the people in hir environment, who seem not to understand hir. Ze also becomes increasingly insecure about hir own behaviour when it is commented on and described as unsuitable for a "boy". In this context, the dance between Ludo and Elisabeth shows a way to work through this feeling of a lost direction and to transform it into a direction where Ludo can find support and love. In hir dance movements, Ludo appears to find a place where ze can express hirself in a way that escapes the gendering and controlling gaze of hir parents. This happens for Ludo not only at the garden party, but also in the careful and delicate steps that ze copies from the TV. Pam is the heroine of Ludo's favourite children's series, *Pam et Ben* and Ludo enthusiastically restages her choreography. In the joy of these movements and musical rhythm, Ludo can cross the boundaries of gender-coded behaviour unpunished. Dance becomes a space of safety. In dance, the body and its articulation through movement is taken seriously, and at the same time its expressions are transformed into artistic and performative ones. Nevertheless, dance occupies a politically charged area as it is connected to the topos of sexuality and desire and the staging of this desire (Desmond 2001: 5).

In the section above, I have argued that the dance scape between Ludo and hir grandmother becomes a place of safety as well as a space in which Ludo reformulates hir relation to the world and hir orientation. I would like to argue further that dance in this film also forms a space that is marked by a gesture of resistance and collectivity. It is a non-verbal critique of the repressive discipline and value system of Ludo's parents, especially of hir father. Ludo runs off to dance with hir grandmother after hir father has scolded first hir and then hir grandmother for inappropriate behaviour. The dance movements connect Ludo to Elisabeth. They allow a communication without speaking, a communication through their "strange" bodily movements, of sometimes being in touch through their bodies. They both experience regimentation by Ludo's family for their unconventional articulations of gender and

age. The dance becomes the space of "escape" through which Ludo and Elisabeth can build a new alliance, which is figuratively drawn through their physical connection, enabled by the dance moves. Their experimental dance movements contrast with the disciplined and polite, well-behaved "small-talk behaviour" of the party crowd. Their dance becomes a space of refusal of normative appellations and in this way also a space of affirmative "difference". It becomes a way of building new connections, a new movement and a sense of belonging between Ludo and people ze trusts and feels close to; namely hir grandmother and, to a lesser extent, hir mother. It creates friendship and draws supportive connections.

Belonging is a crucial theme in this scene. The feminist scholar Elspeth Probyn discusses the notion of belonging as a constant "becoming" that is processual and never stable (Probyn 1996: 19). Belonging for Probyn is a utopian and futural form of existence and embodiment. It is the "desire for some sort of attachment, be it to other people, places, or modes of being, and the ways in which individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become. [It is] a process that is fuelled by yearning rather than the position of identity as a stable state" (Probyn 1996: 19). The idea of belonging is always an imaginary aim; it can never really be achieved (Probyn 1996: 8). Belonging is not a fixed state. Instead, it expresses constant inbetweenness, based on the fictionality of "true" belonging (Probyn 1996: 19). The concept of belonging is not manifested in authenticity but is instead defined by a constant movement (Probyn 1996: 19). Belonging to something is imaginary but nevertheless also a real and felt experience. It forms the relation between objects and beings, as well as the constant flow of changes connected to these belongings. Throughout *Ma vie en rose*'s dance scene, Ludo is entering a social context that is motivated by hir need and desire to belong. Ze embraces hir grandmother, and hir mother, while knowing that these people are for the moment hir points of safety that ze can rely on. This safety is possibly temporary and ze realises that they are unable to understand hir fully. Yet, hir grandmother in particular is floating in an inbetween space of not belonging and disorientation herself, being perceived as a woman who troubles the concept of "age-appropriate" behaviour and expression. The belonging

that Ludo experiences during the garden party scene with Elisabeth and hir mother consists of moments of attachment, of collectivity, imaginary, as well as – especially for the duration of the dance – of protection and comfort. Ze departs from hir parents' regimentation internally in the dance scape. It is a space that allows for a different embodiment, a different positionality, and along with this a temporary belonging to hirself, to other dancers, to the sonic space of the music and to the shared movements.

Conspiracy on the Dance-Floor

The garden party is a site of on-going in-betweenness in which Ludo loses some coordinates but at the same time also hirself becomes the centre by which the party crowd negotiates their understanding of "normality". The dance scene links the dissident bodies of the trans character and the older woman with the cultural history of the dissident body as dangerous and contagious. In this sense, the gender-dissident body shares many traits not only with the old body but also with the disabled body and the racialised body. The sites of age, class and race interlock here with gender and sexuality and connect through an intra-secting and interdependent understanding of embodiment (Lykke 2006; Hornscheidt 2007; McClintock 1995).With gentle steps, Ludo moves through a terrain of gendered movements; and not only that but movements that are also intersectionally coded and constitutive of inappropriate/d embodiment (Minh-Ha 2012). Not only does dance rest on the cultural sites of sexuality, desire and gender expression but it also links to the cultural coding of a dancing body as a racialised body (Desmond 2001: 4; Cvetkovich 2001: 337).

Thus, as a dancing character, Ludo is tapping on highly debated floors. Dance always carries and enacts its own gendered and sexualised history as well as its racialised history in the coding of movement conventions, the cultural rejection or appropriation of these movements and the dynamics of their cultural appropriation (Desmond 2001: 4). As social dancing presents a "public political practice confirming, contravening, or rewriting social relations", as Desmond claims (Desmond 2001: 6), Ludo's steps become a commentary, intervening into the social position

hir family would like hir to fulfil. It also interrogates the sphere of the inappropriate/d body in which socially marginalised embodiments intra-act. Ze physically appropriates the space in these movements, the very personal place of hir body, and transforms it from a site of contestation into hir space of possibility and re-articulation.

Age, as well as gender, presents a significant factor in the alliance between Ludo and Elisabeth. Ludo is affirmed as being a child in the moment hir mother lifts hir up to dance with hir in her arms. The gesture demonstrates support, attention and acceptance. Ludo appears to feel safe for the duration of the dance. It seems as though the dance also allows Ludo's mother to gain a distance from the earlier events of the afternoon, to relax with the music and let go of the continuous "gender policing" of her child.

As much as Ludo's behaviour during the afternoon was considered a problem by hir family, it is at the same time also partly legitimised as a "phase" that ze will grow out of. Also, the behaviour of Ludo's grandmother is judged as inappropriate for her age. Appropriate behaviour for a woman of Elisabeth's age would have been to remain quiet and modest, like an "elderly woman" – an aesthetic of ageing that is also deeply connected with questions of desire and the taboo of sexuality in elderly women. Hence, both Ludo and hir grandmother are affected by bodily expectations of normalcy where questions of age, sexuality and gender merge. Both fail to accommodate the conventional norms of behaviour for their bodies. Ludo and Elisabeth have reached the limits of "appropriateness". Their dance moves – extroverted, sensual and coded as feminine – can be understood as a refusal of the constraint they experience from Ludo's parents, symbolising the social environment's awareness of these dissident bodies. Both Ludo and Elisabeth are socially in disempowered positions, as a child and an "older" woman. In relation to the dance, I would like to suggest here that it becomes a form of spatial appropriation, which is usually prohibited to dissident embodiments. Their unruly movements rework and reshape space, which Desmond stresses as a key aspect of dance (Desmond 2001: 3). The dancer's body contours a particular relation with the social and spatial surroundings (Desmond 2001).

Their dance is outlined by the musical genre of disco music and the

connected dance style. Historically, disco music enabled the disruption of heterosexual, cis-couple dance. As cultural studies scholar Ann Cvetkovich stresses, disco music at social dance events allowed an incorporation of physical sexual expression in the public arena for the first time. And disco enabled a *queering* of the heterosexual couple as it introduced the phenomenon of single dancing at social events (Cvetkovich 2001: 337). Both characters, Ludo and Elisabeth, experience social limitations on the basis of their gender expression that intra-acts with age as well as sexuality. Both are rendered as "inappropriate/d others" by the people in their surroundings based on their expression of sexuality in older age (Elisabeth) and dissident gender embodiment in pre-puberty (Ludo). Ludo and Elisabeth perform not only improper bodies, but especially also inappropriately *moving* bodies, bodies that are active and that come close, that are *proximate* bodies. They take up space; their gestures, arms and hands reach out; they build connections with the space, with one another, experience a body that lives through collectivity and that allows them to rely on alliance, allows entrance, porosity and vulnerability. They reappropriate a position of agency in finding the most physical voice to claim their position: dance moves.

Elisabeth and the gender-dissident child Ludo both become a spectacle in their unintelligible dance moves; a spectacle that is always coded as bodily as well as female; as the one who is being looked at, not the one who is looking. Through their enactment of a "spectacle", which I here read as a conscious and subversive, "could-not-care-less-about-your-conventions" position of becoming the "object" of the gaze, Ludo and Elisabeth are able to appropriate the spectacle as a counter strategy to refusing the spectacle position altogether, as feminist dancer Yvonne Rainer argued in her "No Manifesto" in 1965 (Rainer 1965). This spectacular position challenges the passive position of "being looked at", becoming the target of the gaze and rendered a failure of appropriate embodiment. They escape the location of passivity by grasping the temporary choice of consciously positioning themselves as objectified. In this dance, they consciously become the spectacle, they embrace the position of being looked at, their movements and bodily expression become their language, their form of expression and their agency. Their bodies during this short moment become their

tool to express, to act and "counter-act" (Cvetkovich 2001: 337). They appropriate the spectacular position in order to occupy, for a moment, a particular place as their own. The dance-floor turns into the ground for their kinaesthetic, embodied and emotional conspiracy.

I would like to suggest here a mapping of these scenes as a space of disidentification and the re-imagination of embodiment. The concept of disorientation in particular is a useful resource in order to think of these characters as an illustration of mutual embodiment within the collectivity of beings, objects and spaces. Together with the concept of belonging, disorientation shares the in-betweenness and processuality of existence as well as the constant changes of relationality and position. They are linked through a notion of direction as well as futurity and passionate, affirmative and affectionate connection. They also connect through the elements of self expression, of the materiality of space, of becoming through space and temporality in specific ways shaped by what moves and touches and what comes into contact with the person who is moving. In the dance, this process of thought, experience, disorientation and belonging can be released into a physical act of freedom and the pleasure that is embedded within the temporary and futural experience of the dance.

I propose a reading here of the dance scene between Ludo and Elisabeth as an exit scape that draws on a utopian sensibility which I find to be affectively and emotionally unrolled in the new belongings and reorientations of Ludo. The love and care that flows between them, their growing bond expressed in their mutual movements and their non-verbal communication, includes hope for Ludo that transfers across to me as an entrant. I become included in this scene of protest and moved by the embodied redefinitions and affirmations of selfhood. The dance becomes a temporal stage of movements that reach towards the possibilities of becoming differently; the dance movements, open in their gestures, are directed towards a different futurity for Ludo, hir grandmother and hir trans becoming.

In the next section, I will turn to the film *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, in which dance is embedded in a longing for touch as a gesture of the acceptance of difference. In this film, in contrast to *Ma vie en rose*, the notion of contact becomes strongly associated with fear as much as

with disappointment; yet, for the duration of the dance, these feelings remain marginal and the utopian force of the haptics of dance unfold for the duration of a short, unexpected waltz.

DANCE AND DREAMY ROMANCE IN *HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH* (2001)

Hedwig and the Angry Inch (2001) is an energetic film, filled with ecstatic stage performances, extravagant and glamorous outfits and powerful, angry lyrics. The film narrates the story of the unsuccessful rock singer Hedwig and follows her tour through the USA while she speaks about the path of her life and her struggles through her autobiographical lyrics or in conversations with friends and fans of her band. The songs are illustrated by flashbacks and voice-overs. She travels parallel to her former lover, Tommy Gnosis, who is now a highly successful rock star and continually refuses to acknowledge Hedwig's co-authorship of their songs. Earlier in her life, Hedwig had a "botched" genital surgery in order to cross the border from East Germany to the West, using her mother's passport. She ended up in Kansas, USA.

As a film, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001) followed the huge success of the off-Broadway musical of 1998, which quickly allowed it to gain cult status within the euroamerican queer scene. The film version was nominated for several awards and won many of them, among others the Dramatic Audience and Dramatic Director's Awards at Sundance, Best Feature Prizes at Berlin International Film Festival, Stockholm Film Festival and the San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, and the Audience Awards at San Francisco's International Film Festival and Sundance Film Festival.

Director John Cameron Mitchell, together with composer Stephen Trask and make-up artist Mike Potter, began to work on the story of the musical in 1994 in the context of drag performances at the gay rock club Squeezebox in New York City (Fuchs). Mitchell performed in drag as Hedwig and, with the intention of keeping the vibrant rock vibe of the club alive in the musical, they developed different parts of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* through club events. As soon as it opened in

1998, the musical gathered a large fan community and this grew larger through the film production, which also stars Mitchell as the leading actor. In an interview with journalist Cynthia Fuchs for the online magazine *PopMatters*, Mitchell explains that he created Hedwig as an anti-binary character and wanted to queer the film even more by bringing in Hedwig's boyfriend Yitzhak, who is supposed to represent a cis man "who wants to dress as a woman" and is played by the cis-female actress Miriam Shor (Fuchs). Mitchell states that it was his intention to produce confusion within the "audiences". He was aiming for an experience of disorientation among the entrants as he argues that such an experience allows one "to enter a world, where Hedwig is disoriented too" (Fuchs).

In the emblematic article "Gender without Genitals: Hedwig's Six Inches", trans scholar Jordy Jones criticises the film not only for its conservative identity politics in the misrepresentation of Hedwig as a trans woman, but also for the racist representations of supporting characters such as band member and Hedwig's partner Yitzhak as well as Hedwig's former husband Luther Robinson, a black American G.I. who is shown as having lured her into the surgery only to leave her shortly after their arrival in Midwest America (Jones 2006: 449ff.). This critique elaborates the problematic representation of a trans character alongside racialising and othering practices towards Blackness and Jewishness as well as, unmentioned in Jones' article, disability and the humour that is played out through the parodistic and discriminatory stereotyping of these characters. This eloquent critique by Jones emphasises the great importance of performing an affirmative reading of this film. It is widely circulated, and still today has cult status among LGBTQ communities. The fact that it contains discriminatory politics of representation urges me to locate exit scapes within it that allow a reading of the transing pleasures within this text. The particular dance scape that I have chosen to analyse in this chapter presents an unusually gentle dance scene for this film, which is otherwise filled with highly energised stage gigs and the dance moves of a great lead singer. Hedwig's voice-over narrates how Tommy has been hesitant to touch her body and in particular her genitals: "I am very much aware we haven't kissed in all these months we've been together, in fact he's maintained a near perfect ignorance of the front of me."

The Origin of Love

A song at the beginning of the film, before Tommy even enters the story, anticipates the relationship she will later have with him; a relationship that she does not have with Yitzhak who, despite being her boyfriend, seems to be unappreciated by her. The song, *The Origin of Love,* builds on the historical text of the beginnings of sexuality and the ideal of romantic love in Plato's *Symposium (*Plato 360 BCE). The song is based on Aristophanes' story of the round-people. It foreshadows Hedwig's longing to be touched by Tommy, to experience feeling "whole", complete, and in this it equates to her aim of being recognised as a desirable person despite her bodily ambiguity.

> *And there were three sexes then / One that looked like two men glued back to back / They were called the children of the sun /… / Well the gods grew quite scared of our strength and defiance / And Zeus said "I'm gonna kill them all with my hammer / Like i killed the giants" / But Zeus said "No, / You'd better let me use my lightning like scissors / Like i cut the legs off the whales / Dinosaurs into lizards" / And then he grabbed up some bolts, he let out a laugh / Said "i'll split them right down the middle / Gonna cut them right up in half" / ... / The last time i saw you we had just split in two / He was looking at me, i was looking at you / You had a way so familiar i could not recognise / cause you had blood on your face / But i could swear by your expression / That the pain down in your soul was the same / As the one down in mine / That's the pain / That cuts a straight line down through the heart / We call it love /...*

This song, pondering romance and sexuality, can also be read as a transing text that addresses gender more than sex, emphasising genders as multiple rather than binary. The song expresses the way in which she feels that she does not belong in any conventional gender category and depicts her longing not only for love but also to find a gendered place to belong to.

The crude surgery has queered the materiality of her gendered body and has cut it out of gender binary conventions – she has neither a vagina nor a penis but an angry-inch genital. Her boyfriend Tommy is

afraid of this otherness, and he refuses to touch her sexually. In a dance scene between them, Hedwig confronts Tommy non-verbally with her desire for his touch. That day, he comes storming into her trailer, crying, after a row with his father. She holds him in her arms, so he will calm down soon. Tommy is much younger than Hedwig and they met on a babysitting job, while Hedwig was taking care of his toddler sibling. Tommy, a Jesus Freak, around 17 or 18 years old, still manifests the clumsiness of an insecure teenager. In this scene it becomes clear, through camera framing and the speed of the scenes, that Hedwig is in love with Tommy. The camera follows her eyes as they focus tenderly and adoringly on Tommy's face. After Tommy has calmed down from the unfortunate conversation with his father, they sit down at her camping table inside the trailer. Sunlight is streaming through the window panes. In this tranquil atmosphere she begins to clip his eyebrows while he rehearses on the guitar to learn to hit the right pitch in their new song. It is a concentrated and quiet mood. Tommy repeatedly and frustratingly fails to find the right tonality. Alongside his discordant voice, we hear the woman in the next-door trailer sing, perfectly, Whitney Houston's classic hit *I Will Always Love You*. The camera shows the neighbour in her caravan singing passionately at the open window. As she does so, the weather changes and a curtain of summer rain now hangs between her and Hedwig's trailer. Hedwig continues to deal with Tommy's appearance, looking at him, thinking of a proper stage persona, and finally paints a cross on his forehead with thick and oily mascara. It is a spontaneous idea. Tommy is puzzled and looks at his reflection in the mirror; he is stunned and attempts to sing the tune again with his gaze meeting himself in the mirror. The cross, as a masquerade of confidence, helps him; he finally succeeds and seemingly effortlessly finds the right tune. Hedwig then has an idea for a new name for him and, in this scene which appears like a baptism, gives him the name Tommy Gnosis. It seems as though she uses the Greek term for knowledge on purpose to symbolically hail him into existence. The soft grey of the cross on Tommy's forehead is slightly shiny with the rich, thick paint. The next moment Tommy sings the song line again: "Look what you've done" – and this time he hits the tune precisely and the rhythm of the film changes instantly.

A Dance in a Trailer

The moment after Tommy manages to sing the tune right, he reaches for Hedwig's hand and in slow motion they stand up. The original Whitney Houston song is playing as the soundtrack to the dance that now follows.

Film stills
Hedwig and the Angry Inch (2001)

The images slowly change between close-ups of Tommy and Hedwig. The shot-reverse shot allows intensity and spaciousness. The trailer haptically becomes a wide room, its narrow walls seem to shift, to allow air and movement. The laundry is hanging from the ceiling to dry. They move through the damp clothes as through softly lined up curtains. The moistness of the fabric touches their slightly heated summer skin where it is revealed next to the fabric of their T-shirts and tank tops. In passing by, Hedwig grips a shirt, inhales its scent – maybe she is

aware of the fresh smell of washing powder or perhaps the shirt still smells of Tommy; she smells it while holding her gaze with Tommy.

Film still
Hedwig and the Angry Inch (2001)

Unhurriedly, he guides her through the caravan. The slow motion, close-up shots of their eyes and faces and the strong enactment of a sensual environment serve to evoke a dense and multisensorial experience in this scene. The scent, the sounds of the room, the feeling of wet clothes and the tension between the two protagonists becomes tangible through this complexity of cinematic tools used to set up this scene.

Tommy, leader of the dance, carefully guides Hedwig by the hand. He walks backwards, their eyes meet between the elastic fabrics and Hedwig follows his steps. The events in this sequence, the intimacy and the display of romance, are portrayed as though they stretch throughout time, an effect that is achieved by the slow-motion film speed. Romance and the fantasy of perfect love also affect the spatial dimensions of the film. The room is at first intimate, like a closet with the hanging clothes, then in the next scene it opens up into an imaginary room, much bigger than the original trailer. Their progression through this space and their dance-like movements reflect their connection, and remind us of Hedwig's wish to belong to someone, to find her other half. Their walk has become a dance. It is the silent dance of lovers in an intimate space. It is a dance building up to a sexual moment between them.

They stop moving at some point and Tommy asks Hedwig to breathe into his mouth. They breathe together. This scene appears a little funny, awkward, yet there is something that keeps me from embarrassed laughter.

I can already sense that this is not going to end well; their breaths grow into a kiss and the camera speeds up, faster, a swirl of images, a swift sound of something that flies by and, the next moment, Hedwig and Tommy are standing together on an imaginary trailer doorstep that opens like a barn door towards the outside, passionately kissing each other. In the background, looking out of the trailer, one sees a fairytale landscape; green hills, grass with a freshness and beauty that becomes palpable. Slowly, white blossoms sail like snowflakes from the sky. Birds sing in the trees. The atmosphere is that of an early summer morning in a meadow.

Film still
Hedwig and the Angry Inch (2001)

They continue to kiss, and while their bodies are pressed against each other, Hedwig takes Tommy's hand and lets it slide into the front of her skirt. Within a second, the fairytale crashes, the scenery changes abruptly and they are back in the small, narrow space of the trailer. The grand door is gone. There are no birds chirping comfortingly any longer, no fresh morning air. Tommy jerks his hand back. He stumbles backwards. His face displays shock, disgust, maybe fear. I realise at this moment that Tommy must have always denied Hedwig's former life; her migration from East Germany, and the unlucky surgery that nevertheless enabled her to use her mother's passport to pass through the border control. She told him earlier how she came to the USA, but Tommy is apparently reluctant to touch upon it with his thoughts, nor can he touch her body. "What is this?" he asks in terror the moment she leads his hand towards her crotch. "This is what I have to work with!"

she replies, sad and skeptical, urgently. Tommy stumbles backwards, away from Hedwig; mumbling fake excuses, he runs off. Hedwig yells behind him, desperately, "What are you afraid of? What?? …Love the front of me, honey!"

That is the end of their story for a long time. The scene is presented in a flashback as Hedwig tells the story to a group of queer fans after a small gig at a sparsely attended open-air music festival. She sits with her fans on a pile of old car tyres, drinking vodka from the bottle and telling them about the origins of the band. The story of Tommy and their dance, with its unhappy ending, are part of this. Hedwig started her band after the breakup with Tommy. While Tommy plays the big halls in his solo career, Hedwig's band stages their songs in deserted diners and small bars.

Baroque Dancing

The dance scene presents a very unusual sequence in the context of this film. The film includes several scenes in which Hedwig stands on the stage, sings and dances through the audience, on tables, bars, or on stage while performing. I chose this rather atypical scene to discuss here as it has a strong link to haptic forms of visuality and it highlights the sense of tactility, the moment of touch in all its ambivalences for the trans character. Through this particularly dense connection to touch, the dance itself becomes an immersive and inviting exit scape that engages its entrants intra-actively and multisensorially. The dance is performative, a physical movement of two bodies, still choreographed, and with movements that almost resemble formal dance styles, similar to Baroque-style dances, such as the Pavane. The Pavane is a processional dance, in which the pairs hold each other by the hand only and *pace* rather than "dance" in a more contemporary understanding of dance movement.[44] This scene in the film provides a particular density and hapticity that distinguishes it from any other dance scene in this film. This dance in the trailer ties together the threads of touch, bodily permeability, desire and contagion. It also shows the intimacy and belonging that a dance can promise but, unlike in *Ma vie en rose*, perhaps not fulfil. In contrast to that first film in this chapter,

the dance scene in *Hedwig* is not an act of protest, nor the non-verbal, kinaesthetic commentary on alliance-forming practices and belonging as I discussed with reference to the transing characters in *Ma vie en rose*. Instead, I understand this scene in *Hedwig* as an enactment of a longing for acceptance and contact despite bodily ambiguity and because of it. Yet, Tommy remains unable to allow such proximity to a body he cannot comprehend.

These aspects, presenting the crucial functions of the dance scape in this film, become articulated by Hedwig in the dance with Tommy, their movements, their eye contact, the transgression of reality and fact. These boundaries between reality and fantasy become eroded when the trailer's spacetime expands into a sweet, green meadow decorated by swirling blossoms as the background image for their kiss and the romanticised yet sweetly pathetic nature of this image acts as a metaphor for Hedwig's desire for romantic love.

In her article "Swarms and Enthusiasts: Transfers in/as Choreography", the theatre and dance scholar Gabriele Brandstetter argues that animal conglomerations compose the poetic figuration of the "swarm" in dance as well as in literature. The swarm of blossom that falls like snowflakes around Hedwig and Tommy draws on the historicity of this image in dance, choreography, literature and film. As blossoms, the swarm of falling, whirling objects not only suggests a rite of passage, but is also strongly connected to romance and love (Brandstetter 2008: 97). The English word "swarm" derives from the Middle High German word "swarem, suarum, swarm" and is descriptive of the phonetics of insect groups (Brandstetter 2008: 96). Later on the term is used as a verb "*schwärmen*" (engl: *to swarm/to rave*) throughout philosophical history. During the Romantic period, philosopher and poet Novalis describes the "noisy excess" of people "who hold emotions and even fantasies as truth" as *Schwärmer*. According to Brandstetter, *Schwärmer* (engl.: *swarmers/utopians/enthusiasts*) were feared for their "revolutionary energies" (Brandstetter 2008: 96). The "swarm" is connected to enthusiasm and the "affective power of passion and the lack of rules" that the philosopher Emmanuel Kant sees as a danger to the "boundaries of human reason" (Brandstetter 2008: 97). In literature, as Brandstetter discusses in relation to the fairy tale *The Snow Queen* by

Hans Christian Andersen, the notion of a swarm and "*Schwärmerei* configures a crisis in perception, of orientation in the world and of self-awareness" (Brandstetter 2008: 100).

Through this reading, the image of the falling blossoms becomes linked to notions of disorientation as well as to a changed hierarchy of the senses. Sight becomes less meaningful, seeing becomes impossible in this moment and the scene becomes a meditation on the proximal and on contact. Additionally, the swirl of blossoms becomes an extension of the dance between Hedwig and Tommy.

The scene is firstly a picture of Hedwig's idealising fantasy of love and finding her other half, ultimately framed by the culturally established "clichéd" image of the falling, whirling blossoms at the moment of their kiss. This image of moving objects in poetic text is not ahistorical, but connects to a long tradition of thought, and literary as well as cinematic imagery. The swarm of blossoms ends abruptly when the scene ends as an effect of Tommy's refusal to touch her. It demonstrates that this moment of dreaming and enthusiastic love was far more Hedwig's fantasy than a mutually shared dream. Hedwig becomes the swarmer/ Schwärmer (German: *die Schwärmerin*) in this moment. She is a dreamer, who extracts the romantic bits and pieces out of a realist and often not progressive script in order to treasure a hopeful moment. The image of whirling objects also suggests a crisis situation, the inability to see, or a loss of orientation. At the same time, the storm of blossoms points towards a loss of sight, the loss of the most privileged sense in the constitution of knowledge in euroamerican contexts.

I propose approaching the dance scene in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* as an exit scape. It begins in the moment of Hedwig's "baptising" of Tommy and travels through a slow-motion dance until it ends with the kiss amongst the falling white blossoms. As an entrant, I become embedded in this scene through the tactility that is produced using multiple cinematographic techniques, in particular editing, framing and sound as well as body language and soundtrack. It is a scene that deliberately seems to create a position that includes the entrant within the film in a multisensory way. In this sense, the dance becomes a moment of hope, a spacetime of a brief opportunity to find belonging, acceptance and love. Yet, ambivalently, as an entrant I am already warned about

the potential of failure in their affection as Hedwig tells in voice-over how Tommy continuously refuses to touch her "inch"-genitals.

Vulnerable Bodies

In her book *Dangerous Discourses of Disability, Subjectivity and Sexuality* (2009), feminist philosopher and queer crip scholar Margrit Shildrick discusses touch in relation to the disabled body. Her discussion brings forth many connections with the trans body, especially in the dynamics of its perception by a hetero-patriarchal and cis-normative society. Shildrick argues that the sense of touch disrupts the illusion of the modernist body concept of purity, containment and self-control (Shildrick 2009: 29). The imaginary stable body is shaken by the idea of contact and reminded of its own precariousness, instability and fragility (Shildrick 2009: 20). Touch is a force that opposes the rational ideal of the Cartesian subject. Everything bodily appears to be polluting and dangerous to the "pure" mind concept of the Enlightenment. Through the sense of touch, the body can be discussed as anything but autonomous, independent and impermeable. Touch evokes threat as it shows that a human is not only a rational subject, but also a being with feelings and incongruencies; of skin that barely covers the vulnerability of the body. Through touch, the body becomes a feeling organism and is no longer rendered as only instrumental or containing. The body becomes constituted through contact with others (Shildrick 2009: 26). This is not incidental. Touch calls bodily matter into presence. The body becomes realised and actual while at the same time remaining subordinate to the mind. Yet, a body, with all its strengths and vulnerabilities, is not subsumable to the will of a rational subject. Instead, the presence, needs and requirements of a body have to be recognised as equally important and relevant. Although the discussion above may, to some degree, reproduce the distinction between the body and mind, it is crucial not to understand such a distinction as a "neutral" one. The euroamerican context has come to think of and treat the body and mind as two separate entities. To think of them otherwise becomes almost impossible. Shildrick claims that "bodies matter not because we live in them, but because the experiences that constitute the self are always embodied" (Shildrick 2009: 68).

This argument underlines the foundational feminist understanding of subjectivity that calls for an understanding of the body and mind as interrelated and inseparable.

Yet, in the prevalence of an approach to bodies that regards them as appendices of a rational and mind-driven subject, the body is imagined as potentially threatening, especially when it violates visibly normative assumptions on bodily shapes and appearance. Such bodies become culturally rendered as monstrous (Stryker 2006b) or abject (Kristeva 1982) and socially regimented by violence or discrimination as, for example, the disabled body, the trans body or the black body. These bodies, rendered as "different" from the norm of the white, cis-gendered, abled body, become experienced as especially problematic from a normative perspective when the scopic distance anticipates physical contact. The anti-normative subject experiences a rendering of its body as "unclean" (Shildrick 2009: 32) and becomes connected to affects of fear and disgust. The "abject" body, as the French feminist philosopher and writer Julia Kristeva has named it, is regarded as a possible infiltration of the normative body (in Shildrick 2009: 22) and undermines its own construction of its self as "healthy" and "autonomous". A "contaminating" contact with an abject body, such as the trans body, threatens the idea of the stable and normative body. There is therefore a powerful desire to police clear bodily limits and boundaries (Shildrick 2009: 22).

Tommy is positioned in this scene as such a normative subject who guards his boundaries, afraid of the vulnerability of Hedwig's anti-normative body. He rejects her and establishes her in this moment as the Other, the one that has to be abjected in order to establish the safe, rational subjectivity of Tommy, symbolic of the idea of masculine-coded containment. Tommy is ambivalently connected to Hedwig, in desire for her and for her difference as much as he is obviously also frightened and seemingly even repulsed by it. The dance temporarily disrupts this stream of negative affect, of Hedwig's fear of not being loved, Tommy's reproduction of bodily norms and body expectations. During the dance, these constraining elements are on hold and evoke the dance as an exit scape; a short moment for the imagination and hope that things can be different between them. The dance almost allows us to erase the danger of potential pain for Hedwig and as an

entrant I immerse myself in the fantasy of possibility, of intensifying contact, which, while whirling me in sweet blossoms, urges me into an affective worlding of imaginary difference – a different "being loved" for Hedwig and a different ability to exist with a norm-bending body. A utopian moment in its yearning for a different form of belonging, care and generosity; a moment of utter openness.

APPROPRIATING AGENCY IN *BREAKFAST ON PLUTO* (2005)

In the film *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005), the density of haptic visuality is enriched by another layer. Dance and movement are joined by the imagination of touch in a daydream. In this film, the protagonist Kitten is a glam-rock-influenced, approximately twenty-year-old gender-dissident character whom the film follows through hir coming of age in a small Irish town, later tracing hir search for hir biological mother in London who gave hir up for adoption as a newborn.

The film script is an adaptation of the novel of the same title published in 1998 by Irish writer Patrick McCabe, with whom director Neil Jordan developed the film script. As an Irish independent film, *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005) is Jordan's second film with a trans main character after he directed the thriller *The Crying Game* (1992). *Breakfast on Pluto* could not quite repeat the commercial and award-winning success that he achieved with *The Crying Game* (not within trans criticism) but nevertheless it was nominated for several awards, among them the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor and Best Film, as well as The European Film Award, also for Best Actor. It won the Audience Award at Ljubljana Film Festival (2006) and the Irish Film and Television Award (2007).

The main character Kitten likes to sing, and is well known for hir vivid fantasies and unceasing stream of imaginary stories about hir own life, hir birth, adoption and hir biological parents. During the quest to find hir birth mother in London, Kitten is arrested after one of the frequent bomb attacks carried out by the IRA in London during the 1970s. Kitten has gone out dancing to a nightclub that unfortunately is frequented by British soldiers on leave. A bomb explodes and demolishes the place. Among the wounded is Kitten and

while she is half conscious in hospital the medical staff become aware of hir (conventional) "male" coded anatomy. Ze becomes immediately suspected of the attack and is taken to the police as a supposedly cross-dressing undercover IRA member. After several days of brutal inquiries, beatings and sleep deprivation, Kitten finally seems to offer to testify hir story of hir underground IRA activities when the police push pen and paper towards her. Slowly, Kitten takes the pen and begins to write. Immediately she drifts into a glamorous adventure story, first noting hir antagonism towards the IRA and its methods of action. From there, ze glides further into hir story, departing from the adventure story of a super heroine into the imagination of a peaceful, calm dance between hir and hir friend Lawrence.

A Daydream Dance

The camera frames the images of Kitten's fantasised testimonial while ze writes. Through hir words, an imaginary landscape unfolds. Kitten, walking up a staircase, in a black latex dress inspired as much by fetish wear as by cross-references to Cat Woman. A moment later, ze enters an imaginary planning room of the IRA. There is a voice-over narrative in the scene, which is the story she is writing at this moment. Ze immobilises the cis-male activists with hir "anti-terrorist perfume spray", letting them fall unconscious, and exits the room. The soundtrack, which plays throughout the scene, becomes more distinct – a 1960s disco hit:

> *Stop, what's that sound / everybody look what's going on…*

As she is leaving, she surprisingly adopts the soundtrack for a brief moment and sings along: "Stop, what's that sound?" She starts to dance to the soundtrack. It is a moment that blurs conventional cinematic boundaries between what the film audience and the characters can hear, as a soundtrack usually remains illustrative and diegetically uninvolved unless it is directly embedded within the film.

In time with the beat, Kitten continues to spray hir magical perfume into the air. This action is followed by a change of editing. Now, in slow motion, the film image fills out with the splinters of the exploded

disco ball; an image familiar to the entrant as it appeared earlier when Kitten was dancing in the club and the disco ball burst first as the bomb exploded. This time the splinters of this symbol of disco dancing reassemble slowly into the shape of a shiny ball. In this slow current of images, the ball takes on its former shape again, undoing what has happened in that place, at that time.

The mirror shards reflect the red colour of Kitten's clothes and the frame narrows into a close-up of hir shoulder dressed in a bright red, shiny leather coat which ze was also wearing on that particular unfortunate night. When the camera distances itself again into a medium and long shot, the scene has undergone a transformation. Within just a few seconds, the film has shifted from the interrogation cell through the IRA combat cell into a scene in which Kitten is dancing again, under a reinstalled disco ball, this time not with a stranger, but with hir friend Lawrence; it is a scene of how that night could have been if things had been different in the past, if Lawrence were not dead, if Kitten had not chosen that club, if there had not been any British soldiers.

Film still
Breakfast on Pluto (2005)

In this scene of a dance between Kitten and Lawrence, Kitten is moving slowly around the dance floor. Lawrence, hir friend since childhood, is leading the dance. He was killed a few months earlier in a bomb attack in their home town Tyreelin because, perhaps partly due to his Down Syndrome, he was unaware that a road had been blocked off during an IRA bomb warning and the bomb went off next to him. While they dance, Kitten has hir hands on Lawrence's shoulders. They

shift their feet slightly, smiling at each other, comforting and with the intimacy of close friends. The music has changed with the change of scenery. In the moment of the reestablishment of the disco ball, the music glides into Bobby Goldsboro's song *Honey*, a singer-songwriter/country hit from the late 1960s.

Film still *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005)

> *One day while I was not at home / while she was there and all alone / the angels came / and now all I have is little reason, honey / and I wake up nights and call her name / and now my life is an empty stage ...*

After a few seconds filled with joy and peacefulness, the images are suddenly disrupted and a cut kicks me back to the interrogation cell, Kitten at the desk, the paper and pen in front of hir. The soundtrack fades out and with its fading I become aware that I just drifted away. Together with Kitten I had a small, desperately needed pause from the horrors of the abuse of power by the interrogating police, hir torture and constant misgendering. Now, together with hir I am back in the interrogation room, forced to deal with the consequences of hir story.

The policemen rip the paper from Kitten's hands. They are outraged by hir fictionalised story of political action. Kitten sits in front of them; ze has started to cry. Desperately ze is holding hir head in hir hands, elbows on the table, face down. For the first time during those days of hard inquiry, Kitten shows hirself to be emotionally exposed and unprotected. Ze has lost hir nerve, which it seems that ze had been able to maintain due to

the power of hir strong imagination which allowed hir to drift off during the beatings and imagine herself elsewhere, maintaining a sense of self.

Unfolding Agency

The dance with Lawrence rescued Kitten and at the same time made hir emotionally vulnerable. It softened hir protective shell and forced hir to feel hir loneliness and desperation, enabling hir at the same time to feel the affinity and intimacy of the friendship. It provided hir with agency to continue being hirself. Kitten's vulnerabilities are expressed in the tactile events of the scene; the shattering glass of the disco ball, the perfume, the clothes she wears and the whirling shift of time and space when the dance scape starts and ze holds hir friend closely. This scene also shows hir defencelessness in the reality of the inquiry room. Kitten's remaining agency exists on the level of fantasy. Ze has the ability to transfer hirself somewhere else mentally. In this scene, ze imagines that ze is in hir friend's presence, dancing with him, comforted by his closeness, and his friendship. Lawrence becomes Kitten's point of support in this situation of escalation. Ze associates him with safety. This fantasy implies hir actual "lack" of agency in hir confrontation with the police. Ze is held hostage in a cell, isolated from other people, legal support or friends. Kitten's dance with Lawrence expresses hir minimal space of safety. It is a longing for provisional protection and for the maintaining of the strength required to cope with the situation. In this dreamed dance, I read the movements as symbolic of the shifting of the boundaries between reality and imagination, the power that exists in becomings through dream and fantasy and as a step that brings reality into the fantasy as much as the fantastic into reality – it dilutes the boundaries of two spheres that are conventionally held separate.

The dance in this scene forms neither a place of belonging (as in *Ma vie en rose*), nor a place of longing (as in *Hedwig*). The imaginary dance in the club establishes Kitten's possibilities. Dance becomes a place of agency. It expresses hir ability to remain truthful through the expression of self-identity and emotions. The dance becomes hir shelter and features as a place of security as much as of personal integrity.

This scene becomes my exit scape in Kitten's interrogation and

multisensorially pulls me along into a cinematic spacetime of safety and protection, however imaginary and temporary. It is a scene that makes me think of a statement by Audre Lorde that I was pointed to by Julia Serano's opening quote in her book *Whipping Girl*. Serano's book on trans women and sexism starts with the following lines: "If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive" (Lorde 1984: 45; Serano 2007). This sentence expresses how important it is in a hostile world to continue to define oneself using one's own notions and definitions, not the perceptions of those outside of one's self. This is exactly what the dreamed dance scape with Kitten seems to express. Through the imaginary dance and hir strong ability to fantasise new worlds, Kitten can still know who and what she is, without having to take up the perspective of the powerful institution ze is exposed to, the police in this scene, which can be substituted with any oppressive form of powerful, judgemental abuse.

I understand the potential of this scene, in which dance and fantasy scapes merge, as an expression of agency through an imagination enriched by the image of contact and protection in the dance. The exit scape of the dance between Lawrence and Kitten offers me a scene that I read and experience as utopian; it allows me as an entrant to feel a safety that does not really exist but can temporarily be established, linking itself to a vision of elsewheres and elsewhens. It offers a moment to regain strength in this provisional pause in Kitten's interrogation. With this scene, I have an anchor in this film that makes the violence before and after bearable, the loneliness and restlessness that Kitten experiences almost until the end of the film endurable, and links it to the power of imagination for a futural becoming.

WORLDING THE TRANS BODY IN DANCE

As I discuss in this chapter, dance constitutes the transing body in multiple forms and is negotiated in particular through the sense of touch. Touch in *Ma vie en rose* allows Ludo to find support from hir grandmother, to disrupt normative appellations, to be allowed to intra-act with the notion of a contagious dance, to rearticulate gender through

sensual movement and to perform a reappropriation of the connection between dance, emotionality, contact and bodily vulnerability. The character Hedwig negotiates longing through contact, and emphasises the potential of failing in this longing through the failure of affectionate touch (in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*). Nevertheless, the dance scape in this film presents a hope for affirmation and the corroding of normativity and hope of becoming desirable. It offers me as an entrant a moment to experience intimacy, love and support in the brief minutes of a dance. In *Breakfast on Pluto*, Kitten affirms hirself through dance, traces dance as hir last and first moment of agency and appropriates the power of imagination as a way of maintaining integrity.

Touch takes a hold on these characters in various complex and partially ambivalent ways; while touch is longed for by these characters and is achieved in dance it is always connected with the actuality of violent touch, or of neglect, or of not being touched at all. In addition, especially in relation to trans embodiment, touch presents an arbitrary sense. The characters find affirmation and belonging in it and negotiate their dissidence across differences with each other through touch. I quoted Erin Manning earlier, who argued for touch as an "act of reaching toward" and as a "worlding through the movements of bodies" (Manning 2007: xiv); and thus the characters create worlds together in their dance movements, the affirmation of being in touch and open towards each other allows me as an entrant to feel utopian possibilities of different worlding in these scenes, of how things could be different. And yet, touch is also always embedded in the danger, the life-threatening parts of it, or in the moment of disclosure, a touch that might find a body shape not precisely as it appears while wrapped in clothes, or the touch that feels the binding efforts that a certain body presentation might require.

In relation to cinema theory and sensible cinematic intra-activity, the coming into contact with a film takes place not only in the exit scapes but also in the violent scenes of Trans Cinema, in each scene of constraint, of an exposed body, naked, or a voyeuristic gaze, physical or sexualised violence, all present those instances where the film reaches for me, touches me and exists as a moment and a space within the film with which I would sometimes rather not be brought into contact. Yet,

this ability of a film to touch me is also its potential to unfold utopian becoming that I find so compelling in Trans Cinema and its exit scapes; the friendly touch, the enthusiastic, ecstatic, or charged proximity of the dance scapes become tactile spacetimes that reconciliate me with the story, allow me to affirm the grip a film has on me and which invite me, even urge me, to become an empathic, involved entrant into the cinematic world of a film. Such compelling intra-action in the exit scape allows– as I have advocated – an opening towards the spacetime of hope and utopia. The exit scapes act as the tactile fissures of disidentification with the rest of the film and offer worldings of different becomings, and the hope for a different form of existence, of (trans) gendering, of being loved and touched, of being safe and unharmed.

In each of the dance scapes, the spacetime of utopia is enfolded not only within the story and for the characters, as becomes apparent in Ludo's hopeful belonging, Hedwig's desire for recognition and Kitten's ambiguous establishment of integrity. The utopian moments that these dance scapes in the three films unroll are always also utopian spacetimes for the entrant; the scene becomes the cinematic space in which utopia shapes itself as an affect, the feeling of future, hope and possibility that I can read into these exit scapes – the potentiality that is spread out in these sequences, partially via identification with the character, but much more with the affects of these scenes, their hapticity, the relief and joy they provide for their character which then, I would like to suggest, transposes into the potentiality of feeling hope, joy and safety for the entrant. The element of utopian becoming in these exit scapes is multiple and involves the characters as much as the entrants. Utopia is not in itself a fixed place or set time; instead, as I outlined in Chapter 1, "Topographies of Trans Cinema", utopia means longing for an elsewhere and an elsewhen; the refusal to accept constraint; temporary, imaginary sometimes and somewheres; they are haptically real and tangible in their shaping of the exit scapes. The dance scapes, with their strong bond with tactility and contact, allow entrants to sense a worlding based on the experience of the disruption of normative storylines and representations and the hope that is included in these dance scapes, for their entrants and for each of their transing characters.

INTERLUDE

BRANDON *and* DIL *have been dancing and are now standing at the side of the dance-floor, watching the other dancers.*

BRANDON: I think I could use a smoke. Do you want to join me outside?

DIL: Sure, baby. Let's catch some air.

Outside now. Standing near the club entrance, a few more people around them also smoking.

BRANDON: When I went to the bathroom earlier I found this sticker next to the washbasin saying: *gender/s and pronoun/s are nothing you can see. stop assuming. start asking questions.* It was from a blog called mis-gender.tumblr.com. But don't you think as well that the whole point of transitioning is to fit in and not to be asked any freakin' questions any longer?

ELISABETH, LUDO'S *grandmother, joins them outside with a cigarette. She overheard parts of the conversation while standing with some other friends nearby and is now attentively listening to* BRANDON *and* DIL'S *conversation.*

DIL: I don't know. Sometimes it's important to blend in for various reasons but it's also annoying how people constantly make the wrong assumptions about trans people, passing or not passing, only based on visual markers. And then they're shocked when their low

horizon gets scratched by the unexpected. If they'd asked earlier it could have been a totally different story.

ELISABETH: Yes Dil. I agree. I agree with you as well, Brandon, passing is often important for people. But see, my grandchild, Ludo, you know them, they also often speak of their gender identity and that it doesn't match public expectations. And I could see that Ludo's parents, my daughter and her husband, never seem to be able to listen. The poor child, sometimes I think me and this TV star are the only ones this kid has… I wonder why people don't pay attention. Ludo expresses clearly who they are but nobody hears it.

BRANDON: Well Elisabeth, I think you're right. It's a whole different matter if you pass than if you don't. If you don't pass you need people to ask you what pronouns you prefer or at least to be attentive to you when you express who you are! I guess both positions share their own potential for trouble in this ridiculously narrow-minded world.

Both DIL *and* ELISABETH *nod.* DIL, *the last to finish her cigarette, throws it into the bin near the entrance.*

DIL: Shall we go back inside to the others?[45]

3

SONG AND THE POLITICS OF LISTENING

It was a beautiful and marvellous song –
very slow and soft… This song made her feel
sad and excited and happy all at once.
Carson McCullers[46]

What stories do I tell? …I try to say
something through music. I try to say
something between the music.
Venus de Mars[47]

What does it mean to hear, to be heard, or to listen? Hearing is more than just sound waves being absorbed by an ear, more than just deciphering the meaning of a word. I define it here as equivalent to listening. Hearing then is attentiveness, attention, as well as the stirring of feelings and the planting of knowledge in the person who hears and listens. Yet, the physiology of hearing is also normalised. Not everybody can hear with their ears. Hearing is sometimes an ablist metaphor that means to be understood and refers to becoming aware of someone's verbal and non-verbal articulation and expressions. Hearing then becomes fingertips reading Braille, eyes reading lips, just as much as eardrums vibrated by words and the airborne, energetic waves called sound.

In almost every film with a trans main character, sound is enacted at the especially important level of song. Brandon listens to Lana singing Karaoke in a local pub (*Boys don't Cry*), Ludo dances and hums quietly to hir favourite TV series tune (*Ma vie en rose*), Kitten sings songs to herself and sometimes to customers in the strip booth

where she works (*Breakfast on Pluto*). The list of characters singing to themselves, or listening to others interpreting songs, is much longer and strikes me as a significant part of Trans Cinema that, as I would like to argue in this chapter, offers its entrants an exit scape. To enable a closer discussion of one element, I decided to focus specifically on songs within Trans Cinema in this chapter. Other forms of sound could have been the soundtrack, the voices of speaking characters, or the background soundscapes within different scenes. However, none of these occurrences of sound provide the same complexity or critical potential as the songs within these films themselves.

In this chapter, I investigate Trans Cinema through the use of songs within three films, *Romeos*, *Transamerica* and *The Crying Game*. The first film presents a song scape in the German production *Romeos* (2011), in which the trans male character Lukas finds himself suddenly enthralled by an unexpected song performance in a gay club. For the discussion of a second sound scape, I turn to the film *Transamerica* (2005), which features the trans woman Bree, who goes on a cross-country trip with her son. As the narrative progresses her son will eventually get to know that she is his parent. One evening during their trip, an admirer sings Bree a traditional country-western song, whose intra-diegetic context subverts the meaning and history of the song. This analysis will be followed by a discussion of a song performed on stage by the female trans character Dil in *The Crying Game* (1993). Dil is watched by Fergus, who seems to be following her and they are both attracted to one another. He is oblivious of the queer bar setting and Dil's song functions as a positioning within this trans queer context.

EMBODIED LISTENING

All three films have very different song scapes that also partly overlap in the imaginaries they unfold and the spacetimes they enact. Drawing on the concept of "embodied listening" developed by sound studies scholar Gascia Ouzounian (2006: 70), I would like to focus this chapter on the sense of hearing, the act of listening and a non-ablist deconstruction of hearing: "attentive sensibility". The concept of embodied listening "focuses

on (…) situated and embodied experiences of sounds (…)" (Ouzounian 2006: 78) and enables a critical investigation of the reception of sound and in particular the intra-action between the body of the character, the entrant, the sounds and the intra-diegetic space and time. In this approach, I analyse the song scapes in relation to their potential as exit scapes through a discussion of the lyrics, song genre, voice and historical context of interpretation as well as the context within the film itself. Embodied listening emphasises the affective, transcorporeal strength of sound and explores sound, space, time and sensation in its intra-action and the way in which it affects the "body, its surroundings and its imaginary points" (Ouzounian 2006: 70).[48] Ouzounian describes embodied listening by making use of Donna Haraway's situated knowledges and embodied objectivity (Haraway 1991). Embodied listening draws similarly on the corporeal elements of analysis, deconstructing the dichotomies of body and mind (Ouzounian 2006: 71). It focuses not only on what is being heard, but also on how and where it is being heard (Ouzounian 2006: 72) and by whom. And in the deconstruction of hearing as normalised, attentive sensibility is its counterpart, meaning an awareness of sound through other bodily senses when the ears are not able to hear.

Ouzounian's conceptualisation of embodied listening is connected to the "between" of music, as the trans female singer Venus de Mars puts it in the quote featured at the beginning of the chapter: "I try to say something through music. I try to say something between the music." These "betweens" of music become a space-making in Venus de Mars' words, drawing awareness to the fact that there is something non-graspable in music. This between of music relates not only to the textual inbetweens of music, its lyrics and notation, but also to the inbetweens of sound itself – the non-representability of sound, perhaps also of listening itself as something that is also non-representable, only perhaps in showing it through the absence of other practices (Laws 2010: 2). According to musicologist Sophie Fuller, music historically has often used as a code for queer sexuality (2002: 1). The inbetween of music also refers to this space in music for the non-normative, the between of coherent gender signifiers that are impossible to be embodied by trans subject. The multiple forms of embodied listening to these inbetweens of music is what I will set out to capture in this chapter.[49]

HEARING TRANS

This chapter specifically follows questions about how songs in Trans Cinema affect the characters and provide them with an exit scape. In what way is the act of listening connected to trans embodiment and how is it an important element in trans politics? Engaging with these films through the sense of hearing, and especially of listening, as it is enacted in the films or in a critical formulation, through the sense of attentive sensibilities, means to investigate how the films' trans characters establish themselves differently within the song scapes and to ask what the spacetimes of the songs enable them to feel, to become and how these song scapes present exit scapes for the characters as much as for their entrants.

The practice of embodied listening performs a deprivileging movement with respect to visuality. It shifts the focus from sight to sound, a less dominant sense and a sense that, as attentive sensibility, also links to transfeminist politics in its focus on self-positioning that is spoken rather than an (often wrong) visual decoding. I would like to emphasise here a critical urgency to shift the categorising knowledge about people's identities and positions away from a visual paradigm to a paradigm of attentiveness in which the complexities of a person's articulation through signs and words allow a form of self-representation that pairs up with visual representation as much as it also exceeds it. As an embodied social positioning, transing is often not visible in the multiplicities of its existence. As Brandon quoted in the Interlude at the beginning of this chapter, *gender/s and pronoun/s are nothing you can see. stop assuming. start asking questions*. Thus, transing gender embodiment in its disidentificatory movement away from normative gender positions relies on sound, signs, singing, speaking, writing or other forms of non-verbal communication that contest the simplistic binaries of visual classification. Within the logics of visual categorisation, trans embodiment is nonexistent and it becomes 'voided' in the mis-reading of it as cis-gendered and bi-gendered embodiment or, if not that, then only through failure or as a threat, readable as freakishness in its non-conformity to binary gender norms (Halberstam 2005: 77). My analytical strategies in this chapter, with its focus on embodied

listening and song, is intended to be an invitation to temporarily leave aside visual classification and its dominant sense of sight and in the analysis of the song scapes to focus on the sense of hearing, and along with it attentive sensibility and listening.

HOPE AND ASSURANCE IN *ROMEOS* (2011)

Romeos is one of those rare films that features a trans male character. This subject of male transition and gender dissidence has not been examined by many films as Trans Cinema mostly features female trans characters. Interestingly, at the same time as *Romeos*, another film also featuring a character who disidentifies with a normatively female-assigned gender position was released, the French production *Tomboy* (2011). While *Tomboy* addresses the coming-of-age story of a ten-year-old child, *Romeos* features the young adult Lukas and follows his first months after arriving in a new city, the German town of Cologne.

Romeos was written and directed by German cis-female director Sabine Bernardi. The film has received positive feedback from LGBQ and trans entrants and festivals, and won the Jury Award at the Queer Filmfest Chéries-Chéris in Paris, the Audience Award at Festival Perle, Hannover, Germany, the Queer Youth Award at Oslo Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, Norway, as well as several Jury and Audience Awards at LGBTIQ film festivals in North America. Prior to the release of the film, the screenplay won the Best Treatment Cologne Screenplay Prize in 2007.

Bernardi explains in an interview by the queer online magazine *Inqueery* that she was moved by the difficulties of people growing up trans and having to live with not fitting into the expected social roles. She explains that, as a lesbian, she has experienced what she describes as similar problems with outing and family resistance and she wanted to capture this on film (Bless 2011). Prior to *Romeos* she made a short documentary film about two parenting trans men, *Transfamily* (2005). As she explains, the stories and people she encountered on the trans scene inspired her to produce a fictionalised story. The film, like many trans films in recent years, has been criticised for not working with a trans male actor. Interestingly, she explains that she did send out a call

through popular trans men's forums in Germany but had hardly any response. For the development of Lukas as a character she had Balian Buschbaum's masculinity in mind as a confident and energetic trans man (Bless 2011). Buschbaum has become a familiar German media figure in recent years after his coming out as trans and the end of his professional pole-vaulting career and Olympic success. Bernardi also explains that forum entries by trans men online constitute parts of the script of *Romeos*; in particular in the scenes in which the protagonist Lukas shares his transition experiences in video blogs, she took large sections from existing entries after receiving permission from the authors.

The online exchanges with other trans men are Lukas' only community grounding in the film *Romeos*. Lukas has just finished high school and is anticipating his mastectomy appointment, which is still a few months ahead. The film depicts Lukas' first impressions of Cologne, the experience of settling in, finding new friends and starting his job as a volunteer caretaker at a home for the elderly. It traces not only his transition but also his exploration of the gay and queer scene in the new city. He worries about his non-conforming body while also wanting to have sex with one particular young man whom he has just met. He struggles with his fear of failing normative expectations if he pursues his fling further. Since the story of *Romeos* is invested with the constant threat of being outed, found out and failing to pass, the film steps into similar problematic territory as that which overshadowed *Boys don't Cry* (Aaron 2001; Swan 2001; White 2001; Halberstam 2005) and continues to do so within the film *Tomboy*. The storytelling in *Romeos* seems particularly discomforting in relation to trans politics as it reinforces the discourse of a deceptive body presentation and produces an exploitative framing of the trans person that is dominant in many trans films.

The narrative of fear and physical threat that is connected to the failure to pass is additionally linked to repeated naked-body shots, which show Lukas without clothes weightlifting, getting dressed or showering. The frames seem to predominantly target his breasts, which causes in me discomfort to watch as Lukas is otherwise so careful not to show them, binding his chest, and additionally wearing thick jackets in the summer instead of going for a swim in the lake with his friends.

I observe these scenes frequently reappearing throughout the film and am surprised by director Bernardi's disregard of earlier critiques of trans exoticisation and voyeuristic exploitation that has been discussed in previous work, especially in the wide-ranging theoretical debates in relation to *Boys don't Cry* (Swan 2001; Halberstam 2005; Yekani 2007), but also around *The Crying Game* (Halberstam 2005; Yekani 2007).

In *Romeos*, the naked-body shots seem to use his culturally female-coded body to explain him as a trans character to uninformed entrants. The film thus appears to reproduce the narrative of bodily truth through its implementation of naked-body shots as the ultimate signifiers of Lukas' gender embodiment (Stryker 2006a; Hornscheidt 2005; Singer 2006). Unfortunately, the film also falls into the trap of connecting a non-passing body with unavoidable consequences of violence in a scene in which Lukas has to escape a rape attempt by one of his cis-gay colleagues. The song in *Romeos*, I would like to propose, offers an exit scape as an intra-active spacetime of temporary disruption from these cinematic techniques and a utopian engagement with the inappropriate/d body. I will discuss this further in the analysis of the following description of the song scape.

A Song of Promises

The song scape in *Romeos* is placed within the film at a moment when Lukas is still passing as a cis boy among his friends. The week before the song performance, Lukas and Fabio, the person Lukas is falling for, had been kissing and Lukas had stopped their interaction, withdrawing only reluctantly, as he would have liked to continue making out with Fabio. Yet, he is anxious about Fabio possibly feeling a different body under his clothes than what he imagines. A few days later, Fabio is present when Lukas is accidentally outed by his little sister. Fabio is upset and afraid his gay friends will discover that he was making out with a trans man, which he fears might affect his credibility as gay. The resulting distance between them causes Lukas deep sorrow and heartache and increases his worries about himself and his non-normative body and seems to confirm his fear of failing to be attractive to Fabio. On the following Friday night, Lukas can hardly motivate himself to

leave the house despite the fact that his friends are going to party at their favourite queer club. At some point during that night, alone in his dorm room, he pulls himself together and goes out, joining them. First he stands by himself near the bar; a few metres away from him a few colleagues take some drinks at the bar. Lukas overhears their gossiping, which is directed at a drag queen standing a few feet away. She seems to be the only drag queen in the club and becomes the focus of their ridicule. She overhears the conversation and is aware of the words that are intended to insult and ridicule her. She seems to know these words, they do not surprise her. Lukas stands close by his rude friends but remains silent. He also does not join in with their laughter and instead looks at the person who is being mocked. Their eyes meet, she looks at him almost neutrally yet with a slight smile that seems to open up a common understanding between them, as well as appearing to be meant as a comfort for the sad heaviness that surrounds Lukas.

The film cuts and shows the same feminine person from the bar, who is now the single performer on the stage. During the first instrumental tunes, the light slowly shifts from a warmer bar-like atmosphere into a 'colder', blue and white neon illumination of the space. Lukas is still standing at the bar during these first chords. The crowd and the stage provide the background space behind Lukas. He quickly glances at Fabio, who is sitting nearby. Fabio only looks back briefly, distanced and somewhat angry. A voice becomes audible; strong and clear, it cuts through the room, rolling through the space like a sonic wave. The spherical and gender-ambiguous voice embalming the room, speaking of travel, desperation and a search. The past-time historicity of the lute and the violins disrupt the contemporary musical space of the club, as much due to the composition and instrumentation as the old English verse evoking an impression of displaced time and space. The moment the vocal part sets in, Lukas turns around to face the stage. Cassy Carrington, in real life also a drag queen, has moved from her seat at the bar to her destined place on the stage as the evening's special guest. She lip-synchs to *A Poor Wayfaring Stranger* – a North-American folk song. It is a song that has been known for the last two centuries and which has often been reinterpreted by various artists.

> *I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger / I'm travelling through this world of woe / ...*

Already the first words of the song take a grip on Lukas. The instruments are silent now and only the voice of the singer fills the room. The sound flows through the space without haste, slow and weighty. It encircles the crowd in the room. Not until a few lines have been sung, does the voice become accompanied by a quietly played lute, appearing delicately in the background as the third line sets in:

> *Yet there's no sickness, toil nor danger / In that bright land to which I go / I'm going there to see my father / I'm going there no more to roam / I'm only going over Jordan / I'm only going over home / ...*

The quiet lute adds to the seductiveness of the song. The minimalism of the instrumental use in these lines provokes a humility that allows the voice to be almost the singular director of the spatial atmosphere. The high yet gender-ambiguous voice is powerful in its voluminous potential. It seems to craft a space of sound through the collectively listening crowd. As an entrant, I notice how touched I am by the intense atmosphere and the trans sensibility of the song. A song that perhaps draws this captivating strength from the unexpected contrast with the electronic techno beats that usually flood this space. Now transformed through this song, the room becomes an imaginary castle, a concert hall, a church – a location different in time and space that no longer seems to acoustically resemble a gay club in the early 21st century.

The song's heritage is unknown but it is discussed as being linked to an isolated population group of the Mulgeons in the southeast of the USA in the late 18th century. This group was semi-nomadic and searching for better social conditions as they were a multiracial group, probably consisting of free People of Colour, Native Americans and Europeans (Rouse 2005). It was a typical spiritual song of that time that discussed the hardship of everyday life and dreamt of better possibilities and drastic change, illustrated metaphorically in the song by the image of the river Jordan, which stands for the change from life to death.

Thus, the dream of a different future, of things changing, is apparent

in the lyrics. Here, the river Jordan symbolically becomes a metaphor of transformation and possibility, the crossing of it a difficult, frightening but achievable enterprise in which the far shore possibly presents a continuation of existence under different conditions, a changed landscape, new experiences. The father in the song, conventionally symbolic of God, becomes symbolic of the imaginary of trans community, of new kinships, a change of ethics and close affinities.

Film still
Romeos (2011)

While singing, Cassy Carrington sits on a bar stool, light blonde curls framing her face. Her voice, her appearance, the lyrics, the delicate gestures that she uses as her bodily language to express herself, the light and the atmospheric tensions the song initiates among its attendees all seem to pull Lukas towards the stage, letting him glide rather than walk, emphasising Cassy's mermaid aesthetics; it is a situation that leaves me with the impression of inevitability, of his almost involuntary attraction towards the performer or rather towards the sound, the song and the words sung. During the first verse, Lukas has slowly crossed the space, splitting the audience, and he approaches the stage at the moment the second verse begins. The instrumentation changes.

Strong violins accompany the lyrics and underline the impression of an urgent significance. Cassy turns to Lukas, her eyes meet his again and the next lines appear to be addressed solely to him. She continues to hold his gaze while singing the next verse:

Film still
Romeos (2011)

> *I know dark clouds will gather 'round me / I know my way is rough and steep / Yet golden fields lie just before me / Where God's redeemed shall ever sleep…*

The whole sequence, from the beginning of the song interpretation by Cassy Carrington and Lukas' voyage through the bar towards the stage, uses a shot/reverse shot technique. The camera frames Lukas' face in close up and alternates the singer on the stage in medium shot and long shot, showing her body and the stage behind her.

Film still
Romeos (2011)

The shots sometimes give time for the frame to sink in, allowing the entrant eight to eleven seconds to investigate the facial expression, the emotions showing in Lukas' face, the artful movements of the performer's hands, their connection to the lyrics. Most frames, however, with the

constantly changing shots between Lukas and Cassy, are shorter, three to five seconds, which allow an emotional intensity and tension to grow in the watching of this scene. Lukas is drawn to Cassy's performance and to the song. This reversing technique works as a conventionally formal strategy to elaborate on characters' emotional reactions and "accentuates the emotional content of a scene" (Pramaggiore/Wallis 2005: 177).

Film still
Romeos (2011)

This technique allows an understanding of the protagonists' connection to their surroundings, which otherwise would be harder for the entrant to follow. It also acts as a visual technique to transpose the emotions of a character onto the entrant. The shots evoke a sense of closeness to the events and the character's feelings. They produce a strongly multisensorial experience. The connection between Cassy and Lukas seems to be personal, direct and embodied, and this is affirmed by the editing. In the last two lines of the song, when Cassy sings of the golden fields ahead, the camera sinks to a low-angle shot while framing Lukas – elevating him, evoking for the entrant the feeling of a determined character and his growing confidence.

Siren Songs

The dynamic between Lukas and Cassy is mobilised by Cassy, who directs Lukas, controlling the room through her performance, her voice and the intensity of her presence. Her voice engenders a seduction that resembles the call of the sirens. The song becomes a siren song turned upside down. Instead of luring the listener to death, the performer in this scene seems to promise life rather than take it. Mythologically, mermaids were believed to entice sailors to leave their boats and jump into the tossing waves of the open sea, where they drowned. However, the mermaids also brought these people into a different space, directed by completely different rules of gravity and depth, a deep-water world. They were dead to the living but, in an imaginary way, alive amongst the creatures of the sea. They were carried away by a being that is half human and half fish, and who in so many ways very literally embodies the cultural associations of an abject body: feminine, permeable, watery, rendered not quite human and fetishistically staged as beautiful and oversexualised. In a society whose knowledge is based on rationality and science, masculinity and clear bodily boundaries, the siren becomes a cultural image in which not only do desire and fear blend but also the boundaries between gender, sexuality, bodily limits and corporeal features liquefy. Feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti addresses otherness as "implicitly modeled on ideals of whiteness, masculinity, normality, youth, and health. All other modes of embodiment [...] were pathologized and cast on the other side of normality – that is, viewed as anomalous, deviant, and monstrous. This morphological normativity was inherently anthropocentric, gendered, and racialized" (Braidotti 2009: 526). The figure of the siren in this song scape references various intersections which contribute to a monstrous position within western, patriarchal society, negotiated in a highly gendered and sexualised space of thought (Haraway 1997: 69; Shildrick 2009). The association of the mermaid's body with water, her improper embodiment, which can also be read as linking to a disabled body, and the ambivalence between sexualisation and the substitution of genitals with a fish tail, on multiple levels disrupt the illusion of the modernist body concept of purity, containment and self-control (Shildrick 2009: 29). Thus the mermaid becomes an

iconography of the inappropriate/d other that is repeated in Cassy's approach to Lukas and in her stage performance.[50]

According to queer scholar and musicologist Judith Peraino, music demarcates a time and space in which sexual orientation and gender embodiment become unbound and depart from their previously fixed definitions (Peraino 2003: 434). In the song, Lukas seems to physically relax, here for a moment the labour required to constantly manifest a clearly readable gender embodiment becomes unimportant; he is understood in the song by Cassy, comforted and supported by her; he becomes simultaneously unbound while becoming tied into Cassy's enticing voice. The siren as a Greek word comes from *seire*, which means rope or cord. In one of the earliest narratives to speak about sirens, Homer's *Odyssey* (ca. 800 BCE), the word used to write rope is *peirat*. *Peirat* comes from peirar, meaning limit, end or boundary (Peraino 2003: 337). In this musical interpretation that so much resembles a sirenic seduction with a queer shift, Lukas becomes bound as much as unbound in the roping of Cassy's voice. According to Peraino, sirenic songs expose "the porous nature of mind, body, and humanly determined boundaries, calling into question the desire to remain bound by them" (Peraino 2003: 440). This means that Lukas allows himself to become not only someone who struggles to achieve a perfect passing, but for the short moment of the song, he allows himself to become "monstrous" in the sense of a human who displays vulnerability, openness, and uncontained boundaries (Shildrick 2002). The song and Lukas' embeddedness in the music make him vulnerable, unprotected and at the same time also constitute him as a more complex subject who brings emotions, embodiment, permeability and ratio together. The monstrous figure has a long history in trans activism and trans studies of being an affirming figure (Stryker 2006b; Stone 2006; Wagner 2011). Rather than rejecting this cultural association of monstrosity that is applied to the anti-normative embodied selves of gender-dissident people, the monster instead becomes appropriated.

This scene appears like a modern restaging of sirenic seduction, yet without the sexual component; it is one that seduces Lukas by the complexity it offers in his becoming otherwise, becoming queer, monstrous and vulnerable. In Cassy's words and the mutuality of the

sounds, the space and the people, Lukas is held by the singer's words and hypnotic gaze. He is carried away into a world that seems to move on a different plane of thought, into a world that, imaginary and fantastic as it is, rises up in this acoustic space and pulls him into another realm of existence. It is a female-coded space, with the liquid and uncontained nature of water. He immerses himself in Cassy's voice as if diving into water. This is another way in which his male identity and masculine performance remain stable and important to him, while becoming embedded in a larger context of multiple gender positioning; the feminine-coded water is just an example of further positions. And it is also in a way readable as a comment on the shared sphere of femininity, music and unconventional gender and sexual positionings that all call into question masculinist structures of cisheteronormativity (Peraino 2003: 461).

For the few minutes that the song lasts, Lukas is invited to glimpse the "oceanic" possibilities of a life that allows the existence of beings who exceed the norms of bodily shapes and boundaries, to become monstrous and different alongside them but, most of all, to become himself in this.

The Voice

In this scene, Cassy Carrington performs by lip-synching to a song interpretation by the cis-male opera singer Andreas Scholl. He is a contemporary, German countertenor and sings with a falsetto voice. This is a voice that is achieved through specific bodily techniques of singing involving a complex connection between muscles and breathing; produced by the vibration of the ligamentous edges of the vocal cords, in whole or in part. The term falsetto usually refers to a type of vocal phonation that enables the singer to sing notes in an unusually high vocal range. A falsetto voice can be used by all kinds of bodies even though, until the 1960s, musicologists believed that only cis men were capable of it. It requires a large lung volume to sing with falsetto voice and at that time only men were thought to be able to develop this. In this sense, this vocal technique, which is historically is connected to the singing voices of castrati, is at the same time also a masculinising

voice technique.[51] Yet because of this historical connection to castrati voices, countertenors and falsettos are embedded in an anti-normative gender imaginary and transing body practices. This performance by Cassy Carrington also plays with a culturally coded voice that leaves the gender of the singer ambiguous, as well as that of the performer who lip-synchs.

This sequence, which cuts between Cassy's stage performance and Lukas, builds a unique and strong proximity between the two characters. The watching crowd becomes invisible, dissolving into a space that is filled only by the intense voice of the singer and by the performance. This presents a moment in the film that challenges the understanding of a contained space and precise time; together they seem to stop time, to leave it for a moment, becoming unaware of the room, the people, their expectations and fears. In the moment of this song interpretation, a connection unfolds between Lukas and the singer that had already been briefly suggested in their exchanged looks at the bar over the background noise of unfriendly comments – their affinity and the promise of assurance that lies within it for Lukas. Their alliance appears to be nurtured by the shy but passionate attachment of sympathising strangers who barely know each other except for sensing that they are the only ones of their kind in the room. They reach for one another as one reaches for the possibility of someone else who does not fit in in the same way as others do. This reaching is what queer sound scholar Yvon Bonenfant describes as a touching through timbre, the tone colour, vibration and emotional quality of voice. Timbre is a haptic element that makes voice become grainy, and tangible (Bonenfant 2010: 75)[52]; which might lead one to another, which can become a sonic pathway that links Lukas to Cassy and delivers him to her voice. Bonenfant also captures listening as a listening for queer belongings: "listening out through the static produced by not-queer emanations of vocalic bodies. (…) To find others in that full space, again, requires virtuosity – perhaps, a virtuosic development of the performance of giving attention. To find these others requires a certain kind of attunement to hearing beyond syntax" (Bonenfant 2010: 78). He is referring to the concept of vocalic bodies developed by Steven Connor (2000: 34–5) and with it grasps the space-making of sound through vibration and the material

changes through sound as it "shake[s] matter" (Bonenvant 2010: 75). It is this reaching that is creating, not only affinities and belongings, but different worlds (Bonenfant 2010: 75). Lukas and Cassy create a new world, a watery sphere, between themselves, unsettling the walls of the club, disrespecting the progress of time – they take a "step out" together. This form of "queer listening" as Bonenfant conceptualises it, is also a reaching towards the "disoriented or differently oriented other" through which Lukas and Cassy found each other in the club (Bonenfant 2010: 75). It is an exchange of strangers who know each other well, who can touch each other across time and space. It is Cassy who throws a rope to Lukas to carry him through this world. It is a story of experience and fear in this new life of his as a boy; Cassy offers him support in her smile, her voice, its timbre and the lyrics of her song suggesting to him that he too can become queer, contained and less restrained.

The Spatio-Temporalities of Assurance

The song scape destabilises time and space on multiple levels, which is important as it feeds into a queering of Lukas' becoming. As I argued above, the song, the historicity of it, the intensity of the performance and the connection between Lukas and Cassy, intimately enhanced by the shot/reverse shot technique, troubles clear spatial and temporal boundaries, unfolds spatial possibility as well as troubling an understanding of time's linear progress. I suggest here that we understand the song scape as a reworking of linear temporality, a critique of the capitalist narrative of progression (Lorenz 2012: 104) and along with it also a reimagination of space through sound, and its transformation of the space through its cultural threading with mermaid imaginaries.

The song lyrics themselves speak of a traveller who very conventionally outlines space through exploration and travel, metaphorising experience as a journey that teleologically leads to a futural moment of catharsis and perhaps even salvation. The discourses of journey and travels have been discussed within trans studies by Jay Prosser as a metaphor for the transitioning body that strives for a home (Prosser 1998). This idea of transition as a journey, or gender as a "home", has been critiqued

among other aspects for its implications of linearity and gender dualism (Aizua 2006; 2012a; Crawford 2008). Yet, the complexity of this sound scape, which leads beyond the cultural signification of the lyrics, allows us to also read this sequence as a disintegration of time and space that disturbs the trajectory of a "travel trope", its linearity of a promised better future and its colonialist impact. Instead I hear feelings of hope and assurance resonating in this song scape. These emotions suggest a directedness of this song scape that transforms spatial limitation and spatial signification as well as linear chronopolitics. According to Elizabeth Freeman, it appears to be "the manipulation of time [that offers] (…) a way to produce both bodies and relationalities" (Freeman 2007: 159). She argues that the self and bodies are materialised through certain experiences of time (Freeman 2007: 159).

Hence, in relating the character of Lukas to a history of gender dissidence, his embodiment becomes relational and collective rather than exoticised, individualised or detached from a larger spatio-temporality. Temporality seems to become porous, different historical moments are referenced in this event: the pre-modern myth of sirens, the contemporary club lighting, the 19th century song that has been reworked and repeated so many times until today, as well as the voice that defies gender norms with its anchor in the 16th century. All of these provide elements that queer time in order to envision a different future. A future partly anticipated in the song, its lyrics, the elsewhen and elsewhere that its verse highlights for Lukas, providing him with an assurance of a different future also that which contains less fear and despair.

"[W]hat moves us, what makes us feel, is also which holds us in place" (Ahmed 2006: 11). Immersing myself in this scene as an entrant, the song scape becomes an exit scape because it acts as a holding in place that prevents me from staying outside of the screen but allows me to enter the scenery through its sensitivity and proximity as the scene unfolds. The voice, the lyrics, the sirenic performance secure Lukas as much as open up into the assurance of alternative possibilities and alternative becomings. The song and Lukas' embodied listening, the form of the song affects his embodiment; his surroundings and situatedness in this context allow the film in this exit scape to also unfold the potential of alternative worldings for the entrants.

TRANSAMERICA (2005) AND THE TROUBLING OF WHITENESS

The US-American film *Transamerica* by director Duncan Tucker features the protagonist Bree, a shy and self-conscious trans woman who shortly before her surgery date finds out she has a 16-year-old son, Toby. Her therapist pressures her by saying that she will not give permission for the operation unless she has positioned herself as a trans woman and his parent to her son. Bree, inventing an identity as a social worker, bails him out of jail where he is being held after being arrested for hustling. She explains herself as his new "guardian" who will return him to his stepfather. His mother, Bree's former girlfriend, has just passed away. Together they embark on a road trip. Bree is heading for San Francisco to keep her surgery date, while planning to drop off Toby somewhere in the Mid-West.

As a low-budget production, like *Romeos*, *Transamerica* is cis-male director Tucker's first feature-length film after a few short films with gay topics. As a film with a trans main character, *Transamerica* arrived in cinemas shortly after the film *Normal* (2003), which also features a conservative trans woman and her wife and daughter, who live in the Bible Belt of the USA. *Normal* documents her decision to transition in her early 60s, her tomboy teenage daughter who sees in it a chance to transgress gender boundaries herself, and the wife's resistance. In the same year as *Transamerica* opened, the film *Brokeback Mountain*, advertised as the first gay mainstream film, also entered the cinemas and together both films and their Oscar nominations received a large amount of media attention that focused on their representation of gender and sexual difference in contemporary cinema. *Transamerica*, just like *Romeos*, has also been critiqued by trans activists for not casting a trans woman as the main character – a critique which, especially during recent years of trans activism, has become stronger. *Transamerica* was the first film where this critique actually found wider public recognition.

Tucker's motivation parallels Bernardi's (*Romeos*) and is explained by having intended to address the social difficulties of being trans, as he explains on the official film website.[53] Tucker wanted to show transgender as different from its social stigmatisation as pathological.

Transamerica was Oscar nominated for Felicity Huffman's perform-

ance and the film received several awards, among others the Golden Globe Award, the Independent Spirit Awards, the Screen Actors Guild Awards, the Southeastern Film Critics Association Awards, the Golden Kinnaree Award at the Bangkok International Film Festival, the LGBTIQ magazine *Siegessäule* award at Berlin International Film Festival, the Rosebud Award at Verzauber – International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, the Audience Award at San Francisco International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, the Equality California Entertainment Award as well as the GLAAD Media Awards.

Undermining Normal in a Folk Song

During their trip, before Bree can explain her parental position to Toby, their car is stolen. Calvin, a middle-aged Native American cis man gives them a ride in his van. He is kind and courteous and appeals to the conservative Bree due to his gentlemanly manners, while at the same time setting limits to Toby's teen rebellions against Bree's attempts at parental authority. Calvin offers to host them overnight at his house. Bree cannot fall sleep and when she hears Calvin playing the guitar on the porch she joins him outside. It is a quiet summer evening and Bree takes a seat in the garden chair opposite Calvin. She is wrapped in a warm shirt she has borrowed from him. Shy and tense, she sits in front of him, yet longing for his company. The intimacy of the flirtatious tension between them increases when he begins to sing a song for her:

Film still
Transamerica
(2005)

> *Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me, / Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for thee; / Sounds of the rude world, heard in the day, / Lull'd by the moonlight have all pass'd away!*

This song is a classic folk ballad; usually interpreted as a traditional love song, it becomes in this context an expression of Calvin's admiration for Bree. *Beautiful Dreamer* has been interpreted by many famous North American singers, and was originally composed in the late 19th century by Stephen Collins Foster, born in 1826. Along with other songs by Foster, such as *Oh, Susanne*, and *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Beautiful Dreamer* is regarded as one of the musical foundations of white North American identity. *Beautiful Dreamer* was written by Foster only a few days before his death in 1864 and appeared posthumously. All three songs were part of the racist 'black-face' performances of the Cristy Minstrel Shows in the mid-19th century, and through the enormous success of these shows the songs became popular. The minstrel shows used racist caricatures of people of colour in order to entertain their predominantly white audiences. These shows, in which white performers played black characters, were a large and successful part of US theatre from the 1830s until the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. Foster's songs played a leading role within the formation of an American identity and the construction of nationalism that has always been charged with discourses of white supremacy and racism. In his youth, Forster wrote racist lyrics and "crude caricatures" that were later erased from the songs (PBS 1999-2000). However, from 1849 onwards, Forster changed his position, becoming invested in abolitionist politics and beginning to intervene in the minstrel shows by writing songs that featured a different and at that time new image of people of colour in the USA.

I read the song interpretation of *Beautiful Dreamer* in *Transamerica* as creating a rupture in its former nationalist and racist contextualisation and I localise in it a disruption of the white American imaginary. The characters, a trans woman and a Native American man, socially positioned as inappropriate/d others, recontextualise the racist context of this song and perform a critical appropriation of its lyrics and former context. It is not only the interpreter's position in relation to the

construction of white American nationalist identity, but also the lyrics themselves, that parody the context of this song. The song, its singer, the listener and the context of its interpretation together become an appropriative and ironic movement. The song scape thus takes on an undermining gesture towards "normality"; Calvin and Bree reappropriate a piece that is a folk song, a genre of music for everyday people that is in everyday use. In this appropriation of the song, the two characters write themselves into this context while at the same time also keeping an ironic distance from it.

A Love Song for the Inappropriate/d

As Bree awaits her surgery date, she is filled with insecurities about her appearance and questions whether or not she passes, whether she appears attractive and feminine. The song intra-diegetically is a wooing song by Calvin, it serves as a compliment to her and as an expression of his attraction to her. The lyrics of the song affirm Calvin's wooing of Bree while subverting its reactionary context into a love song for the culturally inappropriate/d and unintelligible, represented by a trans woman and a Native American.

Usually the song is thought of as addressing a dead person, the beautiful dreamer, but I hear in the lyrics an affirmation of life and a new daring when Calvin reassures Bree about her trans position in his song: "awake unto me".

> *Beautiful dreamer, queen of my song, / List while I woo thee with soft melody; / Gone are the cares of life's busy throng, / Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me! / Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!*

The between the music in this scene speaks of his listening to Bree's non-verbal expressions of her gender positioning and her insecurities about her femininity – his words are intended to comfort and reassure her, addressing her through the lyrics as the "queen of my song", recognising her female embodiment and encouraging her not to worry – "gone are the cares of life's busy throng".

The lyrics also bear a remarkable resemblance to the song in *Romeos*. Both songs originated in the same country and in the same century, have connections to the transformation of life through the figure of "death" and address a future with fewer sorrows. Both use the image of clouds and fog that will vanish once the difficult times are over.

> *Beautiful dreamer, out on the sea / Mermaids are chanting the wild lorelie; / Over the streamlet vapors are borne, / Waiting to fade at the bright coming morn. / Beautiful dreamer, beam on my heart, / E'en as the morn on the streamlet and sea; / Then will all clouds of sorrow depart, / Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me! / Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!*

In addition, both songs evoke the trope of the mermaid. In this film it is not the staging of the scene that awakens this association, as it was in *Romeos*, but direct references within the lyrics referring to the saga of the Lorelei. Lorelei is the name of a famous, German-located siren who is supposed to have lived in the river Rhine. Known for her powerful voice, she was feared for luring boats into her vicinity where the sailors would eventually dive into the water in order to reach her, disappearing in the stream, their bodies never found. It is the mermaid, the half-human sea being who is considered dangerous and threatening except to those who are also rendered Other, her sea-life companions. Also in this song scape, the mermaid unhinges temporalities in the symphony with multiple other signifiers in the song and its trans-historical context. It evokes an imaginary spatiality of the underwater world as home to unexpected beings. Both characters, Bree and Calvin, inhabit a space in this song as "outsiders" from a dominant culture in which their bodies and their cultures are rendered inappropriate, and culturally marginalised. The siren trope allows a similar reading to that of *Romeos* in the sense that it produces a gesture of transing normative human gender embodiment in the collective alliance with other anti-normative bodies and their cultural renderings as not quite human or even monstrous.

I suggest a reading of this song scape as an exit scape. It enables me to step away from the overarching affect of fear of Bree's discovery by

her son, the oppressive behaviour of her family towards her transition and in general her restraint in everyday situations where she carefully guards herself. With Calvin she seems to feel safe, he expresses his admiration and his acknowledgement of her trans embodiment. In this sequence, where together they enjoy the evening on the porch, presents a moment that I suggest we perceive as a spacetime that contests the constraining elements of the film. I propose that we understand this song scape as providing a pause from the potential disclosure of Bree and her constant labour to pass and to perform immaculate femininity. It is a moment where she can let go of these fears and is allowed to relax and give up her worries. I also argue that this song scape features most crucially an affirmation for Bree as a utopian moment, one that converses with the historical imagery of the sirens, the transing of a song through the transgression of its conventional cultural significations.

THE CRYING GAME (1993) AND A TRANS POSITIONING

The *Crying Game* by director Neil Jordan is a film that has received widespread press and media attention as well as having sparked academic discussions about the representation of the main protagonist, Dil, as a female, black, trans character and the various forms of her objectification in the film (Kostsopoulos/Mills 1994;.Handler 1994; Edge 1995; Ayers 1997; DuttaAhmed 1998; Serano 2007; Yekani 2007; Grist 2003). Within the general corpus of Trans Cinema films, Dil features as one of only two black trans character in films from a Western European or North American context. Another exception is the film *Gun Hill Road* (2011), whose character is Latina and played by the trans actress Harmony Santana.

During its production process, *The Crying Game* experienced severe financial difficulties and was produced as a low-budget production of 2.3 million US dollars. Jordan began shooting the film with hardly any budget, which he later in an interview related to the politics, sexuality and gender issues in the film (Cummins 2012). *The Crying Game* failed at the box offices in the UK, bringing in only 2 million dollars, in contrast to its large US success where the box office achieved a gross of

68 million dollars. The failure of *The Crying Game* in the UK is assumed to be connected to the political theme of the film, which targeted the IRA and the Irish "Troubles" (Grist 2003: 4). In the USA, this British nationalist crisis is much less well-known and therefore the press and advertising for the film was mainly preoccupied with its representation of sexuality, sexual orientation and gender embodiment. This was enhanced by an exploitative marketing strategy by the production company, Miramax, which urged the press towards a particular review strategy in which Dil's trans identity was not mentioned and attracted their cis entrants through the shock effect when their assumptions about Dil's body were not met (Grist 2003: 4).

The film was nominated for multiple awards and won several of them. The lead actor, Jaye Davidson, a "newcomer" at that time, was nominated for best actress as well as best actor – an expression of the gender trouble this film enfolded not only intra-diegetically but also among jury members at festivals.[54] It received six nominations for the US Academy Awards and won the Award for Best Original Screenplay. In Great Britain *The Crying Game* was also nominated for the British Academy Film Awards in six different categories and won the Award for Best Film. Several other highly acknowledged awards followed, among others the ASCAP Film and Television Music Awards, the Australian Film Institute Award, the European Film Award, The Independent Spirit Awards, London Critics Circle Film Awards, Los Angeles Critics Association Awards, National Board of Review Award and National Society of Film Critics Award, as well as a nomination at the Golden Globe Awards.

A Spectacular Singer

Dil is working as a hairdresser in London, while Fergus, a member of the IRA, is partly responsible for the death of her partner Jody, who was a British soldier stationed in Ireland. After Jody's death, Fergus searches for Dil in London, maybe to befriend or protect her, presumably because he felt close to Jody and is ridden by the guilt he feels about Jody's death. Fergus and Jody had become friends during the days in which Fergus and his group held the black British soldier hostage. In the reviews of this

film, the relationship between Fergus and Jody is repeatedly interpreted as homoerotic (Yekani 2007; Halberstam 2005); reading Jody as a gay man bonding with Fergus also refuses to understand Dil as a trans woman and continues to read her based on the conventional markers of her body as a homosexual cis man. Visuality and the strength of this sense as determining, truth providing and proof giving is a powerful theme throughout the film. Shortly after Fergus and Dil, who passes as a cis woman in her twenties, meet, they develop a romantic but at first platonic relationship in which Fergus never unveils how he first heard about her and what constitutes his connection to her.

One night, Dil takes Fergus home with her. She lets him watch her undress. He is looking at Dil's genitals when they become exposed without the protective layer of her dress and underwear. Fergus is shocked when he sees that her body looks different to what he had expected. He reacts with revulsion to what is for him a visual confusion of normative, bodily shapes. Fergus runs to the bathroom, throws up and immediately afterwards he leaves the flat. Yet, after this night, they remain connected and drawn to each other. There seems to be a net of varied reasons that keeps them together, which are primarily elaborated through Fergus' perspective. Dil's motivations for sticking to him after this remain unclear.

Their story begins earlier though. A few days before, Fergus found Dil's address and the place where she works, a hair salon. He walks in and, without saying much, gets a trim. The next evening, Fergus waits outside the shop until her shift is finished and follows her through the streets. Dil goes to her favourite pub, which also functions as a club during the later hours of the evening, the Metro. Fergus enters shortly after her and their eyes meet while they are both having a drink at the bar. Dil, well aware that he has been following her, communicates with him via the bartender, "Ask him to ask me what I would like to drink." Without waiting for this, she immediately answers her own question with the name of a cocktail and a permission: "Now he can look"; a sentence that exposes his stalker-like behaviour and through which she takes control over the situation by implicitly confronting him with his inappropriate behaviour and unmasking it. After this short verbal exchange and the direct stares, Dil gets picked up by a jealous lover.

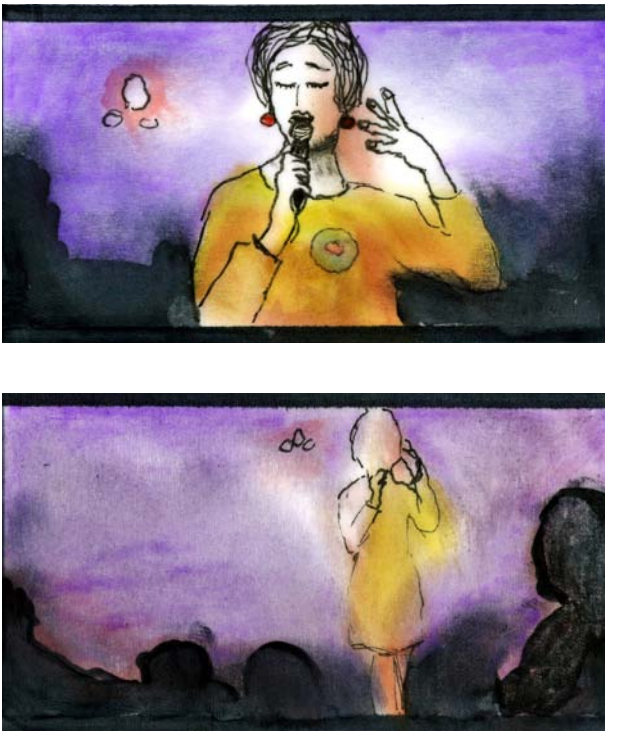
Fergus once again follows her, maybe curious to see where she lives, or in order to be protectively watching over her. Yet, although he becomes a witness to the abusive behaviour of her lover, he does not interfere.

The next night, Fergus appears again at the Metro. This time the bar is crowded, it is something like an open-stage night or a night of various performances. There are people dancing, chatting, squeezing along the bar to get a drink. They are a queer crowd; all kinds of people with different gender and sexual expressions are scattered through the place. It seems as though Fergus does not notice that he is probably the only straight cis man in the club. He sits down at the bar, the barkeeper recognises him and gives him a drink on the house. At some point he leans over, about to say something to Fergus about Dil, who is not present. Midway he stops… Just as Dil appears on the stage. Knowing Dil is trans, he was about to out her to Fergus.

First a few chords bring the crowd's attention to the next stage act. Then Dil's voice appears, together with her hand reaching out from behind the stage curtain, making delicate and feminine movements that seem to resemble the hand movements of "oriental" dance. The moment she begins to sing she is fully on the stage, the camera shows her in long shot and medium close up. Her hair is half long, curly, pinned-up, a few loose strands partly cover her red, ball-shaped earrings that sparkle at the sides of her face. She is wearing a golden sequinned dress with a colourful pattern that corresponds with the round jewellery. She sings the song in her own voice, she is not lip-synching, and her voice is ambiguously deep and yet, in conventional understandings of voice pitch, coded feminine.

> *I know all there is to know about the crying game / I've had my share of the crying game / First there are kisses, then there are sighs / And then before you know where you are / You're sayin' goodbye…*

While she sings, she stands very still on the stage, only moving her arms in expansive, languid movements that also opened her song in the gestures of her hands. Her dress covers her arms yet leaves her legs mostly exposed.



Film stills *The Crying Game* (1993)[55]

Fergus stands near the bar and watches her perform. He was probably unaware until this moment that she is also a singer and performer. While Dil is on stage, she is fully immersed in the song, in her gestures and the performance of the song's heavy, slow tune. Even though she must have noticed Fergus in the room, she never looks at him. She remains the one who is looked at, yet she also remains comfortably in her own world, the song, the bar crowd, for the moment not letting herself be distracted by a flirtatious response to Fergus' look.

The song became famous through Boy George's cover of it produced for the soundtrack of *The Crying Game* in 1992. The original version was sung by Dave Berrie, who achieved a UK hit with it in 1964. The Boy George version was produced by the band Pet Shop Boys, who since 1994 have been openly bisexual and gay and have covered a wide array of songs from gay and queer music icons, among others Dusty Springfield, Madonna, Elton John, Liza Minnelli and Kylie Minogue

(Ruhlmann 2014). Boy George was one of the first lead singers to always openly state queer sexual orientations, ranging from asexuality to bisexuality to gay. His stage performances transgress gender norms not only through his falsetto voice but also in his gender inbetween stage persona. As one of many influences, queer icon David Bowie had a strong impact on him as an artist, performer and singer.

In this sense, the song has a queer grounding that could easily be read as feeding into a reading of this film as gay, as it has been perceived by most reviewers in a normalisation of Dil's trans embodiment into a cis-gay identity. But reading Boy George and his mentor David Bowie not only as gay but primarily as a gender transgressing and transing musical performance, the song becomes situated within a history of gender-dissident song writing and musical performance.

The lyrics of the song explicitly speak of a person who is familiar with heartache, the desperation and great feeling of loss when a partner leaves or passes away. Dil has lost her partner Jody and is filled with great sadness. Her performance in the song scape seems to be the only appropriate choice for her to sing in such a state of feeling alone and immensely saddened. As a song, "The Crying Game" speaks of the pessimism of not wanting to feel so intensely about anyone again in order to try to avoid the emotional vulnerability that love includes. The song speaks of the circularity of the "crying game" – its repeated return, over and over again, when one opens one's heart to someone and the relationship comes to an end for various reasons.

The gloomy lyrics are accompanied by a drawn and melancholic tonality. The minor chords of the song together with the pessimistic and longing content of the lyrics produce a dramatic atmosphere. This seems not only to address Dil's mourning over Jody's death, but also to foreshadow the difficulties of the relationship between Fergus and Dil where Fergus will inflict pain on Dil by not accepting her bodily shape, having ignored the signs of it and, later, after she has fallen in love with him, will leave her alone as he serves his prison sentence for his IRA activities.

Dil's performance of the song is carried out with graceful and elegant movements. Minimalistically she stands on the stage, singing this desperate song in her beautiful voice, mostly moving only her hands

and later her arms with the song. It is a moment of decision for Dil, it is the moment when she opens her heart to Fergus, a fearful but also brave attempt to enter the "game" once more.

The conditions of this song scape differ significantly from the general setting in most other Trans Cinema films. In this film it is the trans character herself who performs a song. In the two previous analyses the trans character was the listener, here Dil takes the stage herself, similar to the main character in *Hedwig* or in Neil Jordan's later film *Breakfast on Pluto*.

The Metro and the queer club setting offers one of the rare moments in Trans Cinema where the trans character is embedded in a queer and trans context. Similar scenes occur briefly in *Transamerica* when Bree meets her trans female support group and in *Romeos* with Lukas' online community. Yet, strangely, in all these films and also in *The Crying Game*, the trans character remains somehow singular, socially detached and without any actual, graspable networks, no friends who come by, hug, gossip, laugh. The community is almost fictional in how it is represented, particularly in this scene. Dil appears on the stage, or at the bar, but remains dislocated from the rest of the crowd.

The Gaze – "Now he can look"

The bar is almost like her home; occasionally her violent boyfriend seems to drop by, but mostly, and now especially on the stage, she captures the room, takes control over the looks, the audience, drawing in their attention and directing the tension in the room, along with Fergus' desire, towards herself.

Dil is being looked at by Fergus, who watches her perform and yet, I would argue, she does not become a passive object of the gaze. A few nights before she had given permission by allowing him to look, exposing his desire, gaining control over the positioning through his staring. I read her performance as giving emphasis to this sentence, a confirmation of her interest in him, in his looks, that also mean attraction; a sentence which has confidently set the rules for their future connection.

Feminist film theory has a long history of discussing the gaze as

objectifying for the female character (Mulvey 1975; Doane 1999a; DeLauretis 1999). And as cultural studies scholar Elahe Haschemi Yekani remarks, one of the problems of a psychoanalytically motivated approach towards gaze structures in film is that it remains binary, it can only see the male and female and the question of mutual attraction. Thus gaze cannot be examined beyond the gender binary and Yekani points towards an interesting question, that does not ask for the subversive potential of a gender inbetween position but rather how the gaze affects the construction of cis hetero gender positions (Yekani 2007: 264). Yekani discusses the spectacularisation of Dil in *The Crying Game* as a structure that constructs her as a sexualised and fetishised object exploited by a male gaze (Yekani 2007: 265). This structure is very explicit throughout the film and still I see an undermining of the "male gaze" in the song scape. This takes place through Dil's words, the song, the lyrics, as much as through her sentence to Fergus "Now, he can look." She is the one in charge, who can read the context, who has the knowledge, while he remains oblivious to her, the bar crowd and its cultural context.

Dil becomes the agent of the gaze as she utilises the stage and the visual exposure to situate herself in a certain context and connect to a certain culture. She is looked at and yet she keeps control over how and when someone is permitted to look. To approach her performance and the gaze dynamics in this film, and particularly the song scape, through such an affirmative reading, resonates with a statement by the musician Elijah Oberman of the band The Shondes. Oberman is interviewed in the documentary film *Riot Acts: Flaunting Gender Deviance in Music Performance* (2009) by trans director Madsen Minax. He speaks about his experiences on stage as a trans musician: "In a way, even though you don't have control over how people are going to see you… I feel probably more safe on stage than otherwise because there *is* a certain element of control there – like being in a context of your own making. I find that very freeing." Here, Elijah Oberman explicitly addresses the fact that in this looked-at-ness there lies discomfort as much as control, depending on the context. The element of control is especially activated for him when he performs on stage. Dil also chooses a stage to determine her third encounter with Fergus and it preludes their first

night together in which Dil is confronted with Fergus' reaction to her trans embodiment. In this scene where she is singing, she appropriates control through the gaze and directs Fergus' looks at her body so that he sees a body that is powerful through her eloquent performance as well as vulnerable in her melancholic interpretation of the song's words. She speaks in this song of both these aspects and yet, although she is heard by Fergus, he is not listening properly, as the later incident at her apartment shows.

Transgender Gazes

Participating in this scene as an entrant, this seems to be exactly the workings of this sequence. Dil, although otherwise exploited in the film by a cisnormative, objectifying gaze, appropriates the strategy of this looked-at-ness and makes it work for her rather than voyeuristically against her in the song scape, as also argued in different articles by cultural studies scholar Judith Jack Halberstam (Halberstam 2005: 81). Yet, Dil's controlling position never resonates with Halberstam's discussion of the transgender gaze. It seems that the different possible transgender gazes Halberstam suggests in hir discussions on Trans Cinema in the book *In a Queer Time and Place* do not apply to this film and this particular scene. In hir earliest discussion of the transgender gaze in a Screen article, Halberstam discusses Boys *don't Cry* and singularly focuses on the modus of "embedded looking" – the possibility to observe the scenery through the trans character's perspective (Halberstam 2001: 294). In the book *In a Queer Time and Place*, Halberstam develops this discussion further and contributes to the transgender gaze with three further modi. The "rewind" gaze describes a situation in which the trans character first passes as a cis character followed by an outing of the character as trans and this presents a central narrative climax. The next modus is "ghosting" where the trans character is integrated into the film after their death, e.g. through voice-overs. And the last modus presents the strategy of "doubling", where the trans character does not remain the only gender-dissident character in a film (Halberstam 2005: 78).

As an entrant I never look at the scenery through Dil's eyes ("embedded gaze"); there is no "ghosting" or "doubling" taking place either. And

even though the "rewind gaze" is present, it is not an encouraging gaze but is integrated in a "coming out" scene with a naked-body shot which included intense reactions both in the cinema, where audiences were known for protesting and walking out of cinemas during this unexpected scene, as well as intra-diegetically ally, where Fergus' reaction is similarly transphobic. Neither of these gaze structures works to the benefit of Dil. Instead the gaze is discussed as exoticising Dil and integrating her as a spectacle, as a "racialised fetish figure" (Halberstam 2005: 81) to simultaneously distract from and enhance the nationalist plot structure of the film. Despite these pessimistic readings of the gaze structures, I would argue that the looked-at-ness becomes a conscious daring of the gaze – an agential looked-at-ness. Dil confidently chooses to be watched; a looking that is permitted and even enforced by her. To go on the stage and perform was her decision and it is something she enjoys. Dil uses the song and her stage performance to enhance her position within the club, to reappropriate and divert an exploitative gaze and utilise it to affirm her positioning within the queer and trans community that frequents this bar.

This scene also shows how an analysis of gaze alone and its construction of the female protagonist as objectified and passive is not enough to encompass the complexity of cinematic dynamics that not only reach beyond the gender binary (Halberstam 2005; Yekani 2007) but also go beyond a visual analysis and include the multisensorial intra-activity that is present in the film, particularly through the song scape. The song scape becomes an exit scape as it becomes the moment of Dil's speaking, where she addresses the audience, Fergus, using the song to position herself, emotionally as much as within a certain scene and a specific embodiment. The song scape becomes a space of reappropriation for Dil, she takes the tool to which she is exposed – the objectification – and appropriates it in order to establish herself and produce a space for herself. In the context of the film the song, its tonality, lyrics and context of interpretation intra-diegetically generate the sequence as an exit scape for the entrant. This song scape provides me with a moment in which I can listen to Dil's words, words she chose to bring into the public, a confident moment, as much as a situation in which she appropriates a safe identity. It presents a utopian exit scape in its encouragement towards exposure, openness, engagement and courage.

LISTENING DIFFERENTLY

Each song scape in this chapter emphasises trans as a vocal position rather than a visual one. In *Romeos* and *Transamerica*, Lukas and Bree listen attentively and are corporeally embedded in the sonic scape of the song's interpretation. The complexity of the song, its context and sounds, is what constitutes these characters, reorientates them, and provides them with different notions of affirmation (*Romeos*) or assurance (*Transamerica*). In both films the trans characters become the listeners, to another gender-dissident performer (*Romeos*) or to another culturally marginalised protagonist (*Transamerica*). Yet, in their listening resides not only a connection or communication but also a moment of trans becoming situated in the moment of mutual understanding and support. In *The Crying Game* it is the trans character herself who becomes the singer, and here I directed my discussion more towards questions of the gaze rather than towards listening as it is her later cis-male lover who hears without actually really listening and thus not understanding her positioning in the song.

It is the inbetween of the music that interested me in this chapter – the multisensorial affectiveness and mutual entanglement of different bodies in the song scapes, of film, singer, character, entrant and their intra-active involvement with each other that I found in these song sequences as exit scapes. The songs' enabling of affinity and support (*Romeos*), of a luring that leads to support, the undermining of normality and white national identity in the subversion of a folk song (*Transamerica*), and the positioning of a character who is looked at but not listened to – and ultimately deploys the visual into her tool of aiming at becoming heard (*The Crying Game*). The songs become exit scapes in their sonic, transcorporeal movement and their playing with categorical boundaries of normativity, in their disintegration of time and space and through their ultimate strength, to open up utopian trajectories for entrants to these scenes.

INTERLUDE

LAURENCE *to* OH DONG-GU*:* I know it's not easy for you right now. Nor will it be that easy later. Do you know the quote, "The Possible's slow fuse is lit by the Imagination"? It's from Emily Dickinson. These lines usually help me to get through the moments when people disrespect me and when I feel like this will never change.

OH DONG-GU *sits on a park bench next to* LAURENCE *where they have just met for a chat and an afternoon walk.*

OH DONG-GU: I think I once saw an animated film that included the whole poem. I also really like it. I didn't really know what it was that I liked about it. But you are right, it is about hope.

LAURENCE: A popular reading of this poem is that we should look beyond the given, and beyond what seems to be unchangeable. People think gender in a way is unchangeable.

OH DONG-GU: Yes, and of course gender is not unchangeable. But the rest of the world thinks that. There is hope in the words of this poem that with imagination, things can be thought of as otherwise.

LAURENCE: By the way, you did a wonderful performance the other night in the club. It was great to see that your mum was there too, so proud of your dancing and singing. She seemed so happy and full of admiration.

OH DONG-GU: Thanks. It was great that you were there too. And something else, I wanted to tell you that I got an email from Ludo. Ze is so sweet and still so little, ze has changed schools and is going to a better one where they allow hir to use the girls' bathroom. I sent hir a video of the gig the other night and I wrote to hir about the fairy before the competition. Ze told me that ze sometimes also sees a fairy. I think I will look for the poem and send it to hir. Ludo has so much imagination but sometimes is so lonely and depressed. I think ze will like it.

LAURENCE: That is so great you two are in touch. I met hir grandmother a few months ago and she told me that Ludo taught hir all the dance moves from Pam.[56]

4

DREAMS, UTOPIAS AND SPACETIMEMATTERING

In a speech by the feminist performance collective YES! Association/ Föreningen JA!, the speaker, aka Lee H. Jones, explains that "[a]ffirming non binary structures also entails living without conceits of foundations, origins, and progress, and especially without clear distinctions between the real and the fictive, the ideal and the material, the past and the present" (Föreningen JA!).[57] This quote in particular elaborates on boundary divisions between culturally manifested and conventionalised categories. Also the speaker, and the performance of the speech itself, triggers these questions, as the speaker is an actor with a fictional name, yet the content and urgency of the speech are very real. Many films I have come to assemble under the term Trans Cinema trouble the boundaries of gender normativity but also the boundaries of the conventionalised understandings of reality and fantasy, of what is dreamed and what is real.

In the previous two analytical chapters I have discussed dancing and singing scapes and the cultural signification of song and dance in relation to the trans bodies of the characters. In this chapter, I would like to focus on a third central exit scape that presents a recurring element in Trans Cinema: fantasy landscapes and dream scenarios, or what I call dream scapes. Exit scapes in the form of dream scapes stage sequences that audiovisually and multisensorially elaborate the dreams of characters, yet they appear to do more than that; queer feminist philosopher Judith Butler reflects on fantasy as a way to rethink the future and think beyond a contested body ideal and its norms (Butler 2005: 28). Similar to Butler's notion of fantasy, the dream scapes discussed in this chapter blur a notion of linear time and progress, the distinctions between past and future, and spatial limitations and

conventions. Fantasy moves life into "a realm of possibility" (Butler 2005: 28). My approach to the dream scapes intra-acts with Butler's notion of fantasy as a deconstruction of bodily norms and an envisioning of what can be – the possibilities of different futures as they are imagined in fantasy. My notion of dream scapes is also informed by how philosopher and psychoanalyst Anne Dufourmantelle addresses dreams as a "potential" and foreshadowing of what is already slowly forming, slowly becoming accessible, or visible. Dreams in her understanding are like Future Tense 2, a future in the making, enriched by a longing for and a slow forming of a future that is different from the present, that helps to imagine the present and future differently (Dufourmantelle 2012). Dream scapes are common to many trans films – fantasy as well as dreams, I would like to argue in this chapter, evolve around utopian sensibilities of imaginative possibility. In this sense, dream scapes are dreams as much as fantastic moments. They also merge stylistically with the literary genre conventions of magical realism (Zamora/Faris 1995). In magical realism, fantastic and bizarre events occur; fantasies, dreams and imaginations of the characters are sometimes accompanied by magical beings such as fairies or ghosts, but sometimes they simply turn the world and its conventionalised rules of place, time and gravity upside down (Jameson 1986; D'haen 1995; Zamora/Faris 1995). Magical realism "relates to the incorporation of the fantastic along with the ordinary" (Hurd 2007: 73). Politically, magical realism is said to function as an imaginative form of critique in existing paradigms of normativity and is used to make a marginalised position visible or to critique a dominant understanding of social injustice (D'haen 1995: 195; 203; Bowers 2004: 127). In my inquiry of the dream scapes, their magical realism offers visual poetics that, by diving into fantastic and magical realms, expresses the desire to imagine the future and reality differently – especially of marginalised subjectivities. Time and place are important coordinates in this discussion, in terms of critiquing existing social hiearchies as well as envisioning different futurities for the marginalised. All these different forms of dream scape, their magical realist aspects as much as their fantasy and imaginative potential, are connected in their shared blurring of distinctions and troubling of boundaries regarding notions such as "reality" and "imagination". The

dream scapes open imagination and reality into a terrain that allows for their co-existence.

SEEING THINGS OTHERS CANNOT SEE

Having turned to different senses such as hearing/attentiveness and touch in the previous chapters, I turn in this chapter to vision in order to discuss possibilities for undermining the scopic regime (Jay 1988) and the categorising force of vision. Within euroamerican societies, seeing means "knowing"; that which only a few people see or sense – which is generally "not seen" – is reduced to fantasy, unworthy nonsense, non-scientific, without value. What cannot be proven by most modern technologies is rendered impossible and non-existent. The characters in these films question this rendering of visibility and the power of technological proof, as they become participants in events that they share with only a few other collaborating characters.

To a degree, the visual medium of film retains in itself its history of rigid bodily disciplining and physical categorisations (Cartwright 1995: 3). I set out in this chapter to find spacetimes in the films that nurture an altered understanding of visuality and possibly reappropriate sight by refusing its binary disciplining and using it as as a tool that can aptly queer normative orders and rework binary categorisations.

Thus seeing is an ambivalent practice. Seeing is a dominant sense that inscribes gender and is embedded in binary norms and categorising practices (McClintock 1995; Jones 2003: 3). But by "seeing differently" (Jones 2012), it also has the ability to spill over into social dreaming and consequently bears the potential to outline the world differently through challenging normative ways of seeing – what seeing means, what can be seen at all and through what parameters something is defined as *visible*.[58] Seeing is thus a sense that acts as collaborator with – as much as troublemaker around – the constitution of normative embodiment.

Through this approach that allows ambivalence to vision, seeing becomes not only the most privileged and valued sense within a western understanding, but also a marginalised sense when it comes to seeing things others cannot see – fantasy, dream and imagination – as well as

seeing things that are understood to be unrealistic. Seeing, then, in this context can become an engagement with the unreal and a convergence towards the not-yet-seen possibilities and the utopias of different worldings (Haraway 2004: 330).

The discussion of dream scapes in Trans Cinema composes this chapter, which I devote to the discussion of how seeing differently relates to the imagination of alternate futurities. Seeing presents a sense that I have set out to critique in this book not only because of its own history of normative and imperialist categorisations (McClintock 1995; Jay 1995; Marks 2000; Sobchack 2004; Mirzoeff 2006) but also as a sense that I argue cannot attend to trans embodiments. Trans embodiment is often invisible if a person is not passing, or does not aim to, or has no access to the necessary technologies. I discuss this aspect more in detail in the chapter on song scapes in Trans Cinema.[59] In the chapter on dream scapes, however, I investigate how these scapes offer a different understanding of seeing and being seen by shifting the boundaries of fiction and reality, as well as contemporary notions of linearity and normative temporalities. Seeing things others cannot see is a main ability of these characters; they become aware of things that others are not able to observe. In these films, all the protagonists are able to see things with their eyes, and their perspectives get translated to the entrants through the camera's perspective.

In this chapter, I will discuss two concepts in particular, in relation to the dream scapes of these films, that also have had an important role throughout the previous chapters, namely the utopian sensibilities (Muñoz 1999; 2009; Dolan 2005; Ahmed 2010) of the exit scapes and spacetimemattering (Massey 1992; Barad 2007). I will investigate how the trans characters intra-act with space and time, how this is affected by the magical realist and imaginative aspects of these sequences, how the dream scapes matter space, time and bodies and how this spacetimemattering is conducive to the utopian and world-making power of Trans Cinema? I suggest approaching these scapes as utopian realms in their potential to make the entrant feel, listen and see differently. In this potential, they share a role with the other scapes discussed in this thesis. Yet, their particularity is featured in their use of phantasmic scenery, imagination and dreaming. These scenes are also specific in

how they stage shifts in the otherwise linear narrative of the plot, and how these shifts unsettle conventionalised notions of space and time and, as I propose, are thus ultimately utopian and hopeful.

This chapter picks up on dream scapes in three films: the South Korean film *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* (*Like a Virgin*) (2006), the French-Canadian production *Laurence Anyways* (2012) as well as the French-Belgian film *Ma vie en rose* (*My Life in Pink*) (1998). I wrote about a dance scape in *Ma vie en rose* in this work's chapter on dance in Trans Cinema and will now consider a dream scape in this film, since its symbolism and staging seem to be in conversation with the dream scape in *Cheonhajangsa Madonna.*

Ma vie en rose features a coming-of-age story of the seven-year-old child Ludo and hir politics of claiming hir gender ambiguity in relation to hir gender-troubled family, schoolmates and neighbours. Ludo admires a television character who also sometimes in Ludo's imagination-reality appears in difficult moments. In a particular scene, Ludo is rescued by this fairy, Pam, while expecting punishment for a game ze has played with hir friend. This introduces the dream scape I will discuss in this chapter.

Cheonhajangsa Madonna also presents a coming-of-age story that, unlike *Ma vie en rose*, includes a mocking irony in a range of its characters and mixes melodrama with comedic elements. Throughout the film *Cheonhajangsa Madonna*, the teenage trans protagonist, Oh Dong-gu, drifts into daydreams mostly starring hirself as well as hir admired, cis male Japanese teacher. In the sequence that I will discuss here, reality and dream merge when hir idol Madonna appears like a good fairy in a desperate moment. Oh Dong-gu works at night in the harbour to save money for the genital surgery she would like to obtain. *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* represents one of the trans childhood films in which the protagonist is supported by a parent, in this case hir mother, and the ambiguity and gender transgression of the character continues without a final "normalisation", as for example takes place in the trans childhood film *Tomboy* (2011). Oh Dong-gu dreams of becoming a dancer and lead singer of hir own band. Daily, ze rehearses complex dance choreographies and decorates hir room with Madonna posters. The film consists of a range of different dream scapes. I will in particular

analyse a dream scape in which Madonna appears to Oh Dong-gu like a good fairy and guides hir back into reality.

Laurence Anyways is the third film I take up in this chapter. The film traces the relationship of two people in their early thirties – they appear as a hetero, cis couple until the moment Laurence expresses to her girlfriend Fred the wish to transition. Laurence also comes out to her friends as well as her colleagues and pupils at the high school where she teaches, at which point she loses her job. The film focuses strongly on the relationship between Laurence and Fred and their trouble staying together during and after Laurence's transition. Laurence struggles with Fred's inability to accept her wish to change her body. The film follows Laurence and Fred over the course of ten years, their break-ups, their deep longing to be with each other and their two failed attempts to reunite. My discussion of this film will focus on two dream scapes that take place shortly after one another in the fissures of their first reunion after five years apart. Both present fantastic magical occurrences, multisensorially connecting playfulness with feelings of desperation and impossibility.

I will in particular discuss the first two films, *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* and *Ma vie en rose*, and their shared trope of the "good fairy", through engaging them in a discussion of "seeing things others cannot see". The third film, *Laurence Anways*, I will discuss mainly in relation to how spacetimemattering intra-acts with the transing of the character Laurence and how the concept relates in this film to the utopian aesthetics of the dream scapes.

VISUAL DISTURBANCE IN *CHEONHAJANGSA MADONNA* (2006)

I came across the South Korean film *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* in 2006, when it had its European premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival under its English title, *Like a Virgin*. The film was screened as part of the Teddy Programme, which is the only LGBTIQ film programme integrated in a highly ranked international film festival. It was not only found in the Teddy Programme but also in the festival's children and teenage programme section. The audience included numerous kids,

parents, teenagers and frequent festival attendees. The film captivated me from the first few scenes on as one of the rare non-euroamerican film productions with a transing character being screened in a western festival; its numerous dream scapes and investment in dreamed futurities made me interested in finding a central spot for it in my writing.

The film has two directors, Hae-jun Lee and Hae-yeong Lee. These two cis men have worked on several film projects together. They write, produce and direct collectively and without a clear distinction of work fields. The film had its South Korean premiere in the summer of 2006, when it was screened at Pusan International Film Festival, the largest Asian film festival. According to the film critic Katja Nicodemus, *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* was accompanied in the festival programme by the first gay movie by a South Korean director, *No Regret*, by Hee-il Leesong, which as she argues highlights the newly forming LGBT film scene in Korea (Nicodemus 2006). The film focuses on Oh Dong-gu's desire to transition; the problems with hir family, hir parents' divorce and hir father's regular domestic violence and alcoholism; as well as Oh Dong-gu's determination to earn enough money for surgery. Ryu Deok-hwan, in the role of Oh Dong-gu, won the award for Best Male Newcomer (Pusan), and the film was nominated for Best Screenplay (Pusan) as well as the Asia Pacific Screen Award for Best Newcomer (Australian Film Festival). The film never entered the North or South American or European film markets outside of selected film festivals in Germany, Canada and Australia. In Asia, it was screened in Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and South Korea.

Oh Dong-gu is highly committed to hir idol and pop-cultural icon Madonna. Madonna's famous quote "I stand for freedom of expression, doing what you believe in, and going after your dreams"[60] runs like a soundtrack throughout the film's story. Oh Dong-gu, approximately 17 years old, is trying to save money for surgery and works in the morning before school loading rice into containers in the harbour.

Soon after the beginning of the film, this hard, physical labour pays off for Oh Dong-gu when ze is discovered coincidentally to be very well built for Ssireum wrestling, a Korean sport perceived as heroic and masculine. Oh Dong-gu is reluctant to join the team until ze finds out that an upcoming competition will include prize money

that could cover hir surgery expenses. Oh Dong-gu joins the team, and hir unexpected talent soon lets hir accept a position among the four cis male wrestlers and their quirky trainer. At home, Oh Dong-gu is forced to deal with hir violent, constantly drunken father. Hir mother has recently left the family, unable to handle the father's violence and drinking problems any longer. Sometimes Oh Dong-gu visits her at her part-time job in the amusement park, which helps Oh Dong-gu's mother to finance her university studies. Their relationship is uneasy and tense. Oh Dong-gu feels left behind and deserted by her. Over the progression of the film, which follows Oh Dong-gu's life and specifically hir month-long training with the Ssireum wrestling team, hir mother becomes increasingly supportive of Oh Dong-gu, and new trust grows between them.

Oh Dong-gu is the only trans character in this film. Hir only constant support is hir best friend – a tall, insecure cis teenage boy who is worried about his future, unsure of his talents, and vacillating between his career plans for the time after high school. In constrast to hir best friend, Oh Dong-gu is presented as strongly determined and oriented towards hir aims to transition as well as to become a pop singer. In an argument with hir friend, who is a bit envious about hir determination, Oh Dong-gu counters, "It's not that I want to become something. I just want to live a *life*". Oh Dong-gu's friend is supportive yet clueless about the significance of the transition for Oh Dong-gu. For hir, it means everything.

An Unexpected Vision

In the most central dream scape in *Cheonhajangsa Madonna*, Oh Dong-gu is following an appearing and vanishing character, who resembles the pop star Madonna as well as a pop-culture version of a fairy. The scene takes place towards the end of the film. Oh Dong-gu has been training with the wrestling team for months. On the day of the competition, Oh Dong-gu "comes out" to hir father. Ze visits him where he works on a shovel excavator at what seems like an otherwise empty construction site. Oh Dong-gu wears make-up and a light polka-dot summer dress, accompanied by hir regular short, dark hair.

Ze positions hirself in front of the vehicle. Oh Dong-gu's father has been aware of his gender-dissident child for a long time, ignoring and restricting any expressions of femininity in hir since Oh Dong-gu's childhood. The day of the competition appears to be a special day for hir, a day where ze wants to clarify things, to find out where hir father and hir mother stand in relation to hir transition and whether they will accept and support hir future path. Hir increased physical strength also now allows hir to openly address hir father, ready to fight him, as he usually responds violently. Oh Dong-gu chooses a non-verbal confrontation, positioning hirself ahead of the dangerous machine that also enhances hir father's power. His reaction to Oh Dong-gu's confident gesture surprised me in its extreme brutality. He reacts with a direct threat, beating hir relentlessly with the hooks of a frustrated former boxing champion that he is. After a long time of being punched hard, Oh Dong-gu counteracts with a special move ze has practiced with the team – the famous shoulder throw. Oh Dong-gu throws hir father over hir own head and he hits the ground, immobile, defeated in the dirt.

On weak legs, with a bloody face, swollen and bloodshot eyes, Oh Dong-gu stumbles off the construction site. The film cuts and shows Oh Dong-gu in a different location, seated on a low windowsill of a corner shop, still wearing the same dress, hir face and eyes swollen and crusted with drying blood. Oh Dong-gu sits there, eyes and face downward, filled with desperation. While crying, ze watches the feet of busy pedestrians pass by. A long-shot opens the view to Oh Dong-gu as well as the busy shopping area; clean, well-dressed citizens cross the streets, running past Oh Dong-gu, who appears paralysed by hir physical pain and the shock of having fought against hir own father. Hir bloodiness and gender ambiguity do not disturb the clean business environment. Nobody takes notice of hir. Nobody looks and nobody cares. I am thinking, ze must be visible in hir dress and short hair, looking like a boy to these cis people – usually a reason people stare, trying to figure out this visual dissonance in a person's gender presentation. Yet nobody stares, as if hir looks that trouble conventional gender norms but also her bloody face are too much to even let eyes touch upon. This scene reminds me of how looking is not only objectification but also recognition. Oh Dong-gu here seems to be too abject to be worth a

glance or eye contact. Hir vulnerability seems to be too visible and too threatening to the surrounding people for them to take a short glance and risk letting this picture touch them. In the absence of looks, Oh Dong-gu becomes isolated, excluded and simply visually silenced.

Film still
Cheonhajangsa Madonna (2006)

The camera angle changes: instead of watching Oh Dong-gu sitting helplessly at the windowsill, the camera shifts to point-of-view shots of Oh Dong-gu. Together with Oh Dong-gu, I become witness to and collaborator on these things others cannot see. The frame shows fast feet rushing past – high heels, sneakers, dress shoes. Hir perspective seems a bit slim, the frame almost like a tunnel; the shock and the swollen eyes seem to minimise hir view. In this downward-focused gaze, suddenly polished, glossy, black high heels pound the sidewalk cement.

Film still
Cheonhajangsa Madonna (2006)

Ze keeps staring at the spot where the shoes touched the ground in front of her. The clicking sound of them in the fading background slowly blends into the instrumental version of Madonna's song "Like a Virgin", evoking the beginning words of the song:

> *I made it through the wilderness / Somehow I made it through /*
> *Didn't know how lost I was / Until I found you…*

Oh Dong-gu stares for another moment at the spot where the shoes just walked past and suddenly gets up, hir movements calmed by the slow motion of the editing that transposes hir numbness or dream-like haziness to the entrant. And yet, in the dimmed speed of the images, I follow Oh Dong-gu rushing through crowded streets, bumping into pedestrians, searching the crowd for the owner of the shoes. Between the people, Oh Dong-gu finally spots the wearer of the shoes that seem to have reminded hir of Madonna, as their appearance is paralleled with the pop singer's emblematic song.

Oh Dong-gu, squeezing through the crowded street, tries to follow the strange figure, trying to see her, to get closer to her. Oh Dong-gu can spot her back and her blonde curly hair. Together with Oh Dong-gu I wonder, is this really Madonna? Or what will this person look like if she turns and looks different than expected? I am at this moment experiencing with Oh Dong-gu the eager wish to see the face of this vision, trying to find out if it really can be Madonna ze has spotted in the street.

Vision here becomes a categorising vision – my own vision is eager to see and "know" who this is, what the person looks like, assuming that if I see the face I will know who it is. And vision also becomes, in this scene, strongly experienced as transgressive when this unconventional, glamourous being disturbs the homogenous business suits, the earnest determination of people on their way to work, to the metro or to start their lunch break. She becomes a brief moment of visual disturbance for the entrant, symbolising the existence of possibility for a different becoming. With her existence, a brief moment of pleasure emerges, derived from her obvious otherness that aligns with Oh Dong-gu's gaze in these moments and accompanies hir in hir inappropriate/d difference.

Film stills
Cheonhajangsa Madonna (2006)

Oh Dong-gu follows her for a few seconds until the woman stops and slowly turns, surrounded by busy, inattentive pedestrians. Her outfit becomes fully visible to the entrant. She wears Madonna's famous cone brassiere, designed by Jean-Paul Gaultier for Madonna's Blond Ambition Tour in 1990. Despite the identical markers of clothes, hair and shoes, she does not look like Madonna. And the moment Oh Dong-gu is about to reach her, she disappears in the crowd, behind a cloud of steam from a street kitchen. By now Oh Dong-gu has shaken off hir haziness and instead is eagerly looking for her, hoping to glimpse this magic vision again. She is gone. Oh Dong-gu searches for her until ze reaches the end of the street. Hir eyes get caught by a street banner advertising the Ssireum competition. Oh Dong-gu breaks out in panic, realising ze is about to miss the event if ze does not hurry up. Hir best friend comes to pick hir up on his motorcycle and they race to the stadium to make it just in time for the beginning of the event.

Seeing Otherwise

In my understanding of this scene, the magically appearing and disappearing being supports Oh Dong-gu in overcoming hir wounded state of shock and helps hir focus on hir dreams to make hir realise them. I read this being as both a female-coded fairy and a figure that carries the cultural connotations of the pop star Madonna. As a fairy, she is the embodiment of transformation and a guiding figure into transing possibilities. She represents the possibilities of other worlds and offers an embodied guidance into a dream world. Yet, as a guiding figure, the fairy in this scene does not guide Oh Dong-gu away from material reality but intead delivers hir to the realisation of hir aim: to win the wrestling tournament. As an other-worldly figure of hope, she reminds Oh Dong-gu of the existence of alternative realities and provides a glimpse into an approach that allows the merging of imagination – something considered unrealistic in a cisheteronormative society – with reality.

Reading the fairy figure as a Madonna-inspired figure, this sequence draws connections between the opening and closing scenes of the film. In both these scenes Madonna is present. In the opening scene in *Cheonhajangsa*, Oh Dong-gu is still a child, listening to a Madonna record while lying on the floor. With the formal strategy of magical realism, a shining disco ball enters the front of frame, illuminating the room around the little Oh Dong-gu in multiple colours. The disco ball is an absurd and impossible object in the opening scene. It is invisible to Oh Dong-gu but, as an object now only visible to the entrant and the bearer of a message, it outlines Oh Dong-gu's dreams and aims and refers to hir trans futurities that become outlined in the closing sequence of the film. In this last sequence, which takes place some time after Oh Dong-gu wins the Ssireum competition, the film shows Oh Dong-gu performing as a rock star, singing Madonna's "Like a Virgin" for a crowded club audience including many friends, Ssiruem team mates and hir mother. Oh Dong-gu is transitioning now and has reached hir aim to perform and sing on stage and to become more and more recognisable as female. The disco ball in this scene illuminates Oh Dong-gu and the club in prismatic speckles of light.[61]

The integration of a blonde, Madonna-like fairy in this South

Korean film also seems to play with the cultural and ethnic coding of a westernised ideal of white beauty. Also, the powerfully preserved, rewritten and somehow universalised version of a Disney fairy is important here, as it is a being that travels continents in DVD packages, disseminating its particular westernised aesthetics as signifiers of imperialist, late-capitalist consumer culture.[62] The film consciously plays with these notions, dramatically counter-positioning them against Oh Dong-gu's own sense of self as ugly, in hir description of hirself to hir mother. At the same time as she is the embodiment of westernised beauty norms, the fairy is a parodic figure in this film – her exaggerated femininity, the nostalgic outfit, the perfect blonde, curly hair seem to comment queerly and with a drag-queen-like irony on global capitalism and the universalising standards of feminine beauty. As the embodiment of a camp and ironic performance, she becomes an agent of critique into these hegemonic ideals of beauty. As a critical figure, she is a spatiotemporal troublemaker. The fairy in *Cheonhanjangsa Madonna* holds the ambivalent position of embodying both the globalised norms as well as their subversion. In *Ma vie en rose*, a fairy also appears and similarly reworks time in her camp performance of femininity. She particularly troubles notions of space and embodiment in space.

A RESCUING VISION IN *MA VIE EN ROSE* (1997)

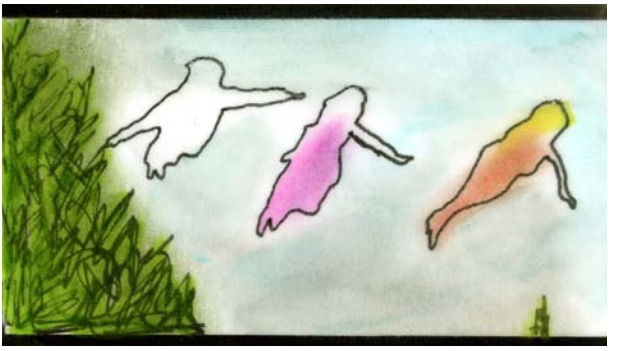
In the French-Belgian film *Ma vie en rose* (1997), unlike in *Cheonhajangsa Madonna*, the fairy appears multiple times. The film tells the story of Ludo, who is seven years old and in conflict with the gender norms of hir environment. I discussed this film and introduced it contextually in the chapter on dance scapes. Ludo becomes repeatedly disciplined into what is, to hir, an unacceptable boy role. Hir only allies are hir grandmother as well as the phantasmic TV series protagonist Pam. The latter is Ludo's idol, similar to what Madonna embodies for Oh Dong-gu. She is only visible to Ludo as well as hir neighbourhood friend Jerome. Pam can fly, and in moments of desperation, she sometimes appears at Ludo's side to protect hir. The two films *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* and *Ma vie en rose* share happy endings, settings which link them to

the genre of family melodrama, as well as coming-of-age narratives of their main characters.

While Ludo is playing "wedding" with hir friend Jerome, hir mother discovers them at the moment they give their vows to each other. Ludo is wearing a satin dress that belongs to Jerome's dead sister. The moment Ludo's mother storms into the room and stares angrily at her child, Pam appears in the window frame, sitting elegantly on the sill, her legs inside the room, golden sparkles surrounding her. Sitting in the liminal space between the outside and the inside of the house, she also symbolically occupies the space between fantasy and reality.

Film still
Ma vie en rose
(1997)

Pam temporarily occupies a space that is not yet named; it is only visible to Ludo and presents hir escape-reality. Pam takes both Ludo and Jerome on a flight through the neighbourhood; sailing in the air like birds, they slowly gain distance from the area of expected punishment and enter an unconventional space of airy becoming, a space usually not populated by human beings and instead left to mythical creatures, birds and small winged animals. The fairy becomes a point of critique of a conventional understanding of space as static and reworks its normative renderings by opening it up to fluidity and possibility. The fairy Pam then becomes a mediator between different worlds, different realities and their potentials. She also reworks temporality in this sequence.



Film still
Ma vie en rose
(1997)

As if through a crack, Ludo slips through reality into a dream world, a new supernatural reality sheltered by hir guardian Pam, who surrounds hir with pink and golden dust and sparkles. Ludo rescues hirself into this new reality, escaping the constraint and the expectation of failure and punishment. Together with Pam, ze moves into a new place and time within the film. This parallel reality is no less real to hir than the one in which hir mother and the neighbours live – it is a co-existing world that she enters through a little rift in space and time, a gap into a different spatiotemporality.

Transtemporal Drag and Fairy-Tale Time

The fairy in this film, in her usual, over-emphasised fairy-tale beauty, similar to the one in *Cheonhajangsa Madonna's* dream scape, is easily readable as a parodic drag performance. Pam in *Ma vie en rose* assembles the iconic traits of the *Wizard of Oz* fairy, including golden magic dust that glitters around her when she appears in Ludo's world. Her over-idealised, exaggerated and mocking feminine beauty – whose parodic drag aspects resemble the irony of hyperfeminine performances – also emphasises this iconography. Additionally, she is gifted with paranormal powers of appearing out of nowhere, becoming invisible or aerial. Treating the fairies in this film and in *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* as drag figures allows both films to situate a critique of the blonde, hyperfeminine, slim and young euroamerican beauty norms for women. Reading the fairy figure as being in drag highlights her radical potential to trouble and trans

dominant western notions of capitalist time and space.

Drag in queer studies scholar Elisabeth Freeman's analysis of queer temporality presents a practice not only of crossing and subverting gendered positions but also of transversing temporal boundaries and troubling temporality (Freeman 2000: 729; Lorenz 2012: 104). A queering of temporalities means always questioning capitalist notions of value, productivity and progress (Lorenz 2012: 103). Queer studies scholar and artist Renate Lorenz takes Freeman's notion of temporal drag in a different direction and conceptualises it as transtemporal drag, emphasising the processuality and the temporal movement of subjectivity and also a decentralisation of identity politics (Lorenz 2012: 103). Transtemporal drag presents a central element of the fairy scape in these two films, especially in relation to its performance of western beauty norms and the drag asethetics of the fairies. The strangeness of the fairy appearances in these films, their discontinuity within the diegesis of the films and their temporal simultaneity with other events – for example, Ludo is being punished by hir mother while at the same time flying through the air – Lorenz describes as radical queer chronopolitics, or "intrusions into normalizing concepts of time" (Lorenz 2012: 99). Their transtemporality avoids a gesture of nostalgia and instead reinvents a mythical as well as historicised figure – the fairy as a figure of a past-tense imaginary – in order to problematise conflicts and violence.

In both *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* and *Ma vie en rose*, the fairy troubles a modernist understanding of linear time in the overlap and conflation of different paradigms – the mythical and the real, as well as the nostalgic and futuristic elements of fairy tales. These elments are futuristic in the sense that a fairy can actively construct futures through the mythical as well as magical three wishes, which she might offer to kind people in need. These last elements of the fairy are implicit in both films, embedded and embodied in the reference to this cultural imaginary of the fairy. As a figure, she embodies fairy-tale time, bringing with her tales of desperation, quests and hopes. She disturbs an idea of temporal progression by being a figure of the "once-upon-a-time"-liness of a fairy tale yet reappearing during contemporary, rational modernity, as both films are set in contemporary times. She fluctuates and connects

temporalities. She returns, disappears and may appear again in these films. Also, she troubles the linear diegesis and allows for simultaneity of events and character appearances.

In a Queer Time and Place (2005), Judith Jack Halberstam's book on the necessity to reflect on normative notions of time in order to theorise a critique of capitalist appellations and its interconnectedness with queer subjectivities, Halberstam ponders queer temporalities in their reconsiderations of queer incongruencies, failure and queer futurities. Returning to Elisabeth Freeman, who argues similarly to Halberstam that the dissonances of temporality are intertwined with sexual and gender identity (Freeman 2007: 159), time has very material consequences on bodies. Bodies as well as identities materialise through certain experiences of time. Explaining different forms in which embodiment and gender positioning intra-act with temporal politics, Freeman draws upon Judith Butler's notion of performativity and refers to it as a time-bound concept, relying on the "repetition" of the gestural and linguistic norms of gender (Freeman 2007: 161). Freeman's arguments are specific to sexual identity, yet I find her concept just as relevant to trans embodiment. As Freeman proposes, dissident embodiments and orientations present "a set of possibilities produced out of temporal and historical differences" (Freeman 2007: 159). To focus on a queer notion of time, then, can mean to acknowledge how chronopolitics not only generate queer subjectivity but also relate to how a queering of temporalities intra-acts with transgender embodiment, an argument that also reconnects to the temporal analysis of historian Susan Stryker in relation to the rise of a trans movement and its becoming a field of study by and not about trans people and trans lives. I elaborated on this political aspect of trans studies in the introductory chapter, and I argue by drawing on Stryker how certain temporal and historical shifts enable certain social movements and embodiments to surface (Stryker 2006a: 8).

The close relationship between temporalities and trans embodiment is elaborated in this dream scape, as it unsettles linear notions of time in the disruption of a linear narrative and refuses to enact progress and productivity. It allows objects and beings to enter the screen that are rendered useless in a capitalist, cisheteropatriarchal approach to value

– the fairy, fairy tales, imaginary realities, pop-cultural icons, and the belief in the mythical and magical and its non-rationalist underpinnings. Despite the fact that the fairy is also a commercialised image propagating western beauty ideas, it also troubles these notions and turns in its drag femininity against linear, progress-oriented chronopolitics. The fairy as the helpful figure in a story stands for necessary social transformation from the point of view of the trans characters in these films – troubling the restricting structures and supporting the character.[63]

As much as the fairy figure troubles time, she also disturbs spatial limitations – tugging at boundaries of reality and imaginative landscapes, leading Ludo into a different world, sailing with hir through the air, presenting for hir an invitation into a reality of imagination and the becoming of reality through imagination. This invitation is embodied in Pam's positioning between the outside and the inside worlds on the windowpane as well as by the *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* fairy guiding Oh Don-gu out of imagination and back into reality by pointing hir towards the upcoming competition banner. The fairy scape in these films shifts and queers a conventional notion of spatiality; the bodies that are liveable and existent in a particular space and time become redefined.

Space and time are intertwined entities that have for a long time been argued to be oppositional. Halberstam as well as critical geographer Doreen Massey stress that postmodern theorists have kept these categories separate, polarised and mutually exclusive (Massey 1992: 67 ff.; Halberstam 2005: 6). Both stress that an analysis of space must include an analysis of time. Massey outlines how these debates not only maintain a binary opposition of time and space but how they also work through strongly gendered rethorics (Massey 1992: 71).[64] Time has been associated with "change, movement, history, [and] dynamism" (Massey 1992: 73), while space becomes rendered the "absence of these things" (Massey 1992: 72) and associated with "stasis,… reproduction, nostalgia, emotion, aesthetics, [and] the body" (Massey 1992: 73).[65] The dream scapes in these two sequences in *Cheonhajangsa* as well as Ma vie elaborate how space and time are mutually intra-dependent and connected (Massey 1992: 84). The fairy sequences rework the cultural history of trans and non-normative embodiment into a concept taken from post-Newtonian physics, spacetime, and take it further into a

practice of becoming through spacetime – as one feminist physicist calls it, spacetimemattering (Barad 2007: 230). The fairies in both films become figures of spacetimemattering, as they rework space and time into an inseperable "dynamic and contingent materialization of space, time, and bodies" (Barad 2007: 224). An approach to spacetime as a process of mattering and materialisation of embodiment is important for the dream scapes, as the figure of the fairy in the two dream scapes co-constitutes the body of the trans protagonist in a way that it locates it between stable notions of space and time. It transes notions connected to these two elements and interweaves them, dissolving the gendered connotations of space and time as separate entities and reworking their gendered connotations. This process troubles connected values such as progress, linearity and rationality as much as stasis and nostalgia. The trans bodies of the characters become here graspable as bodies that temporarily refuse such values, their opposition to one another and their cultural coding as either valuable or invaluable, flexible, static, temporary or persistent.

The dream scapes in *Cheonhajangsa* Madonna and *Ma vie en rose* present a queer reworking of time and space in their playful engagement with space, imagination, reality and time. These sequences seem to produce the materiality of the trans characters, as they trouble the division between space and time and emphasise their mutuality and co-existence in their presence. Space collapses as a container; it is no longer static when Ludo flies with the fairy; Oh Dong-gu follows, through a busy street, the fairy who magically disappears almost in the moment she has led hir back into a different temporality, one that is considered "reality". In the construction of the trans characters in connection to the fairy figures, these characters Ludo and Oh Dong-gu matter space and time differently, and problematise the polarisation and mutual exclusion of conventional notions of space and time. The mobilisation of space and time between the trans characters and the fairy figures in these films is especially relevant for the representation of trans embodiment in these dream scapes. In dissolving the dominant understanding of time and space as mutually exclusive and oppositional, the dream scapes and the dynamics of the fairy figure also problematise normative notions of spatiality as well as temporality.

The fairy figure thus not only symbolically represents a breakdown of normative understandings of space and time, she actively perpetuates an anti-normative approach to space and time as an extension of gender politics that aim to erode binary oppositions, essentialism and categorical exclusions.

Spatial boundaries become porous and leaky, imagination sweeps into material reality and a current of imagination-reality begins to connect polarised spheres that have otherwise been thought of as dualistically opposite. Also, temporality loses its force to linearity and progress. The trans embodiment in connection with the fairy figure embeds a queer temporality into the films that includes circularity, failure, slow time, anti-progress, and non-valuable and non-commodifiable "time lines" (Halberstam, in Dinshaw 2007: 182).

This discussion on the complex cultural debates of the significations and gendering of space and time is meant to provide a background for the importance of the cultural labour of the figure of the fairy in these two films and how this figure is conducive to the imagined spacetimes I refer to in the exit scapes – spacetimes of utopian sensibility and alternate-worldly becomings.

Wishlandscapes and Utopian Sensibility

In *Cruising Utopia* (2009), cultural studies scholar José Muñoz speaks of "wish-landscapes" (Muñoz 2009: 5) – the fairies in the films invite their entrants to perceive the dream scapes as spacetimes that allow them to find a place and time in the film for a wish for a different futural social reality and for social transformation. Muñoz points out how socially marginalised groups – because of particular social constructions of skin colour, bodily ability, body shape, gender and sexual identity – are forced to invest in imaginary alternatives to the existing, oppressive structures in which it is otherwise almost impossible to survive. In order to change the present, a radical optimism, sourced from the force of hope and imagination, becomes necessary (Muñoz 2009: 9). Muñoz addresses the need to *feel* hope and to *feel* utopia in order to remain radically optimistic and make transformation possible (Muñoz 2009: 18).

Further, cultural studies scholar Sara Ahmed and her critical discussion of contemporary, nationalist discourses on happiness in her publication *The Promise of Happiness* (2010) connect her politics and scholarly work to a discussion of utopian sensibilities. She develops a concept she calls the "politics of the hap" as a strategy for imagining different political futures. Ahmed argues that the discourse of happiness presents an inherent part of a neoliberal, late-capitalist society in crisis. She turns away from the compulsory claim to be happy and the constant interpellations to happiness. According to her, it is not "happy" futures that are necessary but a belief that alternative futures are possible (Ahmed 2010: 163). She also stresses how these futures are based on a collective "process of becoming conscious of class, race, and gendered forms of oppression" (Ahmed 2010: 162). Imagination is the driving force to invent alternate futurities. The fairy in these scenes as well as the dream scapes in the following film analysis of *Laurence Anyways* present such imaginative moments of strength and hope, which also make them available to me as exit scapes. The fairy sequences become the hap in the film, the symbolic as well as active generator of alternative utopian futures. They are fantastic, dreamlike and magical, as in the next film analysis, and in this the fairy sequences feed into a potentiality of a different life and different reality.

In Ahmed's argument, the utopian form presents the possibility of alternatives based on hope (Ahmed 2010: 163). She addresses a notion of future within utopian politics and the urgency to approach this future not as already lost but as something that could be lost if not taken care of (Ahmed 2010: 163). In her discussion of utopia, she is wary of the ambivalences in reclaiming a utopian trajectory, as the idea of utopian politics has also very much been used for nationalist, conservative and fascist politics. By referring to utopias as "technologies of capital and empire" (Ahmed 2010: 275), she refers to the function of utopia, for example, in the construction of fascist regimes, or the beginning of the militaristic invasion of countries and colonialism. Yet, in her own critical and reappropriating pursuit of utopian sensibilities, she similarly to Muñoz emphasises the hopeful and transformative strength of utopian thought in, as she adds in reference to Lauren Berlant, its "sensually lived potentiality" (Berlant, 2008: 272, in Ahmed 2010: 196).

The potentiality or the per-haps-ness of utopian politics performs an affirmative reappropriation of utopian trajectories and is invested in the practices of learning to notice what "we have learned not to notice" (Ahmed 2010: 216).

In this "visual" investigation of utopia, Ahmed's writing also resonates in the arguments of performance studies scholar Angelika Bammer, who as I outlined in the first chapter of this volume, defines utopian politics as a movement towards the "not-yet-seen" (Bammer 1991: 7). Both Ahmed and Bammer use visual metaphors to discuss utopian transformations in their "invisibility" of the present state and the aim to bring things into perspective, make them *see*-able, investigate what is not seen anymore or "not-yet" seen. In this, their notions of utopian sensibility as a vague image, not quite visible and yet still somehow shimmering on the horizon, converse with the fairy as a figure that draws on the imaginative potential to believe in imagination, in the things that cannot be seen if tackled from a dominant, modernist perspective. The fairy figure is a semi-visible figure, fading and reappearing, ultimately the embodiment of a wish for different social realities, for learning to notice again what has become unnoticed and to believe in the strength of fantasy and dream; to create spaces, different futures and especially different values of being, belonging and becoming with. Such an approach towards the utopian form is very much embedded in Ernst Bloch's philosophical accounts on hope and social transformation (1986). Muñoz refers to his philosophy explicitly; in Sara Ahmed's and Jill Bammer's elaborations on the utopian non-yet-seen futurities, Bloch's principle of hope seems to deliver background knowledge.

I suggest grasping the dream scapes as paths into the not-yet-seen and the yet unimaginable embodiments, which will shape time and space for the transformations of the future. The trans characters in both films, together with their fairy imaginations, become bodies that explore cultural boundaries and limitations in a form that challenges modernist rationality and draws instead on imagination, vulnerability and irony. The dream scapes present a meditation on what is real, what is realist and what is possible as much as what is valuable for capitalist progress. Gender transitioning and gender-dissident bodies are, because of their pathologisation and cultural stigmatisation in contemporary

western heterocisnormative contexts, not read as "realist" in the sense of a rationalist notion of embodiment. Trans people's embodiment is also not presented as progress oriented in the sense of a conventional understanding of biography and personal development.[66]

By challenging these boundaries, shifting them in new directions, the dream scapes of these two films allow gender-dissident embodiments to enter the field of possibility rather than remain constrained. These scenes draw on impossibilities becoming possible or at least "possibilities of being in other ways, of being perhaps" (Ahmed 2010: 223), becoming the not-yet-seen, becoming seen by those to whom they matter, for whom they matter, because and through their ability to imagine and dream different realities and futurities. In this drawing on the aspect of (im)possibility in the dream scapes, I suggest an intra-action with them that locates in these scapes as an unfolding of possibilities. The dream scapes enable the entrant to enter the unthinkable – a spaciotemporality that cannot be seen or that becomes visible only in exceptional moments.

The Quebecois feature film *Laurence Anyways* (2012) incorporates fantastic and dreamlike elements that I investigate in the next section in relation to spaciotemporalities, imagination and utopian sensibility.

THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN IN *LAURENCE ANYWAYS* (2012)

Laurence Anyways (2012) is one of the most recently released trans films discussed in this volume. It closely and intimately follows Fred and Laurence's struggle for their relationship. Fred, cis and straight, cannot get behind Laurence's desire to transition. Laurence fights for Fred, hoping for her love and ability to support her during her transition and not leave her.

Many reviewers critique this film for its length – almost three hours – while others celebrate it for the amount of intensity the film creates through its dense soundtrack, abundance of colours and meticulously staged 1980s fashion and set design. The film is not only greatly celebrated by followers of Xavier Dolan, the 25-year-old cis gay director of this film, it also was nominated at a range of international film festivals and won awards at the Cannes Film Festival, Toronto

International Film Festival, Vancouver Film Critics Circle Awards, the Canadian Screen Awards, the Prix Lumière, and several Jutra Awards.

Within the Trans Cinema classification, *Laurence Anyways* differs from many other films as it never addresses Laurence's interactions with institutions, psychiatrists or surgeons. The film also breaks a pattern with conventional trans films as the physical effects of her transition or her non-normative body never become visually exploited. The film leaves the institutional troubles of the transitioning character on the side – they are glimpsed briefly when Laurence walks the school hallways for the first time in a dress, but otherwise the film exceptionally focuses on the emotional geography between Laurence and Fred as well as, peripherally, Laurence's troubles with her elderly parents. The film in particular follows Laurence from shortly after her coming out through the ten subsequent years. The film traces her bodily changes and her growing confidence and femininity indirectly and respectfully – allowing the trans character to repeatedly become the holder of the gaze, materialising a transgender gaze (Halberstam 2001: 294), as the film manages to represent events through Laurence's perspective and also provides her with a group of gender-dissident friends.

The film includes several scenes of discrimination and violence towards Laurence, yet they resist being dragged out throughout the film, as is often the case in Trans Cinema. Shortly after coming out, Laurence is beaten up on the street, and her mother denies her support on the phone. Yet, fortunately in the same instance, Laurence unexpectedly finds a person who takes her in, takes care of her bleeding wounds and introduces her to a group of gender-dissident people who will over the course of the next ten years become Laurence's close friends.

A Waterfall and Flying Clothes

From the beginning, the film establishes Fred and Laurence as very much in love. The film illustrates the couple's intimacy through unconventional means. Instead of showing sex, physical contact or other romantic or physically intense scenes, it shows their passionate connectedness through the intimate stories and games they share and play with each other. These include their passionate creations of lists of imaginary items

and lists of dream destinations. Important for a later dream scape in this chapter, the film shows their shared intimacy through scenes such as their game of spilling the full laundry basket over the other person's body to wake them up from a small afternoon nap or just to make the other one giggle in the mountain of unwashed, probably smelly clothes.

Despite their strong bond, Fred is unable to follow Laurence through the transition or accommodate Laurence's bodily changes and the new social perceptions she and Laurence encounter. The film represents the couple as hip, avant-garde and extravagant. Later, Fred moves to the suburbs, marries an average middle-class career man and has a child. She continues the laundry game with her son. Whenever she does a washing, she lets him know she is about to put the clothes in the machine. He eagerly runs into the laundry room, throws himself on the ground and lets Fred spill the clothes over him like little dirty blankets. His joyous laughter is audible underneath the clothes, contrasted by Fred's blank face and a forced smile that seems to recall a different time and person covered by the laundry rain.

Shortly after this scene, years after the breakup, Fred receives a small parcel from Laurence. She has not heard from Laurence in five years and is unaware that Laurence has watched her sometimes from her car outside of Fred's house. As a sign of her existence and her connection to Fred, she has subtly painted pink one of the brick stones of the greyish-brown house. Fred is a woman who had liked to dress in strong colours, extravagant make-up, and bright red dyed hair. Knowing she would appreciate the colour, Laurence had painted the stone for her.

The parcel contains Laurence's first book of autobiographical poems, sent to her as soon as the book was printed. Receiving the small package, Fred reads the sender's name with a little shock of nervousness as well as joy. She spends the rest of the morning waiting for the moment when her husband and child have left the house and she has the time and quiet to fully concentrate. The moment she is alone and the house is calm, she sits down on the sofa, inhaling rather than reading each word, each line of Laurence's life. Almost nothing is audible in this scene. I can only see her breathing fast and heavy.

Film still
Laurence Anyways (2012)

Otherwise the scene is completely silent, bringing all the attention to Fred and her anticipation of her immediate reactions to the reading. Without ever looking up, she reads and reads. The long scene of reading and silence are almost unbearable, suffocating, dense. As she approaches the end of the book, swooshing sounds become audible, first quietly but quickly increasing in volume. The sound of rushing and brawling water, a waterfall... more and more immensely auditively covering the scene. Yet, the image has not changed. Fred is still reading in her living room. Finally she finishes. The sound of gushing water is tremendous. She looks up. Fred seems small on the sofa. I think that she will cry any minute now or begin to scream, but instead she sits there immobile, quiet, the noise of gushing water growing and growing into an unbearable loudness. And then suddenly a massive amount of water falls from the ceiling, exactly above her. It washes her for seconds that feel like minutes. She gets completely drenched in this cold stream. Its strength almost washes her off the sofa; the whole room becomes soaked.

Film still
Laurence Anyways (2012)

An image of great relief, of something heavy falling off, but also falling on her, the waterfall addresses tears, tremendous amounts of sadness, of weight, of drowning, and maybe also of being cleansed, cooled and shaken awake out of a dim haziness. It is an intense moment in which I as entrant would have expected her to break out in a loud cry, or tears at least, but instead the film offers me this image of huge water masses falling from the ceiling. Such an enactment delivers a multisensorial complexity that could not have been achieved if the character had only been shown in tears. The waterfall instead allows not only a wider interpretative range of Fred's emotions in this minute but also a transposition of multiple sensorial sets to the entrants. The result of this scene is a strong sensible cinematic intra-activity between the entrant, Fred and, especially implicitly, Laurence.

Reviews have either highly celebrated Dolan's aesthetic choices in the film for their sensibility and intensity, or heavily critiqued the aesthetics as too literal, pathetic and "over the top". Also, the MTV clip aesthetic – the frequent use of slow motion and dominant soundtrack music of late 1980s and 1990s underground electronic music – is part of a style that received ambivalent responses. I find it outstanding in its exaggerated illustration of cinematic multisensoriality and the capacity of the cinematic medium to become highly suggestive and complex in its sensual expression.

The living room is reworked in this dream scape of falling water and becomes a creek, a waterfall, a space which dissolves the polarities of culture and nature, noise and silence, reading and understanding. Spacetimemattering challenges space as "container" – the living room does not bear the water, it *becomes* the waterfall through the intensity of the image, which literally floods the boundaries of spacial separateness.

Upon first impression, this scene might not be deemed an exit scape, given the visual absence of the trans character. It is Fred who I watch reading and getting drenched in the streaming water. Yet, this scene offers itself as an exit scape, a dream scape, as it allows Laurence to be present through her writing – I become the witness of Fred's reading of Laurence, and I read together with Fred what Laurence has long desired to express to her. Despite her absence as a clearly defined and rendered body, Laurence features as the central figure of this scene.

She is present in the waterfall, the noise, the book, the effects on the entrant. It is a dream scape that for me, as entrant, draws me close to Laurence's hopes and her strong desire to reconnect with Fred. And this hope soon materialises. Fred contacts Laurence the moment after she reads the book and Laurence replies and visits her immediately.

A few scenes later, I enter the next exit scape. Laurence stands in Fred's living room. "Come with me". Laurence repeats this sentence a few times. Fred listens, looks away, looks back. She breaks into a smile. Her negotiation of the decision is only made through body language, facial expressions and gestures. Music becomes audible, the soundtrack of the contemporary electronic music project Moderat, with the track "A New Error". They leave the house; the music grows louder – repeating the sensorial experience of the waterfall noise in the form of musical beats that sweep the scene.

Laurence and Fred are wrapped in almost identical light winter coats, Laurence in dark purple, Fred in a lighter shade. The outside is beaming with bright sunlight, and a massive blue sky spans overhead; the claustrophic narrowness of Fred's house is left behind them. Seated in my cinema chair I notice that I am relaxing, breathing again. I must have stopped for the previous seconds as the story developed from Fred's reading to their reunion and their decision to move on together.

I am sitting there, thankful to the director for a well-chosen soundtrack and smiling along with Laurence and Fred's choreography of slow-motion pleasure in the open space, highlighted by Moderat's beats. An in-between frame shows their destination as the one in a photograph from their former kitchen, ice pieces swimming on dark water, words written across the picture frame saying "Île au Noir". A fictional island, real in the film, was a much-desired travel location for Fred and Laurence.

The camera is now close to them, watching them walk away, showing their backs and heads in the lower half of the picture; the upper half is filled by a blue, icy winter sky and a few electricity poles and cables. At their sides, snow, scattered wooden houses, an empty cement road, no people, no cars, no birds, no other beings around them. They walk, and wind blows softly into their clothes and through their hair.

A long shot points at the backs of their wind-filled coats. The frame

allows a view of the sky, the field and snow next to the road; and most astonishingly, around them are a thousand pieces of clothing – colourful garments, pants, t-shirts, skirts, blouses, pullovers, underwear, all kinds of items slowly sail through the air, scatter their path, the side of the road.

Film still
Laurence Anyways (2012)

Their colours are enhanced by the brilliant sunlight illuminating each item. The world seems upside down, its rules of gravity intact yet the air filled with the most bizarre items that seem native to this environment. Things are out of place, and yet this scene becomes, in its visual upheaval, somehow the most peaceful one of the film.

The clothes are slowly sailing downwards. Fred and Laurence, who have kept walking, turn to each other, now embracing, kissing, smiling into the sun, at one another. The camera moves to a close-up of their faces. They stretch them towards the light like long-buried caterpillars, a slightly low-angle shot frames their faces in front of the clear blue sky in the background. Around them, the clothes are still flying, welcomed by them like a breeze of gentle snowflakes. Faces lifted up, they are eager to feel the fabric like fresh caresses of cooling crystals. It is bizarre how these clothes fall and fall, touching these two people, gathering around them on the ground, while they do not seem to think of the scene as surprising – these items seem to be common to the habitat, welcomed like the first snowfall of winter. Colour, light, freshness, peace and intimacy emanate from this scene – until the film cuts. The dream scape ends and something else continues.

Spacetimemattering Clothing

The scene described above works without spoken dialogue; it functions visually as well as through the strong instrumental soundtrack that changes rhythm slightly in the editing folds, and in the changes of the camera angles from long to wide angle, long shot to close-up.

The airborne clothes in the dream scape induce lightness, elevated by the easiness of their flight, as their loose scatter and mild touch faces, bodies and the snowy ground. As this takes place after a break-up between Laurence and Fred and all the sadness that accompanied it, the almost gravity-defying easy sail of fabric seems to contrast the emotional roller coaster of their being and becoming with one another. They both seem happy in this scene, as if nothing can go wrong anymore and as if Fred finally made her decision to love Laurence how she is. There is hope here that Fred has finally come to terms with Laurence's new embodiment, her altered shape, identity and looks. Laurence is delighted. It is a moment of strong hope for both. Lightness is the ruling feeling of this scene, the wishful easiness and a fresh flight into new times together.

The clothes in this scene seem to weave in with the temporalities Laurence and Fred shared earlier as lovers – time here almost becomes an item in and of itself that can be given, divided, exchanged, re-enacted. In the early years of their relationship, they had played with clothes, letting them rain onto their bodies; now the clothes address the potentiality of a sharing of time and space, and they become objects of trust and tenderness. The odour of worn clothes, the touch of fabrics, the smell of bodies, and the taboo-breaking unruliness of the scene as a juxtapose to the domestic sterility of Fred's new life – a grey, unhomely house, the unemotional relationship to her husband and even her son; she is bored, underinspired and passionless, and has become almost automatised, her body lost in time and space. The laundry game and its rearticulation in the flying garments allows the film to repeatedly return to the body, to Fred as much as Laurence's bodily existence and becoming, through this game and their intra-actions.

The flying clothes scene allows the film to enact bodies on unconventional paths in intimate entanglements – there is never a body shown

naked nor having sex in the film, which are more common forms of bodily appellation and intensity in film. Instead, *Laurence Anyways* integrates bodies through their compassion and their physicality in the film's enactment, through people and things that come close, that have a history and that unfold into new possible futures. It is this intimacy in the characters' departure from Fred's domestic lifestyle and their walk among flying clothes that continuously refers to a past as well as future of the laundry as a symbol of their shared tenderness and ultimately of their belonging to one another. It is a meaningful object that seems to speak of the perhapsness of their reunion, while bearing the knowledge of their past and their struggles with one another. The clothes enact the intimacy and joy of this relationship, hinting towards a re-enactment of it in the now-beginning future for Laurence and Fred, and becoming a sign of temporality, of the passing of time, of the return of events, of their feelings for one another, of staying the same and also of hopefully changing through the experience of time or accepting change with time.

Already, the title of the film seems to speak of time and its passing and the changes that come along with it, or the things that remain the same despite the fear that they might change. It is Laurence who remains the same person as much as she also transforms with the flow of time, through many new experiences, reactions and possibilities. *Anyways* …a floppy "s", almost careless but with an edge of rebellion, a bit nostalgic and with a wish to remain recognisable to loved ones. It is a desire to stay visible, present and certainly sensed as still the same person, with the same laughter, the same wit, similar attitudes yet, importantly for herself, a different presence and a different form of being in the world.

Clothes are worn close to the skin; they become part of a person's self-presentation and sometimes evena second skin. I myself have a few very favourite items and I wear them often; they become part of me. I get attached to them and, once I stop wearing them, I keep them close like old friends – they remain in my surroundings, maybe at the bottom of my shelf; or after some time, they retreat to the basement. As they have been such an integral part of me, they belong to the history of my being. Every once in a while, I take a trip to their new storage

location and look through the bag in which they are kept. Some of them I will pick out, surprised to find them interesting again. I invite them to accompany me again and take them upstairs to my room where they unfold into a new life and into a new time with me.

Clothes are important items, as part of a person's archive of chronopolitical wandering through the world or as the fabric that expresses identity and belonging. They are spatiotemporal signposts, marking different experiences in time and space. Yet, the film seems also to ague that they are emotional archives; in *Laurence Anyways*, they seem to have all the past feelings of Fred and Laurence knit into their shapes. Not many parts of a person are as close to the body or skin of a person as their clothes. Their wardrobe is patterned by their personality, imprinted into the threads of a favourite jumper, the patiently knitted socks, the smell of a scarf.

The feeling of mourning is a strong emotion that arises from this dream scape. Watching this scene of the falling clothes fills me with as much joy and hope for Laurence and Fred's reunion as sadness over their unfulfilled wish to stay together and their years-long sadness because of this. This wish to remain recognisable to Fred seems to remain unfulfilled, and Laurence's repeated realisation is embedded in scapes of mourning, the grief about the possible and later repeated breakups and the loss of support from Fred as her partner and best friend. The film does not judge Fred's inability to follow Laurence's transition. Instead, it traces the emotional connections between these two people and follows mostly Laurence's perspective on the relationship and her waiting for Fred to hopefully come to terms with her transition. The tremendous sadness that remains integrated in this scene of the flying clothes as well as the waterfall scene sits side by side with feelings of passion and joy as they appear in the moment, for instance, when Fred and Laurence leave the house together to embark on the journey to the Île au Noir.

Time becomes circular in the rhythms of mourning; it thickens and thins, constantly changing its hapticity and circular in its repeated returns (Patel 2007: 280). When sadness returns in unexpected moments, memories become vividly present, and dialogues, touches or smells arise in one's thoughts that seem almost undirected, less capable of

being willed and instead occurring based on indirect cues. Time is no longer linear in these moments. The falling clothes in the dream scape come to my mind when I think of this circularity of grieving, how they sink through the air in slow motion, how this image is repeated in the film several times – falling and falling and falling clothes, like a multisensorial elaboration, stretching, its emphasis in punctuation. They can be smelled, heard, seen, touched. They repeat time and encircle experiences of bodily contact when they touch a body's surface. As much as time is thickening and thinning, the hapticity of these falling clothes changes, from lightness filled with laughter and smiles, to the heaviness of them repeatedly accomodating gravity, laden by a sense of desperation, impossibility and the failure to live this relationship joyfully.

In their relation to space, clothes are connected to certain places; the thinning and thickening of time is spatial, as the clothes and the memories embedded in them not only relate to a passed-away time but also to a certain place filled with particular people, objects and smells that are no longer attainable. In this sense, Laurence's experiences of grieving over the loss of Fred and their relationship in this film do not take place once but are repeated throughout time, over the duration of the ten years of the film's narrative time and without the open resolution of the film, suggesting that they might even continue further.

In *Laurence Anyways*, it is the circularity of their reunions that introduces a queering investigation of time and place emphasised by returns and repetitions. Time becomes mobilised spatially as an "askew spiral, which tightens and loosens" (Patel 2007: 280). Laurence and Fred continually and inexhaustably return to one another, trying to find an escape from their sadness and a solution to their longing for each other. They fail over and over again to materialise it. Time is not "a neutral zone, not an inevitable arrow, but established in the familiarities between each 'thing'" (Patel 2007: 284). In a Newtonian understanding, time and space are separate – space presents itself as "neutral and abstracted and untextured" (Patel 2007: 282). In a post-Newtonian, Baradian approach to spacetimemattering, *Laurence Anyways* and its two dream scapes emphasise the circularity of time and its intra-action with space and bodies. The term spacetimemattering by queer feminist physicist Karen Barad (2007) refers to how space

and time are entangled and are constantly becoming with each other. Space is not the container of time (Barad 2007: 181) nor is space the stasis to time's flexibility and reflexivity (Barad 2007: 180). With this understanding, Barad relates to Doreen Massey's problematisation of the cultural significations of space and time and her argument on their intra-dependencies (Massey 1992: 84). Barad takes her argument further by addressing the productive aspect of spacetime entanglements. She stresses that space and time "are mutually constituted through the dynamics of iterative intra-activity" and that the "spacetime manifold is iteratively (re)configured in terms of how material-discursive practices come to matter" (Barad 2007: 181). Matter is not a given but a product of spacetime intra-activity: "Matter isn't situated in the world; matter is worlding in its materiality" (Barad 2007: 181). In this sense, matter becomes a doing, a result of "its iterative intra-active becoming" (Barad 2012: 80) as much as worlding – a doing and undoing of the world in its entanglements of spacetimematter(ing).

Relating her onto-epistemological theory to the dream scapes in *Laurence Anyways* in particular, and the reappearing clothes and their representation of space and time in their relationship, Laurence and Fred are entangled with these items – their relationship, their emotions, their memories, their future are done and undone with the flying, falling, appearing and disappearing of the clothes. The past and the present as well as the future are not simply there, but instead they are constantly in the making and become spun from the constant iterative intra-actions of spacetimemattering (Barad 2011: 145).

On another level, the particular importance of space and time in their relationship and this entanglement is mattering, as it produces emotions between them: hope, despair, longing, desperation. Emotions are not actually material but they matter. Their existence produces the haptics of this relationship and the embodied subjectivities of Laurence and Fred as emotional and involved beings. The falling and flying clothes as well as the waterfall scene present phenomena in the film that express something that matters tremendously to the characters. Apart from the expression of time as circular, the clothes are also a very intimate matter and represent something otherwise not visible – their emotional belonging and bond; ultimately, feelings as

they exist between Laurence and Fred are hardly transposable into a visual regime. The spacetimemattering of this dream scape also evokes their relationship, it matters it back into existence in their feelings of hope, their steps through the landscape, their touching of the clothes, their wish-fulfilling adventure to the Île au noir. They rematerialise their bond and relationship. And finally, the spacetimemattering in this scape also relates to the mattering of the entrant's feelings and how I become, as an entrant, integrated and intra-actively produced through the spacetime entanglements in the scape.

I suggest here an understanding of the spacetimemattering in these two scapes as a landscape of utopian possibility, as a "hope-landscape" (Bloch 1986: 16). The two discussed dream scapes in *Laurence Anyways* seem to be embedded in a longing to make the impossible possible, representing Laurence's urgency to hold onto Fred and onto their relationship, her hope to persuade Fred to resolve her resistance towards Laurence's transition. These scapes are utopian – not as they represent another place, or "no-place" as the word suggests in its etymology, but in the feelings they condense, let exist beside one another, and their concentration on hope and the belief in the "perhaps". Laurence and Fred embrace in this dream scape the *perhapsness* of their becoming together – the clothes weighty as much as airy, laden with sadness but also carried by the desire for the easiness of an earlier time and the hope to move again into similar spacetimes. The hap in the perhaps can be then the "opening up [of] possibilities for being in other ways, of being perhaps" (Ahmed 2010: 223). This "perhaps" is in particular not a hap derived from happiness. The main aspect of their longing and hoping is not happiness, it is the longing for belonging together and making it possible to be with one another. The politics of hap are not "happy" or "unhappy" (Ahmed 2010: 223); instead, the hap in perhaps is the openness to what happens and the movement towards "a world in which things can happen in alternative ways" (Ahmed 2010: 223).

The dream scapes in this film negotiate futurity through visual metaphors of the "not-yet-seen" – the magical realism of the waterfall scene is sensually experienced by Fred, she must be able to see it; similarly, the clothes in the latter dream scape are shown as touching Fred's and Laurence's faces that are stretching up to them, awaiting

eagerly the touch of the flying fabrics. The clothes represent the past and the possibility of their future, of Laurence's potentiality to live in a relationship with Fred – they are not seeable by any other character; the events are obviously imaginary as much as illustrative of an internal emotional experience. But they are at the same time very real and in contact with Fred's and Laurence's bodies. They are the things that cannot be seen by others, or are not-yet-seen, similar to how Laurence requires Fred to become able to imagine a future with her. They are symbolic of the things that have been lost, have been forgotten, have escaped from sight: the potential of embodied feelings and imagination.

SOCIAL DREAMING

In the exit scapes in *Laurence Anyways*, the protagonists feel hope and possibility as well as loss. The exit scapes in this film trouble time differently than in the dream scapes of *Ma vie en rose* or *Cheonhajangsa Madonna*, where past and future are intermingled through the figure of the fairy. Instead, in *Laurence Anyways*, it is the speed and the hapticity of time, its slowness, rapidity and circularity, that are discussed in relation to spatiality. In this elaboration of spacetime in its different forms, what matters are the intense feelings that are formed here – the sadness, the mourning, as well as possibility, potential, peace and joy, the hap and its utopian quality to dream alternative futurities and to be hopeful. While the emphasis in the first two films of this chapter lies on the strength of believing in alternate worlds and in the power of worlding other worlds through imagination and fantasy, the main focus of the discussion of the last film of this chapter is spacetimemattering and the intra-active entanglements of space, time and materialities. The spacetime worlding of alternative futures as alternative places and times is part of this – the future is not existent before it is produced intra-actively as a process of spacetimemattering.

The discussion of the utopian sensibility of exit scapes has been an ongoing project in this book. The exit scapes all include utopian spacetimematterings on different levels, intra-diegetically as much as extra-diegetically. Intra-diegetically, the dream scapes as well as other

exit scapes produce alternatives for their characters, moments of hope, of belonging, of strength. But most interesting for me remains the question of the utopian spacetimemattering for the entrant. To a degree, I theorise all exit scapes in Trans Cinema as utopian scapes that offer the entrant a spacetime of different imagining and an escape from the films' scenes of constraint. Yet in the scapes of this chapter, the aspect of dreaming of utopian alternatives becomes quite literal. The dream scapes and their images of fairies and bizarre circumstances are dreamy possibilities and intense expressions of hope and longing; they provide elsewheres and elsewhens in the film. In the dream scapes, the entrants are offered the experience of potentially seeing things differently and seeing the not-yet-seen – escaping the constraining elements and temporarily joining the characters in believing in their engagement with imagination.

The dream scapes present multisensorial elaborations of the possible – of the perhaps – in ways that are not yet established, maybe not even yet be imaginable. Because these sequences perpetuate utopian hope and the possibility of "elsewherewhens," I have proposed to approach them as exit scapes; they offer affects that are embedded in utopian sensibilites of imagination. They provide a point of rest and rescue for the entrant, as well as space and time for imaginative leaps. I suggest understanding them as scapes of negotiation of futurities. In particular, the dream scapes of this chapter include dream, imagination and fantasy very directly into their sensible intra-activities. The dream scapes literally become scapes of "social dreaming" (Sargent 1994; Sargisson 1996: 1). The characters experience the unseeable – things that cannot be seen by others – and are invested in the mattering of alternative futures and alternate world-making through their relations with fairies, unreal waterfalls or the magic of bizarre amounts of flying and falling clothes.

To conclude this chapter on dreams and imagination, magical objects and events act as a statement of belief in the "impossible", of investing in that which is deemed worthless in a rationalist, occularcentric and modernist society. I argue here for a hope for the impossible to become possible, in which imagination becomes an ally to trans lives, one which in dominant understandings would be thought of as an impossible embodiment. Dean Spade's manifesto "Impossibility Now" provides

me with these final words on the potential of the impossible. He write that "[t]rans people have always been told that we are impossible, that we do not exist, that we are not who we say we are, that we are incomprehensible …" (Spade 2013). What lets the exit scapes become welcoming gates in this chapter, but also in the other chapters, is their forceful "demanding of the impossible" (Spade 2013) – the demanding of the potential survival of violent circumstances and the hope for a different existence, different societal conditions and different collective living possibilities within which imagination and dreams lie as their stepping stones.

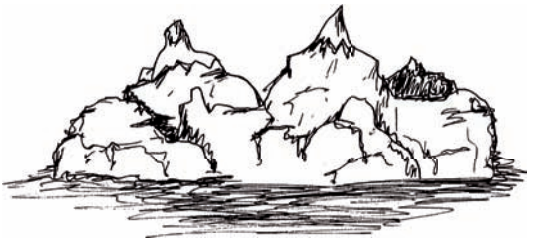
5

PLEASE BRING STRANGE THINGS. A CONCLUSION

Please bring strange things.
Please come bringing new things.
Let very old things come into your hands.
Let what you do not know come into your eyes.
Let desert sand harden your feet.
Let the arch of your feet be the mountains.
Let the paths of your fingertips be your maps
And the ways you go be the lines of your palms.
Let there be deep snow in your inbreathing
And your outbreath be the shining of ice.
May your mouth contain the shapes of strange words.
May you smell food cooking you have not eaten.
May the spring of a foreign river be your navel.
May your soul be at home where there are no houses.
Walk carefully, well-loved one,
Walk mindfully, well-loved one,
Walk fearlessly, well-loved one.
Return with us, return to us,
Be always coming home.[67]

This book has been a discussion of strange things that have touched me in various ways. These things have taken me along multiple paths. In the first four lines of this marvelous poem, feminist science fiction writer and poet Ursula LeGuin writes about a wish to encounter things

that are strange, other, unknown, maybe approached with fear, yet in this poem, there is no trembling, no fright.[68] Instead, the strange things are the ones wanted, longed for, embraced and wished for; these words contain a longing to come into contact with the unknown – a world brought to the one who is positioned in a cinema seat or at home watching a movie on the projector with friends or lovers. It is a world that is dazzling for those who open themseves up to it.



Apart from it being a strange thing altogether that I wrote this book that brought many new things close to me, I wrote in particular about the moments in film that come close, the frighteningly intimate scenes that are not outside of or apart from me. I focused on the moments within which I feel implicated and those that, as I insisted in my preceeding chapters, compound central aspects of Trans Cinema. The gay Greek poet Constantine P. Cavafy writes in a poem sometimes compared to LeGuin's *Strange Things* that the scary things, the interesting things, the really challenging things cannot be encountered "unless you bring them along inside your soul, unless your soul sets them up in front of you".[69] The items named by Cavafy are those that I wrote about in this book – strange moments in film that come very close, that disorientate me in the feelings they evoke and that are the objects that orientate me anew – which lead me through a film like a tempting path through a wide, sometimes uneasy landscape. I follow these scapes like areas of orientation – futural points – they are the not-yet-here-and-now of the utopian landscapes of a different world that the exit scapes have the power to unfold.

One of my supervisors has LeGuin's poem hanging on her office door.[70] When I read it for the first time, before one of my meetings with her on a draft of this dissertation manuscript, it produced in me a feeling of deep longing for these strange things. I wanted to hold them.

I wanted to be the one someone returns to with these "new things". I have been the traveller myself in these last years, between Sweden and Germany most of the time, embarking on this magical and sometimes rough trip of writing this thesis and also meeting myself over and over again in my journey through these pages. The poem resonated with me, as it made me long for a rest, for being not the traveller for once but the one that says farewell and then waits for these wonderful treasures and stories that will be brought back. In the past years, the cinema as much as my laptop screen have been the sites that helped me travel. They became the courtyard to a wider area within which I could embark on journeys, longing for the stories offered to me. I appreciated the strange things films had to give. I voyaged within its stories for the strange things they had to give.

The strangest thing of all became the exit scapes – sites and moments in these films that approached me physically, made me engage with the films through many senses and made me open up towards the possibility of futurity and hope within Trans Cinema. The exit scapes became the little openings within sometimes hostile trans imaginaries, as these films sometimes unroll carpets of suffocating fear as a central narrative tool. The exit scapes are the ropes that take me across the stream of one-dimensional and violent storylines and character representations that constrain, rather than open up to the diversities of, trans embodiment, and lead to affirmation and hope. While bearing in mind that not all trans films are this harsh, they all require in my understanding a reading through their exit scapes – moments that help to cope, that become a rescue rope, that nurture a vision of a different life and a different becoming.

The strength of the exit scapes therefore lies in their capacity to unleash feelings of hope for a different futurity and utopian becoming. I wrote a lot about feelings in this book – the feelings of hope and potential that are dawning in the cinematic leaps that a film takes when it opens into an exit scape. I am certainly fostering, in these exit scapes, *possibility*, multisensoriality and hapticity, vision and a sensible attentiveness of embodied listening and listening differently.

Ursula LeGuin's poem is a travel description, a wish, a worry, and a wishing (fare)well – it wishes the well-loved one to be careful,

mindful, fearless and returning. It also is the well through which I can make a wish, a wishing well. I throw a glowing coin into the water and it makes meandering circles; with every little wave, a wish floats across the well's surface calling for a future – brighter, better, different, stranger, weirder, more hopeful, more monstrous, more vulnerable, intimate, caring and kinder. These ripples on the water's surface are the destablising moments in the films that make the utopian and hopeful feelings possible.

Addressing trans politics and trans embodiment always also means taking a step into a theoretical terrain of travel tales. Transition as a journey is a common trope – from transnational and anti-nationalist discourses (Crawford 2008; Cotten 2012; Aizura 2012b), to contexts of trans embodiment and language (Enke 2012b; Hornscheidt 2012), to the problematic discussion of trans as a home (Prosser 1998). These aspects are often embedded in the audiovisual exploration of trans narratives through road movies, cross-country travels and different nationalist subtexts and their interconnectedness with gender politics. Yet, despite this problematic side of the travel trope for trans theorising, for my approach to the exit scapes and the discussion of cinema it is also a hopeful trope. I said above that cinema opens up and unfolds into a landscape that I travel through – it shows me worlds, people, feelings, occurrences and objects I would not otherwise have been able to encounter. Cinema is worlding – it is my worlding; it changes me, challenges me and does and undoes me. It puts me together as much as it sometimes rips me apart. The journey, the letting go and the wish for a brave travel in LeGuin's poem seems to address not only a leisurely journey but the great journey of life, or at least a rite of passage that, despite being very interesting as a trope, I will not dwell on any longer here. Instead, I will turn towards the poem's secondary character, the "strange things" that grab me, move me and physically change me and my outlook on trans embodiment. I would like to write a bit more about these very haptic and multisensorial qualities, about time and place as the context of this situated movement and hapticity of Trans Cinema, and about what makes the exit scapes ultimately and promisingly queer.

EXIT SCAPES

I once backpacked through Ireland, in trucks mostly, with my friend. One day we hiked to the sea shore; cliffs with horizontal lines opened up into tremendous terraces, sometimes bordered by crashing waves, less harmed by the force of the water on that particular day. The sun was out as we paced over the rocks, and in front of my foot was a small crab creeping backwards into its little hole on the rock ground, closing the hole with a nearby pebble so beautiful, polished and so temptingly shiny in the sunlight that I had to take it. I held it in my hand. It was the perfect size and had two smooth holes crafted by water and sand over centuries. I said goodbye to the crab and took the stone with me. Elated over this shiny stone treasure, I slipped it into my pocket, only slightly dampened by looming guilt about the robbery. The stone sits at my windowsill now, sometimes alone on a shelf and sometimes in the company of one of my plants. Whenever I take it into my hand, these ambivalent feelings reoccur: delight, betrayal, joy and slight nostalgia. This feeling is maybe what Sara Ahmed refers to when she writes, in relation to phenomenology, about how things constitute humans through the feelings they raise in us, through the crafted net of stories they let us nestle inside like we would into a hammock. The stone became my strange thing, granted to me by a sea animal; it nurtured in me an affective relation that holds strong proximity with me, enriched by memories, embedded in the feelings of a close friendship with my travel companion, gloomed somewhat by our later estrangement but saturated by the pleasure this stone has given me since I slipped it from its stony pocket and gave it a new home.

Things, or "objects", constitute human subjectivity in an intra-active exchange of feelings. The contact with objects involves disorientation as much as reorientation (Ahmed 2006: 165) – for now, it is the disorientation that I find interesting. These objects are disorientating

as they come close. They produce proximity with otherness, something outside of oneself –they are strange and scary. Yet in this they also hold the possibility of encountering something new, something not-yet-here-and-now, something that is less materially present rather than promised in the object. In this feeling of lost certainty about the distance between me and this thing lies possibility, as the feelings these strange things evoke undo order, and only through an increased distance can this order be re-established. Things undo me as they come close; they make me emotionally vulnerable as I am relating to them. I am directed towards and connected with them. In this sense, a strange thing is one that constitutes me as a subject, a feeling, an embodied self. These things that disturb order are disorientating, and in this quality they might also, according to Sara Ahmed, be queer (Ahmed 2006: 161); they undo what is supposed to be done, fixed, unchanged. The strange things unfasten supposedly fixed categories and in this they crush limits, set up to prevail forever, as I wrote in my Prelude to this book. These things can disorient in their proximity; yet, only those that come close, that are brought inside one's soul (Cavafy 1910), can untie and loosen these boundaries and open one to the experience of disorientation and the potential this experience enables.

The exit scapes as particular moments and spaces in Trans Cinema are short and temporary – they slip and keep slipping. The exit scapes share this quality with the strange things (Ahmed 2006: 172). Just as Ahmed describes the strange things, the exit scapes are brief spacetimes in a larger length of film; sometimes there are several exit scapes with the same film, but as the film plays on, they slip away – they are always intense but brief. Their proximity is always one that is retreating – it cannot be held in place – it is the undone order of things in place (Ahmed 2006: 172).

As exit scapes they are slippery things – not only because they keep slipping away but also because they are sequences filled with fine music, elaborate dancing and great magic moments that tempt me to slip inside as though entering a secret room of unexpectedness. It is in this hideout that I can become with the characters something else; together with them I become vulnerable, open, hopeful and strong. It is an identification that goes deeper than the character. The exit scapes

are identificatory places, without identification with a character but with feelings that can be read into these moments. Such an emotional proximity is confusing, unsettling. The exit scapes are the places that undo order, they disorientate.

I think of the exit scapes as these strange things within the realm of cinema. They are moments of disorientation and thus have the potentiality to generate new perspectives, to realise the former order as normative, to take this moment of lost reference points as a spacetime of crafting utopian imaginaries. They enact a magical capacity of utopian sensibility that reorientates their entrants by letting them envision a becoming elsewhere, a becoming otherwise, a becoming inappropriate/d others.

The exit scapes are strange things – they are twisting, disordering moments in Trans Cinema that I have discussed in these chapters as the places and times in these films that position themselves against the normalising and constraining representations of gender embodiment. They are the smooth pebbles between me and the rough rest of the film – the violence inherent in the naked body shots, the fetishisation of the gender-dissident body and its pathologisation and freak show exploitation.

TOUCHING, LISTENING, AND SEEING

Throughout this cine-cultural and transfeminist study I have explored the potential of reading Trans Cinema through exit scapes of dance, song and dream scapes. My curiosity was led by several key questions:

1. In which way could exit scapes in Trans Cinema provide spaces and moments within a film that enable a disidentificatory intra-action with the film? Can the films unfold into spaces and times that support a hopeful reimagining of trans becoming?
2. Is it possible that the exit scapes not only present a brief pause for the entrant – a positive moment of film viewing within the scenes of constraint – but also lift the entrant into a hopeful spacetime of possibility and alternate worldings?
3. How would a transfeminist reading of Trans Cinema also

require the use of new terminologies that are wary of the otherwise privileging of an occularcentric language?

4. In what form could an engagement with these films through the notion of exit scapes be beneficial for a transdisciplinary approach to Trans Cinema and present a reading with strong links to anti-essentialist and anti-identitarian overlaps between queer theory and transgender studies?

I am critical of the term "viewer" or "spectator", and the entrant became in this book my new term for grasping a reciprocal, non-occularcentric position of being involved with film. The term entrant appeared able to lead me further than the one-dimensional, scopic terminology of film theory and its notions of viewer and spectator; the term "audience" also remains mono-sensual in relation to cinematic intra-action. Spectator still entails a polarising and divided setting of itself and film; additionally the term spectator stresses the visual part of film engagement as it links to *spectare*, Latin for "to view" or "to watch".

Multisensorial cinema theory is critical of these aspects (Marks 2000), yet scholars in this strand of film theory continue to use occularcentric terminology that does not account for the multisensorial element of film engagement as well as the entanglements (Barad 2007) and transcorporeality (Alaimo 2008) of cinematic intra-action. Through the notion of entrant I wanted to draw attention to this issue and critically explore a new term that places less emphasis on the visual part in film involvement and instead incites associations with film as a space within which I am transcorporeally embedded; a space I move through and which, in its best moments, becomes a strange thing, an exit scape. Thus, the term entrant leans on the term haptic spectator (Marks 2000) – yet, in its emphasis on entrance as a reformulation of transcorporeal viewing, the term speaks of a stepping into the film's fictional territory while also deprivileging an occularcentric terminology.

The film as a space, with escape possibilities in the exit scapes and the entrant as a personification of film engagement within this space, is a metaphor that also relates to the spatial term of trans – not as a crossing of space but as a movement away (Enke 2012a: 5) and also closer to something new, different, a possibility of becoming otherwise and elsewhere.

Together with my investment in reformulating the term for viewer into entrant, I have also suggested a shifted terminology for the notion of haptic/multisensorial spectatorship (Marks 2000). Fond of Marks' (2000), Sobchack's (2004) and Barker's (2009) investigations into multisensorial film involvement, I remain critical of their continuous use of scopic terminology. Drawing on feminist film theory and its branch of haptic spectatorship, I formulated a concept I came to call sensible cinematic intra-activity. The notion of sensible cinematic intra-activity links to my understanding of film engagement as an embodied and reciprocal practice. I argued earlier that an approach towards film that is experienced as embodied and haptic requires not only a shift in this theoretical trajectory of sensual cinema theory (Marks 2000; Sobchack 2004; Barker 2009) but also new terminologies that live up to the tasks of sensorial cinema theory by deconstructing an occularcentric, objective and disembodied approach to film. This term has been very helpful for me in understanding the intimate and mutual entanglements between film and its entrants. It emphasises an affirmative, transcorporeal and affective engagement with film.

For each of the analyses of the three different exit scapes that appear frequently within Trans Cinema, I have deployed one human bodily sense as the main intra-active filter through which to read the exit scapes: touch, hearing and sight. Hearing and sight have already been central to film analysis, yet always as disembodied and privileged senses of knowledge. In connecting them to the trans body, the transcorporeal entrant's hearing and sight become shifted. Hearing is a sense on which trans embodiment relies, as embodiment is often visually invisible and becomes read through binary, cisgendering parameters. Sight begins to include seeing things that others cannot see – a resistant seeing that is less connected to categorisations than it is to reimagining and seeing differently. Touch has been explored in recent cinematic endeavours

(Marks 2000; Sobchack 2004; Barker 2009) yet not connected to trans embodiment and the moving trans body, which provide a historical context of dissident embodiment even beyond the category of gender.

In the chapter on dance scapes, I have discussed the films *Ma vie en rose* (1997), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001) and *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005) and through them the importance of movement and touch regarding representation of trans embodiment in the film as well as for the entrant. Touch is important to discuss audiovisually, as it shifts the focus away from the privileged sense of sight towards a haptic element of film engagement that has for a long time been overlooked (Sobchack 2004; Marks 2000; Barker 2009). Touch calls bodily matter into existence. It draws on the dangers of things that come close, as much its own historical rendering. The proximate and the bodily elements of touch are threatening, as they relate to contact as much as to discourses of contagion – and in this they pair up with historical connections between toxic touch, permeability and dissident and boundary-transgressing bodies. I reappropriate touch through a discussion of the theoretical concepts of disorientation (Ahmed 2006) and belongings (Probyn 1996) as I work them into my analysis of the dance scapes. This chapter is driven by the following question: in which way do the dance scapes and the enactments of movement, proximity and touch unfold the trans body in film between vulnerabilty and possibility? In the discussion of three different dance scapes through the concepts of disorientation and belongings, I have found that these dance scapes unfurl the trans character's body differently, expanding it between refusal, longing and the maintenance of integrity.

In the film *Ma vie en rose* (1997), the trans character Ludo builds new belongings towards another dissident character, hir grandmother, and reorientates hirself in an enactment of inappropriate/d movements. The transing body as well as the aging body embrace the threat that is associated with their bodily openness in dance, their being in contact with one another as well as potentially with others. The dance movements, their connections through gestures, looks and touch, make them vulnerable and confident in the temporarily possible space of refusal of norms of embodiment, gender and age expression in their shared dance. The dance, for Ludo, becomes a place of safety as well as a space

of reformulating hir orientations towards the world.

In *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001), the trans character Hedwig similarly experiences disorientation in a moment of longing for an idealised form of romantic love. The shared dance between Hedwig and her lover is sensual, enacting not protest but an idealised, imaginary notion of love. The brief, gentle dance between these two characters leads them into a disorientating storm of whirling blossoms – the ultimate signifier of romantic feelings and a destabiliser of the sense of sight. This moment of "clouded vision" becomes an extension of their dance transposed into the object of flower petals. Despite their promise of touch and dreamlike happiness, this moment ends when the exit scape is finalised through the following scene of disppointment, which Hedwig experiences through Tommy's rejection of physical contact and sexual intimacy with her. While the dance presents a place of reorientation and new belongings in the previous exit scape, in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, the dance scape becomes a moment of intimacy that Hedwig otherwise cannot achieve with Tommy. It is a brief spacetime within the film in which Hedwig's wish for a different reality, different conditions for bodily difference, and the experience of touch and love becomes possible and opens into a utopian potentiality.

The last exit scape in this chapter presents a discussion of the dance in *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005). The trans character, Kitten, dances in a scene that ze daydreams about with hir close friend Lawrence, who shortly before this scene was killed in an accident. The dance helps hir to maintain hir integrity in a moment when ze is brutally interrogated and misaddressed as a crossdressing terrorist by the British police. Also in this film, similar to Ludo in *Ma vie en rose*, the trans character connects hirself in the exit scape to another dissident figure, as Lawrence's body is coded as disabled. Kitten uses the dance as a moment of rescue, an imaginary point of safety enacted in the peacefulness ze can find in the calm and comforting dance moves with hir friend. In this chapter, dance in its intra-action with trans embodiment and the entrants, becomes a space of worlding through movement (Manning 2007: xiv), an affirmation of being in touch with and open towards each other, enabling utopian possibility and a feeling of hope.

In the second analytical chapter I investigated song scapes in Trans

Cinema. In this chapter, I shifted the focus towards the sense of hearing. I discussed the exit scapes in this chapter in particular through the concept of "embodied listening" (Ouzounian 2006) as an embodied form of approaching sound and the intra-action between the entrant and the cinematic components (the film, the characters, the lyrics, the historical context of the song, genre and voice). Investigating the song scapes through embodied listening enables an emphasis on the affective, situated, textual and transcorporeal aspects of sound, space, time and sensation. This concept is invested in how sound intra-acts with the "body, its surroundings and its imaginary points" (Ouzounina 2006: 70). I chose to discuss hearing, and in particular listening, as it presents an important practice for trans embodiment and its recognition. Trans embodiment cannot be seen; it needs to be listened to when someone explains their pronoun preference and their gender positioning. I was guided in this chapter by the following questions: How do intra-diegetic song scapes in Trans Cinema provide exit scapes? How in particular does the sense of listening open the trans character towards a different trans becoming? How do these song scapes relate the trans characters to multiple, spatiotemporal differences? What possibilities and hopeful futurities do the song scapes enable the characters to feel and experience through embodied listening?

My analysis expresses that trans in these song scapes is allowed to become an embodied position – of becoming through listening and/or being listened to. I was interested in the in-between of the music, which I addressed through Venus DeMars' interview quote from the documentary film about trans musicians, *Riot Acts*: "What stories do I tell? … I try to say something through music. I try to say something between the music" (2010). The song scapes enable in their sonic spacetimes in-between possibilities of elsewheres and elsewhens, which as I propose, unfold into utopian possibility. These in-betweens of the song scapes have acted differently in each film.

In the film *Romeos* (2011), the song scapes enact new affinities for the trans character. Lukas, enticed by a sirenic voice, becomes bound to the possibilities of a different becoming, connected to the potential of dissidence, permeability and leakiness across embodiments. The song is sung by another transing character and the voice and the lyrics

direct Lukas in his trans becoming. My discussion of the song scape indicates that Lukas seems to experience support and comfort in the song scape, the lyrics and the voice, and he develops a virtuosity for listening for similar ones (Bonenfant 2010: 78).

Bree, the trans character in *Transamerica* (2005), also encounters a sirenic figure through song – this time as part of the lyrics. The singer, Calvin, a Native American cis man, disrupts whiteness and is linked to Bree through the coding of bodily otherness. Bree, the listener, becomes a character who, together with Calvin, undermines white, racist American imaginaries and their norms of embodiment. Calvin, a listener himself to Bree's embodiment, understands Bree's trans positioning, and the film grants substantially more space to alliance than it does to fear; the latter is limited to Bree's white, cis gay son.

The last film of the song scape chapter, *The Crying Game* (1992), is one in which I read the song scape as a self-positioning of the trans character, who sings a song that reflects on her life and the fear of becoming vulnerable. The song scape works as an exit scape, as it unfolds into the openness of Dil's song performance, her positioning and her emotional vulnerability. It is the scene that invites the trans entrant into this film, who is otherwise not addressed by the film. The exploitative scenes of constraint that exoticise Dil and present her as a "racialised fetish figure" (Halberstam 2005: 81) appear to address an "unknowing" entrant, who is unable to read and understand Dil's trans positioning (Halberstam 2005: 80; Williams 2011: 119). The song fails to reach the listener who, I argue, could be understood to be the addressee – her future lover Fergus. Her looked-at-ness is what remains, when listening is nonexistent. But to be on stage, to be the one looked at, can also be a choice of appropriating space and disarming the attempts of exoticising the spectacle, which implies a passive object of the gaze.

Hence, the song scapes play out embodied listening differently, and I read them as enabling various strategies for utopian trans becoming through listening. It is the song scapes that in particular provide comfort, support, alliances, self-positiong and undermining of categories of normative embodiment.

The last analytical chapter deals with dream scapes in Trans Cinema. Fairies magically appear, and spatial and temporal orders are turned

upside down – reality becomes mixed up with fantasy, and the power of imagination and dream infiltrates a rationalist understanding of reality, realism and possibility. Dream scapes allow not only for boundary blurring between real and imaginary but also for an engagement with possibility as crafted through imagination and otherwise not-seen possiblities of the not-here-and-now. In particular, this softening and breaking down of the boundaries of reality has utopian potential that I wanted to bring out in this chapter through a discussion of spacetime and the worlding power of hope in the dream scapes. Dream scapes, however, are scapes not only of dreaming but also of fantasising and envisioning through the cinematic version of magical realism.

This chapter has a take on vision that differs from the culturally dominant sense of sight. It is not the sense of truth or objective knowledge production – instead, my analysis performs a reappropriation of sight through the notion of utopian vision, of seeing things others cannot see, of envisioning the future differently. This chapter is the place where I discussed in the most depth queer spacetime politics (Freeman 2000; Lorenz 2012), spacetimemattering (Barad 2007) and utopian sensibility (Dolan 2005; Muñoz 2009; Ahmed 2010) in Trans Cinema and its exit scapes. In all of the chapters, I investigated the exit scapes through their chronopolitics and spatialities and most strongly through their utopian sensibilities and potentiality, but this chapter hosts this discussion most extensively.

The questions that steered my intra-actions with Trans Cinema in this chapter follow: In which ways does seeing differently relate to the imagination of alternate futurities? How do the dream scapes offer a different understanding of seeing and being seen? How can they shift the boundaries of fiction and reality? How does seeing things differently relate to different worldings and thus to a different intra-action with space and time?

In the film *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* (2006), a fairy becomes a visual troublemaker for the entrant and a stabilising encounter for the trans character. As an embodiment of transformation and hope, the fairy that appears for the character Oh Dong-gu in a moment of desperation becomes hir guide in realising hir dreams. As a beautiful, blonde, westernised female figure, the fairy counter-positions the character's own sense of self as ugly and monstrous. As a monstrous figure herself, the fairy becomes Oh Dong-gu's embodied hope, a camp reworking of westernised beauty ideals and most importantly a supportive ally in the category of those rendered not quite human – the trans teenager and the half-human, fantasy-reality boundary walking fairy.

Also, in the film *Ma vie en rose* (1997), when the fairy appears in its dream scape of when the trans child Ludo is scared, this mythical figure becomes a guide and a spacetime troublemaker. She unsettles clear distinctions not only of reality and myth/fantasy, but also of spaces, times and connection as an embodiment that exceeds, crosses and unhinges conventionalised binary gendered categories. These two films, especially, deal with seeing things others cannot see and the power of imagination, seeing beings beyond normal embodiment, seeing outside the clear and rigid categorisations of reality and embracing a possiblity of utopian hope.

In the third and last film of the dream scape chapter, *Laurence Anyways* (2012), I analysed two scenes as dream scapes in which the world is turned upside down: water masses fall from the ceiling into a living room, and clothes fall from the sky like snow. The trans character, Laurence, negotiates the potential of love throughout the film, as well as the loss of her cis female lover Fred, who could not deal with Laurence's transition. The exit scapes in this film are different than the fairy scapes. They do not present embodiments of help or support but are themselves poetic multisensorialisations of intense feelings such as hope and possibility – potentiality but also of fear of repeated disappointment. The dream scapes in this film tear at linear understandings of time, of place, of what is real and what is seen that others cannot see. My discussions of these dream scapes demonstrate that these scapes are spacetimematterings of "hope-landscapes" (Bloch 1986) – they are the

enactment of longing, possibility and the hap in perhapsness (Ahmed 2010), as well as the en*visioning* and wishing for a "world in which things can happen in alternative ways" (Ahmed 2010: 223).

AND FURTHER

I hope to contribute conceptionally to the arena of feminist film theory and to the expansion of trans film scholarship with my methodological work on the terms entrant, exit scape as well as sensible cinematic intra-activity. These notions address phenomenology, affect scholarship and add to the foundation of the emerging field of trans phenomenology. All three concepts have, in my thesis, become useful tools in relation to inquiries in visual culture and also in general investigations of image-related intra-actions. The entrant in particular is related to further scholarship on the queer, lesbian, black or female "spectator"(Stacey 1994; hooks 1999; White 1999; Doane 1999b; Aaron 2004), and in my research it addresses a trans and/or genderqueer entrant that so far has not been theorised in cinema scholarship, with the exception of Jonathan William's research discussed earlier (2011).

Exit scapes have for me developed into a concept that not only relates to audiovisual cultures but is also transferable to non-image-based scholarship. Exit scapes exist in each person's life; they present necessary moments of rest and reimagining. Their core strength not only is bound to cinematic research but can also appear as part of a self-narrative. In this volume, the interludes – including film quotes and later in the book as fictionalised scripts – present one such layer of exit scape in my text that is not audiovisual. They feature trans-imaginary relations and cradle the characters in a dreamlike collectivity that might never but hopefully will one day exist.

Being in the final stage of this research on Trans Cinema also sharpens my awareness of the not-yet-researched possibilities for future intra-actions within this field. My research had a very particular focus on the exit scapes in Trans Cinema and a discussion of them through their utopian potential. Taking this as a starting point rather than solely as a result, I am able to identify further ideas for investigation in this

area that could be interesting to pursue in transfeminist research. As I argued in the introductory chapter of this study, trans masculinity and trans femininity are represented via different narrative tools in contemporary Trans Cinema. Trans men are mostly shown in relation to becoming victims of (sexualised) violence, while trans women are represented in ways that devalue or deride their femininity. It is important to analyse this issue further by first asking the following: How does being trans become "gendered" in film? In what ways are trans masculinities represented differently than trans femininities? What are the reasons for and implications of these differences? Is this, and if so in what ways, related to the absence of genderqueerness in feature fiction films? Is it really absent? Secondly, regarding the most recently debated topic of trans actors in film productions, mainly in relation to Trans Cinema, it would be interesting to continue the debate on trans casting for Trans Cinema or cinema in general, including on the topics of authenticity, access, advocacy and the de/naturalisation of trans embodiment in cinema related to casting choices. A third avenue for research explores the problematics of Trans Cinema having so far not been analysed in detail in relation to the dominance and seeming privileging of whiteness and white trans characters in film. Neither has privileging of "able-bodied" characters been addressed in research and related to the intra-action between trans representation and its social impact. The character representations nurture conventionalised, euroamerican beauty ideals and idealise androgyny. It would be interesting to investigate this link further regarding the social preconditions of trans visibility in different production size and distribution contexts in film. A final central research trajectory drawn from my results of this study on Trans Cinema presents the relation between popular culture (in particular film) and didactics. I would like to explore the ways in which these films can provide significant pedagogical tools as well help trans entrants develop future visions of a changed social structure. What are their implications in the education of cis entrants in relation to trans embodiment, discrimination and necessary future social changes? How do these films affect different relationalities between their entrants, social context, reimagining trans life and/or building towards greater sensitivity in relation to trans discrimination?

UTOPIAN OBJECTS

In my discussion of Trans Cinema, I have in particular stressed the utopian politics and potentiality of the exit scapes: the feeling of utopian hope. The exit scapes not only present a "pause" from the scenes of constraint but most importantly lead further and become spaces for imagining the world differently, for sensing how the world could feel otherwise. The exit scapes are feeling scapes – strange things saturated with potential proximity and strong leaning towards the evocation of emotions; I have claimed in these chapters that they make and remake the world as much as they do and undo me; they are world-making (Muñoz 1999: 196) in their deepest capacity, and they reshape an imaginary of trans becoming for the characters as much as their entrants. The exit scapes are the moments in which the characters and the entrants become potentially queer subjects: vulnerable, open, ambivalent, processual and mutually made in and through collectivity rather than featured as singular and automonous. When Ludo dances with hir granny, their intimacy and mutual support opens a site in this film – temporary, brief, almost too short – that provides me with strength to endure the restraint Ludo experiences in the rest of the film via almost everyone in hir social surroundings. This attachment between Ludo and hir grandmother becomes a proximate, strong feeling that dissolves any question of character identification and invites its entrants into alternative patterns of identification and disidentification with dance, movement and the inappropriate/dness of their existence.

The utopian elements in the exit scapes in these films are the strange, slippery things that make the film into a wishing well – a utopian scape that can become anything, most of all queer, in the sense of the not-yet-here-ness of a queer culture and politics (Muñoz 2009: 187). The exit scapes are those elements that in their tenderness, passionate joy and magic dreaminess make Trans Cinema into a very special experience that inclines its entrants to intra-act with the film; the exit scapes are the films' sites of possibility and joy, building towards a necessary escape from the constraint the trans body experiences in its cinematic form as much as in its existence in society.

The exit scapes are the moments in which the utopian form befriends

failure – the failure to compromise with normality and to accommodate normative embodiments. They are sites and temporalities that allow the entrants to become vulnerable and inappropriate/d others. According to José Muñoz, in *Cruising Utopia*, queer utopian aesthetics always consist of two things, failure and virtuosity (Muñoz 2009: 169); their formats are embedded in a constant attempt, failure, and repeated attempt (Muñoz 2009: 155). The exit scapes are strange things – they fail, they slip, they are queer. I have grown fond of them in their potentiality, their virtuosity, their incapacity to be perfect, easy, rational, autonomous or predictable. Instead, they are the spacetimes in the films that are slippery, temporary and, most of all, dreamy in their world-making potentiality. They are the cinematic sites of virtuosity in which one "exit[s] from the stale and static lifeworld dominated by the alienation, exploitation, and drudgery" that is otherwise so present in everyday life (Muñoz 2009: 173) as well as in cinematic representations of dissident embodiments.

The real potential of the exit scapes sits in the critical escapism that they have to offer to their entrants; they become the hideouts of the monstrous before meeting the others for whom they have been listening (Bonenfant 2010: 78). They are places of utopian sensibility. And they are the spaces in which the characters undermine normality, fail it, or refuse it, as much as they also long for it, and immerse in attachments with characters whose bodies are similarly rendered dissident by old age, sexuality, dis/abilities, gender. The exit scapes provide intra-diegetic spacetimes for these characters to meet and to experience affinities, grow affections and receive acceptance. They are the spacetimes that are not only invested in normalisation or recognition but devoted to gestures to the confident queerness of the monstrous other (Stryker 2006b (orig. 1994); Stone 2006 (orig. 1991); Wagner 2010a, 20010b, 2011).

The exit scapes are the strange things that come very close, invite me to become a transcorporeal entrant to the films and urge me to really engage with, participate in and encounter a story in its best moments affectively and closely. The strangeness of the thing is not part of the thing or of me – it sits between me, my body and the object (Ahmed 2006: 163). The proximity is a temporary encounter of real possibility, and only the loss of fear of this decreased distance allows for a real exchange. In this, the exit scapes not only let me "walk in someone

else's shoes" (Smith 2014) – this engagement with cinema goes much further and deeper. Strangely, "exit scape" is not only a good pair of boots that allows me to walk rocky surfaces, something worn on my body that I can put on or take off, but in fact a feeling that gets under my skin, sinking in like a soothing lotion; the exit scapes and their power to embed the entrant nourish a moment of cinematic entanglement that dissolves the polarity of screen/viewer into a real encounter and makes them transcorporeally enter a story and a world-in-the-making.

AFTERWORD

Walking, dancing, pleasure: these accompany the poetic act.
Hélène Cixous[71]

In the last year of this thesis I have become a co-parent to a dog. Together with hir I have discovered the green side of the city anew. In my neighbourhood, I have found forests and parks I never knew existed so close to my house. This dog changes my engagmeent with the city as much as ze changes my daily writing rhythms. Without wanting to compare hir to a strange thing, ze nevertheless really has brought disorder into my life. First, I was very troubled by finding a few things mixed up in my life – time for long walks, ideas for trips, as well as writing and resting times. Things fell into place after a few weeks. Instead of spending my mornings and afternoons writing and reading, I started walking in those times, through forests, parks, along canals and the many lakes surrounding the city. Writing was what I did afterwards, when it grew darker and many people were finishing their work days. I had never been an afternoon and evening writer – now I came to love using these more quiet hours for the tricky task of knotting and unraveling my brain's synapses so that they would end up telling me something meaningful. I also became a dancer again, having given up on party life long ago for several reasons. Strangely and unexpectedly, the final phase of my PhD put me in a state of mind that saw the madness and singularity of revision and final-paragraph writing blending well with the ecstacy of electronic music and clubbing. Still, while writing these pages, I am experiencing the most bizarre feelings caused by the excitement and fear of finishing this book. I am elevated by a certain level of exhaustion that culminates into a feeling of subtle eurphoria – walking the through the

woods, writing at my desk, dancing at night sometimes; no matter what I do, I always feel a bit out of touch with reality, levitating just slightly above ground, while maintaining sharp senses and hyperemotional awareness and also longing for silence among and solitude from human interaction. I just recently re-read Hélène Cixous' book on creative writing, and I keep hearing her words while writing these reflections (Cixous 1993: 65): "Writing is not arriving; most of the time it's not arriving. One must go on foot, with the body. One has to go away, leave the self. How far must one not arrive in order to write, how far must one wander and wear out and have pleasure? One must walk as far as the night. One's own night."

Right now, I think I know what she means by "not arriving" – it is this feeling of not quite having been able to accomplish everything I set out to do, going over and over the text, changing a few things, reconsidering metaphors, even results sometimes – it is a feeling of finalising a book that is complete as much as it is incomplete. The feeling of walking one's night is opening up oneself in the unfolding of pages. I have tried, often failed and yet sometimes felt like walking this night. I have chosen a style of writing that is personal, that involves me in the analysis as an active part, speaking first of all for myself and suggesting that this autoethnographic perspective is also relevant to a broader audience. I have walked my own night, not on every page but in enough sentences to wonder about the vulnerability of myself as writer. It is a scary experience for a shy person; I was intimidated by my openness – sometimes that led me to cut out a few passages, while some of them stayed. I certainly have wanted to keep trying, living up to my politics of touch, vulnerability and movement. I kept walking. In

the same text, shortly before the passage quoted above, Cixous writes that a writer is always also a traveller, someone who wears their shoes out many times. I have walked off my shoes' soles in these past years, wandering through tales as if they were secret gardens, opening doors in films that lead into wonderous fields – and yet, I still feel like I have not walked far enough. I will have to find myself a new pair of shoes and look for more strange things to wonder about.

NOTES

1 It is a binary language paradigm in English as much as in my first language, German. Many other languages speak a similarly binary grammar, or also enable far fewer gender binary possibilities of direct and indirect address.

2 For further discussions on gender-neutral pronouns see the well substantiated wikipedia entry, available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender-specific_and_gender-neutral_pronouns#Historical_and_dialectal_gender-neutral_pronouns, http://genderneutralpronoun.wordpress.com/, as well as an interview with performers Rae Spoon and Ivan E. Coyote (Mychajlowycz 2014). Available online at: http://www.chartattack.com/features/interviews/2014/04/25/rae-spoon-gender-failure/

3 This first fictionalised conversation between the characters is based on quotes from the films *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005) with character Kitten, *Ma vie en rose* (1997) with character Ludo, *The Crying Game* (1992) with character Dil, *Romeos* (2011) with character Lukas, *Transamerica* (2005) with character Bree, and *Boys don't Cry* (1991) with character Brandon. In the later Interludes between chapters, the continued conversation between different trans characters will not be quotations but imaginary scripts.

4 This term refers not only to intersectionality (see footnote 22, page 224) but also to the feminist physicist Karen Barad's term, intra-action (2003), and thus to the co-constitutive and entangled relationalities of social categories.

5 I elaborated more on these categories of positioning ("transfeminist", etc.) in the "Note on Transing Terminology" at the beginning of the dissertation.

6 Entrants is part of a novel terminology that I have developed in order to shift the term "viewer" into a non-ocularcentric format, which I explain in more detail in the section called "The Entrant".

7 I de-capitalise the adjectives "westernised" and "euroamerican" in order to de-centralise and deconstruct their position of privilege. However, in terms that are purely geographical, such as "Western European", I have retained the conventional capitalisation.

8 For further discussions on the terminological delimitations of transgender, transsexuality and trans, see Feinberg 1998; Halberstam 1998; Prosser 1998; Namaste 2000; Stryker 2004; 2006a, Stone 2006; Whittle 2006; Valentine 2007; Stryker/Currah/Moore 2008.

9 Some also prefer to write trans* or trans- or trans' – depending on the political and/or national context. These terms all include a critique of this divide between transsexuality and transgender and open up space for different trans positionings.

10 In relation to trans* or transgender I think that a reappropriation together with Sandy Stone's "posttransexual" (2006) is just as appropriate and also quite important as, in many contexts, the term transsexual is much better known than transgender. A self-positioning as transsexual in many ways "rings more bells" in people and at the same time can also challenge and disrupt their stereotypical understanding of it (given the circumstance that it is a vaguely safe environment to make such positionings and claims).

11 I am critical of discussions that link trans or transgender to a fluid position that is often also transphobically equated with privilege and contrasted with a delimitation of trans*sexuality* as more "serious" and disadvantaging in comparison to the assumed flexibility of a trans*gender* position. This discussion has been led, among others, by Jay Prosser (1998) and Judith Jack Halberstam (1998) and also taken up by Jonathan Williams (20011).

12 I have already explained this pronoun use in the first pages of the thesis but just to emphasise in order to avoid misunderstandings, writing gender-neutral pronouns for Hazel Freeman could easily be mis-read as a "transing" of Freeman. This is not the intention here; these pronouns are "neutral" in the sense that I use them when either the author prefers them or I am not informed about the author's pronoun choice (which is also sometimes independent of their gender identity).

13 In paraphrasing other people's work on cinema I will use their terminology, as in this case, where Jonathan Williams uses "viewer"; otherwise I will use my own terminology. Due to my investment in multi-sensorial cinema theory, I have chosen the term entrant and explain it in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

14 Film scholar Helen Hok-Sze Leung has stressed the potential of reading, for example, films formerly received as queer, gay or lesbian themed as trans (2012). Anthony Wagner is performing such a transing reading with

the Alien films (forthcoming).

15 I write in English here, my first language is German, and these, as well as other Western and Central European languages, are the ones that I address here as grammatically gender binary. I am aware that many languages function without the same strict grammatical gender binary appellations as those that exist in German or also French, e.g. through a unisex pronoun or multiple pronoun possibilities. English also offers a few linguistic possibilities for gender-non-specific address such as the singular, informal "they" and "them" as well as the new inventions of "hir" and "ze".

16 Some films, such as *By Hook or by Crook*, are trans community productions, *Boys don't Cry* was a low-budget production, a queer community located film by a lesbian filmmaker which circulated widely and became one of the most well-known trans films in Europe and North America. *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* is cis-gay filmmaker John Cameron Mitchell's low-budget production, and *The Crying Game* and *Breakfast on Pluto* were made by cis director Neil Jordan with larger-scale funding and high circulation. Asian productions, such as *Beautiful Boxer* or *Cheonhajangsa Madonna*, or films from South America, such as *The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros* and *Elvis é Madona*, had low budgets or medium-scale funding and circulated in Europe and North America only at film festivals and not in regular cinema programmes.

17 I write sex/gender system with a slash primarily to highlight the entanglement of the physical body and gender identity. These elements are not independently acting units that can be dissected, which would easily feed into the idea of the Cartesian subject in which the body is treated as a "container". I will continue to mostly speak of gender embodiment in this text, which always includes identity and its interrelatedness with embodiment.

18 *XXY* (2007) has a similar take but the teenage character's embodiment is intersex and not trans male identified even though the character who has taken hormone blockers for testosterone production stops taking these and can be read as approaching a male transition.

19 As an extension of Judith Jack Halberstam's "knowing audiences" of trans films (Halberstam 2005: 80), trans scholar Jonathan Williams argues for a "knowing reader" of trans films whose collective sense of being at risk interacts with their subjectivity as trans entrants (Williams 2011: 111).

20 It would be interesting here to further investigate the differences between the representations of trans femininity and trans masculinity in films.

As trans masculinity seems to be negotiated differently in a cisheteronormative context, often connected to sexualised violence, the female trans characters appear to be more strongly linked to dynamics of spectacle and ridicule. This is an observation relating to cinematic representation. In non-cinematic reality sexualised violence seems to affect all gender dissident position equally.

21 Another debate that has recently gained increasing media attention and sparked a debate on trans visibility in popular culture is the absence of trans actors from cinema, or at least, from Trans Cinema (Rachel 2014; Ulaby 2014). This debate began especially in relation to the recent *Dallas Buyers Club* (2013) and the cis male actor Jared Leto's transmisogyny in interviews and his speech at the Golden Globe awards. One of his most strongly outspoken opponents is the trans woman and actress Cox Laverne from the Netflix series *Orange is the New Black* (2013). This series is one of the rare examples of the casting of a trans actress. Also in the independent film production *Gun Hill Road* (2011), the trans female character is played by the trans actress Harmony Santana. Interestingly, some female roles are cast with a cis male actor (*The Crying Game*, 1992), and others with cis female actors (*Transamerica*, 2005). The same is true for the actors and actresses chosen for male roles in Trans Cinema. Film scholar Helen Hok-Sze Leung argues that a cis female actor for the role of a trans woman in film at least acknowledges the diegetic ambitions of the character (Leung 2012: 188). I will not go deeper into this debate now. I would like to do this at a later point as part of my post-doctoral research, as this discussion links to important issues such as authenticity, essentialism, access and casting politics as much as a general enactment of trans politics within popular culture.

22 Intersectionality in my understanding refers to the co-constitutive factors of different social categories that stand in relation to oppression, discrimination and privilege. I have already mentioned earlier that the fusion with the term intra-action emphasises this aspect of the co-constitutive labour within and among categorisations. Feminist scholar Nina Lykke (2010a) has activated Barad's term of intra-action in order to refer "to the ways in which gender intra-acts with race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality [and among others] class" (Lykke 2006: 152). Feminist scholar Magdalena Górska's forthcoming dissertation is making new contributions to the field by also problematising the re-categorising effects of intersectional approaches and developing her own conceptual interventions. Her research deconstructs the idea of categorical

entanglements and discusses intersectionality not only through categories and identities but also through processualities and the materialising effects of bodily or social practices (Górska, 60% seminar paper). It is important to keep in mind that intersectionality as a concept is not always critical of hierarchical relationships (Erel et al. 2008: 275). Feminist scholar and linguist Lann Hornscheidt has also developed the term "interdependencies" as a critical reformulation of intersectionality, pointing exactly towards the co-constitutive aspect of categories (Hornscheidt 2007: 67). Ze also stresses how intersectionality is not only a methodological tool but in the process of its institutionalisation it also became a paradigm that does not always include a reflexive approach to hierarchies and power relations (Hornscheidt 2009). Górska's intervention responds to these critiques and problematises a depoliticised notion of intersectionality while emphasising its critical perspective by discussing it not only as an epistemological concept but equally as an ontological one (Górska, forthcoming PhD dissertation). Intersectionality became known as a conceptual term in the late 1980s and was first suggested by feminist law scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (Crenshaw 1989). While this approach to identity categories as differentiated and constituted through various social, cultural, economic and political conditions and experiences was not new at that time, the term itself was a new label for such conceptualisations.

23 Alaimo refers to "trans-corporeality" through a temporal frame of space-time that is shared by human bodies and their inseparability from "nature". She refers to the trans- in trans-corporeality as also being a movement across "territories of material and discursive, natural and cultural, biological and textual" modes of analysis (Alaimo 2008: 238). I shift the meaning of Alaimo's trans-corporeality towards not only a shared trope between human and nature, but also between objects and bodies and I consider her notion of trans-corporeality to be useful for a phenomenological approach to embodiment and its mutual existence with space, time, inanimate and animate beings and objects.

24 In the field of trans studies an extensive and complex debate exists about the overlaps and oppositions between queer and trans politics. A central critique in regard to the way in which queerfeminist studies approach trans feeds into (from a trans perspective) a fetishisation of the non-passing trans subject and polarises it against the assumed "normativity" and inflexibility of the passing trans person (Namaste 2000; Hines 2006; Prosser 1998; Stryker

2004).

25 Identity politics are problematic as they produce sameness where multiple differences exist, yet they also "make resistance possible but always fail to identify accurately" (Alcoff 2000). Their homogenising effects need to be continuously recognised and revised; in addition the ongoing in- and exclusions that take place through the formation of social entities such as "woman", "gay", or "trans" need be taken into account. A first strong critique was articulated by the Combahee River Collective, who challenged the "Second Wave" feminist movement for formulating the subject of feminism as white and middle class, unifying the existing diversity of women through the identity category "woman" (Combahee River Collective 1979).

26 Thanks to Eliza Steinbock for supporting me in the search for a term that could encompass these different structures of limitation towards trans embodiment, in particular film scenes, and for suggesting the term constraint.

27 Thank to Tove Solander who, through her own recent work on sensory theory in relation to the author and artist Shelley Jackson (2013), has challenged and very much inspired my thoughts and writing on Trans Cinema.

28 Negative or violent scenes can also on occasion be experienced as pleasant, for example, as Williams argues through one of his interview participants, when these sequences are pedagogical for trans people and inform them about risk (William 2011: 112). Such scenes can also be important for non-informed audiences. As film scholar Katherina Lindner argues in relation to lesbian representations in cinema, if lesbian embodiment is embedded in scenes of constraint, then the encounter with such stories in cinematic representations can also be sensed as satisfactory as cinema presents a public platform which can provide the opportunity for public awareness and a potentially growing sensibility (Lindner 2012).

29 This is in fact a tricky argument as transgender is important as an identity category but it also needs to be critical of the exclusions and inclusions that identity categories produce. I render it here as an open notion which is processual and can include different positions and embodiments that link to gender transgression but which is also at the same time a very particular term, a "strategic" identity category that defines a very specific set of bodily practices and a politically distinct position in order to critique the multiple forms of exclusion and discrimination that trans positions experience in contemporary euroamerican contexts.

30 The term "imaginary" refers to the definition of cultural imaginaries as "the points of exchange between fantasy imagery and discursive bodies". At these points "cultural communities (…) continually reinvent themselves, and (…) inflect identity formation" (Åsberg 2009: 97; Lykke 2002: 141). The cultural imaginaries are places of discursive and imaginary exchange as well as reflexivity.

31 This means to a certain degree addressing a trans entrant not as an essentially trans-embodied entrant but as inhabiting an entrant situation that transes the embodiment of all its entrants in the moment of engagement with the exit scapes. My entrance here finds echoes in film scholar Jackie Stacey's audience research on the female "spectator" and their affinities to female Hollywood stars. Instead of investigating lesbian "spectators", she inspects the spawned homoeroticism for the "spectators" regardless of their sexual orientation (Stacey 1994).

32 Rosi Braidotti is not a philosopher known for her transaffirmative politics, yet I find her writing in so many other respects very important and supportive for thinking about trans embodiment, attachments and futurity. I hope she will revise her opinions and surrender to a theory that affirms not only life but also trans embodiments as an important part of it.

33 I approach space and time as always being intra-connected in my writing and here I am following Karen Barad (2007) as well as Doreen Massey's arguments on spacetime (1992), which I will discuss in more detail in the last analytical chapter.

34 The term intra-action is taken from queer feminist physicist Karen Barad's philosophical framework. She contrasts intra-action with the term "interaction" which in her understanding reinscribes the binary and detached relationship of analysis, apparatus and "object". Intra-activity explicitly speaks of the mutual co-constitutiveness of reality and interpretation (Barad 2001: 97; 104; 106).

35 Williams analysed different anthologies to determine their approach to Trans Cinema as queer film studies readers could be a location for publications on Trans Cinema. He came to the conclusion that these anthologies only marginally included trans films in their chapters, often erasing the trans embodiment of the characters and usually decontextualising them from a wider frame of trans studies (Willliams 2011: 5; 7). He analysed the volumes *New Queer Cinema* (Aaron 2004), *Queer Cinema: The Film Reader* (Benshoff and

Griffin 2006), *Independent Queer Cinema: Reviews and Interviews* (Kramer 2006), *British Queer Cinema* (Robin Griffiths 2006), *Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in Americ*a (Benshoff and Griffin 2006) and *Queer Cinema in Europe* (Robin Griffiths 2008). However, I would like to add that Jackie Stacey and Sarah Street's anthology *Queer Screen* (2007) is an exception with its inclusion of several articles on the *Boys don't Cry* debate. They affirm trans film studies as a potential part of queer film studies in their affirmative statement on how the discussion of trans representation in films "marks the arrival of 'trans' debates and 'trans' theory within queer film studies" (Stacey/ Street 2007: 13).

36 Thanks to Renate Lorenz for pointing me towards Irit Rogoff's notion of implicatedness and supporting my idea of the entrant as a non-optical notion of film engagement. In addition, reading her book *Queer Art: A Freak Theory* (2012) has contributed in many ways to my thoughts on the affects of the exit scapes.

37 In the discussion of already existing approaches to cinema, such as those by Marks or Barker and Sobchack, I will use their choice of terminology, which also means including their own terms for entrant: "viewer" or "spectator".

38 Thanks to Doro Wiese for her support, her ideas on the cinema of the senses and for pointing me towards this track of feminist film theory (2003; 2012).

39 I approach discourses here through a Haraway-influenced paradigm as "material-semiotic practices through which objects of attention and knowing subjects are both constituted" (Haraway 1997: 218).

40 Karen Barad contrasts intra-action with the term "interaction" which in her understanding reinscribes the binary and detached relationship of analysis, apparatus and "object". Intra-activity explicitly speaks of the mutual co-constitutiveness of reality and interpretation.

41 The following Interlude dialogues are fictionalised scripts between the characters, namely Bree (*Transamerica*, 2005); Brandon (*Boys don't Cry*, 1999); Hedwig (H*edwig and the Angry Inch*, 2001), Kitten (*Breakfast on Pluto*, 2005), and Dil (*The Crying Game*, 1992).

42 Both terms are based on the online etymology dictionairy. Available online at: http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search =contagion&searchmode=none; http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ contagion and http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=contact

43 Thanks to Renate Lorenz for our continuing discussions on queer politics, film-making practices, dance, life and the future, as well as many other things. I owe her this reference on Rae Beth Gordon as well as many other trajectories of thought in this book.

44 Mark Franko's *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body* (1993) provides further examples of the dancing body in Baroque times.

45 The characters are from the following films: Brandon (*Boys don't Cry*, 1999); Dil (*The Crying Game*, 1992) and Elisabeth (*Ma vie en rose,* 1997)

46 This quote is a comment from Mick, the teenage tomboy character in Carson McCuller's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* (1993, orig. 1940). Mick searches for music to listen to, as it helps her to elevate herself into a different world and a different emotional space. Music is her hideout. She composes a song by herself, which she titles "This thing I want, I know not what" – the quote at the top of the page is her own description of this song (p. 288).

47 Venus de Mars in an interview in *Riot Acts: Flaunting Gender Deviance in Music Performance* (2010), a documentary film about transgender musicians in the United States by director Madsen Minax.

48 Thanks to Fender Schrade in particular for supporting my work in this chapter by discussing the possibilities of sound analysis with me and stirring many of my thoughts in relation to trans, sound and music.

49 All characters in the analysed films are able to hear with their ears, yet I find it important to also deconstruct it as a privilege and thus I developed the concept of attentive sensibility in order to have a critical term to approach this sense. In the following discussion in this chapter I will nevertheless often write exclusively about hearing as this is what the characters are represented as doing.

50 Mermaids also have great significance in contemporary trans activism as, for example, in the British youth organisation Mermaidsuk.org.uk, which makes reference to this cultural iconography.

51 Castrati were castrated children at birth signified as male. The surgery prevented the change of vocal range during puberty. This was a technique used by monarchs to produce high voices for the operas. Castrati existed between the 16th and late 19th centuries in Italy until it became illegal. Castrati children underwent a long and hard training in order to become young composers, musicians and most of all opera singers. Some of them became very well known and found international fame and stardom.

52 Thanks to David Azul for supporting me with references in my first steps into sound studies. Reading his writing in the field of trans studies and voice has been a great inspiration for this chapter (Azul 2008; 2009).

53 Available online at: http://www.transamerica-movie.com/filmkritik/

54 This information used to be on the following link but it is unfortunately not available any longer: http://www.freewebs.com/jayesecrets/cryinginterview.htm

55 An image of her pose and dress with much better framing and resolution can be found here: http://www.buzzfeed.com/rafeposey/21-times-cisgender-actors-played-transgender-characters. It is not a film still but probably a set image.

56 Oh Dong-gu is the trans character in *Cheonhajangsa Madonna* (2006) and Laurence is the main character in *Laurence Anyways* (2012)

57 Lee H. Jones was the alter ego of a speaker engaged by the group for an exhibition at Moderna Museet (the Modern Museum) in Stockholm in 2010. Jones held a manifesto for radical intersectional politics and art activism called *We Will Open a New Front*. Lea Robinson, aka Lee H. Jones, is a friend of Föreningen JA!, an actor, and assistant director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the manager of LGBTQAA Programming and Advising at Columbia University, New York City (available online at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hd1nbgpGEfY). The poem in the Interlude is called "The gleam of an heroic act". In: The Poems of Emily Dickinson, Harvard University Press, 1999, No. 1687.

58 I had a discussion about hearing as a sense that not everyone has. In this chapter I would also like to be sensitive to a privileging of ableist notions. However, I am discussing seeing and visibility here; none of the characters mentioned in this chapter have visual impairments.

59 I write about this in more detail in the preceding chapter when I discuss the sense of listening and the practice of attentiveness. Trans is often not a visible position, and when it is, that position is mostly rendered as non-normative or unintelligible.

60 Available online at: http://womenshistory.about.com/od/quotes/a/madonna.htm.

61 I decided here to not delve into the meaning of fairy as a synonym for a feminine gay man, an association relevant since the beginning of the 20th century. I think discussing the fairy figure here along those lines would involve reading Oh Dong-gu as gay rather than trans despite the fact that fairy relates

to masculine femininity. For this particular chapter, I find this meaning less interesting for the debate on trans imaginaries. More on the convergence of fairy and gayness here: http://www.qualiafolk.com/2011/12/08/fairy/ .

62 The fairy as a supranatural being has a much longer history and a much more ambivalent and complex connotation than how it later became globalised through Disney films. Only since the mid-19th century have fairies become more strongly rendered as human-shaped, female-bodied creatures coded as harmless and cute; they have earlier also had malicious and evil connotations in their interactions with human beings: http://www.qualiafolk.com/2011/12/08/fairy/ .

63 This queering of time becomes also a transing of time in particular when thinking of gender transition not as a crossing from one side to another – as often conventionally understood – but actually as an away from (Enke 2012: 5) a certain temporal moment of definition, the moment of gender assignment at birth. Transitions and gender redefinitions also do not in many cases follow linear movements but hold a place for ambivalence, lapses, returns, new starts.

64 Massey elaborates how political scientist Ernesto Laclau approaches space as stasis, while literary scholar Fredric Jameson renders it as chaotic depthlessness. Both contradicting positions value space as negative and contrast it with the dynamics and movement of "time". Laclau states temporality as that which "must be conceived as the exact opposite of space" (Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Times*, p. 41, quoted in Massey 1992: 71).

65 I wrote this section after I presented the first ideas of this chapter at the Queer Seminar series at Stockholm University, October 2012. Discussing many aspects of this chapter with the seminar participants helped to focus this chapter. Thanks especially to Janne Bromseth, Ingrid Ryberg, Katarina Sandström and Signe Bremer.

66 Trans embodiment is often also used in dominant discourses as a stakeholder for either fluidity and flexiblity of embodiment or else its rigidity and stasis. Trans studies seek to problematise and dissolve this polarisation (Halberstam 2005: 18ff.).

67 In: *Always Coming Home,* Ursula LeGuin, 1985.

68 Ursula LeGuin introduces this poem and its background in a lecture held at the University of Berkeley, 2013. The video is available at: http://townsendcenter.berkeley.edu/media/ursula-k-le-guin-writer.

69 C. P. Cavafy wrote this poem in 1910 and titled it *Ithaka.* It draws

symbolically on Odysseus' journey using the trope of travel to speak about life as a journey, and among many things, the experiences of joy and the acquisition of knowledge. Together with Ursula LeGuin's poem, Cavafy's *Ithaka* is briefly discussed on http://stevemasover.blogspot.de/2013/03/ursula-le-guin-visits-uc-berkeley.html.

70 (Thank you, Cissi!)

71 In: *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, Hélène Cixous, 1993, p. 64

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aaron, Michele, 2001, "Pass/Fail: The *Boys Don't Cry* Debate", *Screen*, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 92–96.

Aaron, Michele, 2004, "The New Queer Spectator". In: Michele Aaron (ed.) *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp. 187–200.

AG Einleitung, 2011, "Feminismus". In: AK Feministische Sprachpraxis (eds) *Feminismus schreiben lernen*. Frankfurt/Main: Brandes & Apsel, pp. 12–56.

Ahmed, Sara, 1998, *Differences that Matter: Feminist Theory and Postmodernism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ahmed, Sara, 2004, *The Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ahmed, Sara, 2006, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ahmed, Sara, 2010, *The Promise of Happiness.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Aizura, Aren Z., 2012a, "Transnational Transgender Rights and Immigration Law". In: Finn Anne Enke (ed.) *Transfeminist Perspectives in and beyond Transgender and Gender Studie*s. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 133–150.

Aizura, Aren Z., 2012b, "The Persistence of Transgender Travel Narratives". In: Trystan T. Cotten (ed.) *Transgender Migrations: The Bodies, Borders, and Politics of Transition*". London: Routledge, pp. 139–156.

Aizura, Aren, 2006, "Of Borders and Homes: The Imaginary Community of (Trans)Sexual Citizenship", *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 289–309.

Alaimo, Stacey, 2008, "Trans-corporeal Feminisms and the Ethical Space of Nature". In: Stacey Alaimo and Susan Hekman (eds) *Material Feminisms*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 237–264.

Alcoff, Linda Martín, 2000, "Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?" In: Paula Moya and Michael Hames-Garcia (eds) *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory*

and the Predicament of Postmodernism, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 312–344. Available online at: http://alcoff.com/content/afraidid.html#footnote22

Appadurai, Arjun, 2006, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy". In: Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Doublas M. Keller (eds) *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*. Victoria: Blackwell, pp. 584–603.

Åsberg, Cecilia, 2014a, "Resilience Is Cyborg: Feminist Clues to a Post-Disciplinary Environmental Humanities of Critique and Creativity", *Resilience: Journal of Environmental Humanities* 2014, No. 1, pp. 5–7.

Åsberg, Cecilia, 2014b, "Imagining Posthumanities, Enlivening Feminisms". In: Iris van der Tuin and Bolette Blaagaard (eds) *The Subject of Rosi Braidotti*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 92–101.

Åsberg, Cecilia and Jennifer Lum, 2009, "PharmaAD-ventures: A Feminist Analysis of Pharmacological Imaginary of Alzheimer's Disease", *Body and Society*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 95–117.

Axelsson, Majgull, 2003, *April Witch*. New York: Random House.

Ayers, M. Kathryn, 1997, "The Only Good Woman, Isn't a Woman at all: *The Crying Game* and the Politics of Misogyny", *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 329–335.

Azul, David and Sander Scheidt, 2008, "The Show with the Voice: An [Au]/-[o]-tophonographic Parody", *Forum: Qualititative Social Research*, Vol 9, No. 2. Available online at: http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/409/887

Azul, David, 2009, "My Vibrant Voice Story: Fictorcritical Fragments in Audio and Writing", *Creative Approaches to Research*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 7–20.

Bammer, Angelika, 1991, *Partial Visions: Feminism and Utopia in the 1970s*. New York: Taylor and Francis.

Barad, Karen, 2001, "Getting Real: Technoscientific Practices and the Materialization of Reality", *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 87–128.

Barad, Karen, 2007, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.* Durham/London: Duke University Press.

Barad, Karen, 2011, "Nature's Queer Performativity", *Qui Parle*, Vol. 19, No. 12, pp. 121–158.

Barad, Karen, 2012, "Intra-actions", Interview by Adam Kleinman, *Mousse*

34, pp. 76–81.

Barker, Jennifer M., 2009, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Benshoff, Harry M. and Sean Griffin, 2006, *Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Berlant, Lauren, 2008, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Berlant, Lauren, 2011, *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bless, Torsten, 2011, "Interview: Sabine Bernardi". Available online at: http://www.inqueery.de/kultur/interview-sabine-bernardi

Bloch, Ernst, 1986, *The Principle of Hope*, Vol. 1, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Bollen, Jonathan, 2001, "Queer Kinesthesia: Performativity on the Dance-Floor". In: Jane Desmond (ed.) *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities On and Off the Stage*. Madison: Wisconsin University Press, pp. 285–314.

Bonenfant, Yvon, 2010, "Queer Listening to Queer Vocal Timbres". In: *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 74–80.

Boudry, Pauline and Renate Lorenz (eds), 2011, *Temporal Drag*, (Catalogue), Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz.

Boudry, Pauline and Renate Lorenz, 2010, "Contagious!" Installation. Available online at: http://www.boudry-lorenz.de/contagious/

Bowers, Maggie A., 2004, *Magic(al) Realism*. New York: Routledge.

Braidotti, Rosi, 2006, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Braidotti, Rosi, 2009, "Animals, Anomalies, and Inorganic Others", *PMLA*, Vol. 124, No. 2, pp. 526–532.

Brandstetter, Gabriele, 2008, "Swarms and Enthusiasts: Transfers in/as Choreography." In: *Parallax*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 92–104.

Brody, Jennifer Devere, 2002, "Boyz Do Cry: Screening History's White Lies", *Screen*, Vol. 43, No. 1, pp. 91–96.

Butler, Judith, 1990, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith, 1993, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith, 2005, *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.

Cartwright, Lisa, 1995, *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cixous, Hélène, 1993, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*. New York: Columbia

University Press.

Classen, Constance, 1997, "Foundations for an anthropology of the senses", *International Social Science Journal*, No. 153, pp. 401–412.

Combahee River Collective, 1979, "The Combahee River Collective: A Black Feminist Statement," In: Zillah R. Eisenstein (ed.) *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*. New York: Monthly Review Press, pp. 362–372.

Connor, Steven, 2000, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*. London: Oxford University Press.

Cotten, Trystan T. (ed.), 2012, *Transgender Migrations: The Bodies, Borders, and Politics of Transition*. New York: Routledge.

Cramerotti, Alfredo, 2011, "The tranformation of curating: Three Terms". Available online at: http://alcramer.net/library/file/Switch_extract_Alfredo%20Cramerotti.pdf

Crawford, Lucas, 2008, "Transgender without Organs? Mobilizing a Geo-Affective Theory of Gender Modification". In: Pailsey Currah, Lisa-Jean Moore and Susan Stryker (eds) *Trans-. Women Studies Quarterly (WSQ)*, Fall/Winter 2008, pp. 127–143.

Crawford, Lucas, 2012, "Transgender Movement(s) and Beating the Straight Flush: Building an Art of Trans Washrooms". In: Trystan T. Cotten (ed.) *Transgender Migrations: The Bodies, Borders, and Politics of Transition*. London: Routledge, pp. 59–75.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé, 1989, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics". *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, pp. 139–167.

Cummins, Steve, 2012, "Interview: Five Minutes With... Irish Filmmaker Neil Jordan". Available online at: http://iftn.ie/news/?act1=record&only=1&aid=73&rid=4285314&tpl=archnews&force=1

Currah, Paisley, Susan Stryker and Lisa Jean Moore, 2008, "Introduction: Trans-, Trans, or Transgender?" *Trans -: WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 36. No. 3–4), pp. 12–22.

Cvetkovich, Ann, 2001, "White Boots and Combat Boots: My Life as a Lesbian Go-Go Dancer". In: Jane C. Desmond (ed.), *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities on and off the Stage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 315–348.

Cvetkovich, Anne, 2003, *An Archive of Feeling: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press.

D'haen, Theo, 1995, "Magical realism and Postmodernism: Decentering Privileged Centers". In: Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (eds), *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 191–208.

DeLauretis, Teresa, 1985, "Rethinking Women's Cinema: Aesthetics and Feminist Theory". *New German Critique* 34 (Winter), pp. 154–175.

DeLauretis, Teresa, 1987, *The Technologies of Gender: Essays on Film, Theory, and Fiction.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

DeLauretis, Teresa, 1999, "Oedipus Interruptus". In: Sue Thornham (ed.) F*eminist Film Theory: A Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 83–96.

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari, 2004, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Continuum.

Desmond, Jane C., 2001, "Introduction. Making the Invisible Visible: Staging Sexualities through Dance". In: Jane C. Desmond (ed.) *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities On and off the Stage.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 3–31.

Dinshaw, Carolyn, 2007, "Theorizing Queer Temporalities: A Roundtable Discussion" *GLQ*, Vol. 13, No. 2–3, pp. 177–195.

Diprose, Rosalyn, 1994, "Performing Body-Identity", *Writings on Dance* 11–12, pp. 6-17.

Doane, Mary Anne, 1999a, "Caught and Rebecca: The Inscription of Femininity as Absence". In: Sue Thornham (ed.) *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 70–82.

Doane, Mary Anne, 1999b, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator". In: Sue Thornham (ed.) *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 131–145.

Dolan, Jill, 2005, *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Dufourmantelle, Anna, 2012, "Rêve - Anne Dufourmantelle est l'invitée de Raphaël Enthoven dans 'Philosophie'", ARTE 2012. Available online at: http://www.arte.tv/fr/cette-semaine/6921930.html

DuttaAhmed, Shantanu, 1998, "'I Thought You Knew!': Performing the Penis, the Phallus, and Otherness in Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game*". *Film Criticism*,

Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 61–73.

Dyer, Richard, 1985, "Entertainment and Utopia". In: Bill Nichols (ed.) *Movies and Methods: An Anthology. Volume 2.* Berkley: University of California Press, pp. 220–232.

Dyer, Richard, 2013, *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations*. New York: Routledge.

Edge, Sarah, 1995, "Women Are Trouble, Did You Know That Fergus?': Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game*". *Feminist Review*, No. 50, pp. 173–86.

Ellis, Carolyn, 2004, *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography.* Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

Engel, Antke, 2002, *Wider die Eindeutigkeit. Sexualität und Geschlecht im Fokus queerer Politik der Repräsentation.* Frankfurt/M.: Campus.

Engel, Antke, 2003, "The Surplus of Paradoxes: Queering Images of Sexuality and Economy". In: Celine-Marie Pacale (ed.) *Social Inequality and the Politics of Representation: A Global Landscape*. London: Sage, pp. 176–188.

Enke, Anne Finn, 2012b, "The Education of Little Cis: Cisgender and the Discipline of Opposing Bodies". In: Anne Finn Enke (ed.) *Transfeminist Perspectives: In and Beyond Transgender and Gender Studies*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 60–77.

Enke, Anne Finn, 2012a, "Introduction: Transfeminist Perspectives". In Anne Finn Enke (ed.) *Transfeminist Perspectives: In and Beyond Transgender and Gender Studies*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 1–15.

Erel, U., Haritaworn, J., Klesse, C., & Rodríguez, G., 2008, "On the Depoliticisation of Intersectionality Talk: Conceptualising Multiple Oppressions in Critical Sexuality Studies". In: A. Kuntsman & E. Miyake (eds), *Out of Place: Interrogating Silences in Queerness/Raciality*. York: Raw Nerve Books.

Feinberg, Leslie, 1998, *Transgender Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Ferri, Anthony J., 2007, Willing Suspension of Disbelief: Poetic Faith in Film. Plymouth: Lexington Books.

Fiske, John, 1992, *Understanding Popular Culture.* New York: Routledge.

Flax, Jane, 1992, The End of Innocence". In: Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (eds) *Feminists Theorize the Political*. New York/London: Routledge, pp. 445–463.

Föreningen JA!, (2010), "We will open a new front". Available online at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hd1nbgpGEfY

Freeman, Elizabeth, 2000, "Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations", *New Literary History. A Journal of Theory and Interpretation*, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 727–744.

Freeman, Elizabeth, 2007, "Introduction", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. Vol. 13, No. 2–3, pp. 159–176.

Freeman, Elizabeth, 2008, "Turn the Beat Around: Sadomasochism, Temporality, History." In: *Differences. A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 32–70.

Freeman, Elizabeth, 2010, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Freeman, Hazel, *Hazel Freeman's International Transgender Film Guide.* Available online at: www.tg-films.info

Fuchs, Cynthia, "One Person Cannot Complete You: Interview with John Cameron Mitchell". Available online at: http://www.popmatters.com/feature/mitchell-john-cameron/

Fuller, Sophie and Lloyd Whitesell (eds.), 2002, *Queer Episodes in Music and Modern Identity.* Champaign: Illinois University Press.

Gay, Roxane, 2014, "'Game of Thrones' glamorizes rape: That was not consent, and rape is not a narrative device." Available online at: http://www.salon.com/2014/04/21/game_of_thrones_and_the_glamorization_of_rape/

Gledhill, Christine and Linda Williams (eds), 2000, *Reinventing Film Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gordon, Rae Beth, 2009, *Dances with Darwin*. London: Ashgate.

Górska, Magdalena, forthcoming, *Breathing Matters: Feminist Material Semiotics of Affect, Knowledge, and Power* (working title). Dissertation, Linköping University.

Grist, Leighton, 2003, "'It's Only a Piece of Meat': Gender Ambiguity, Sexuality, and Politics in *The Crying Game* and *M. Butterfly*", *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 42.No. 4, pp. 3–28.

Halberstam, Judith Jack, 1998, *Female Masculinity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Halberstam, Judith Jack, 2001, "The Transgender Gaze in *Boys Don't Cry*", *Screen*, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 294–298.

Halberstam, Judith Jack, 2005, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives.* New York: New York University Press.

Halberstam, Judith Jack, 2006, "Rethinking Feminist and Queer Theory",

Paper at Conference *Trans/forming Knowledge*, Center for Gender Studies, University of Chicago, February 16–18.

Hall, Stuart (ed.), 1997, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Handler, Kristin, 1994, "Sexing The Crying Game: Difference, Identity, Ethics", *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 31–42.

Haraway, Donn, 2008, *When Species Meet*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Haraway, Donna (Interview by Nicholas Gane), 2006, "When we have never been human, what is to be done?" *Theory Culture Society*, Vol. 23, No. 7-8, pp. 135–158.

Haraway, Donna, 1988, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective", *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 575–599.

Haraway, Donna, 1991, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century". In: Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, pp. 149–181.

Haraway, Donna, 1997, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium: FemaleMan©_Meets_Onco_ Mouse™. Feminism and Technoscience*. New York/ London: Routledge.

Haraway, Donna, 2004, "Cyborgs, Coyotes, and Dogs: A Kinship of Feminist Figurations and There Are always More Things Going on than You Thought! Methodologies of Thinking Technologies." In: Haraway, Donna, *The Haraway Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 321–342.

Hayward, Eva, 2011, "T2=F2M+M2F", In: The Triangle, Vol. 1, No. 10, pp. 7 – 8. Available online at: https://www.academia.edu/473482/T2_F2M_M2F

Hayward, Eva, 2012, "Spiderwomen: Notes on transpositions". In: Tristan T. Cotten (ed.), *Transgender Migrations: The Bodies, Boundaries, and Politics of Transition.* New York: Routledge, pp. 92–104.

Henderson, Lisa, 2001, "The Class Character of *Boys Don't Cry*", *Screen*, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 299–303.

Hermes, Joke, 2005, *Re-reading Popular Culture*, Victoria: Blackwell.

Hines, Sally, 2006, "Whats the difference? Bringing Particularity to Queer Studies of Transgender", *Journal of Gender Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 49–66.

Hird, Myra, 2001, "Appropriating Identity: Viewing Boys Don't Cry", *Inter-*

national Feminist Journal of Politics, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 435–442.

hooks, bell, 1999, "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators". In: Sue Thornham (ed.) F*eminist Film Theory: A Reader*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 307–320.

Hornscheidt, A. Lann, 2009, "Intersectional Challenges to Gender Studies – Gender Studies as Challenge to Intersectionality". In: C. Åsberg, K. Harrison, B. Pernrud, & M. Gustavson (eds.), *Gender Delight: Science, Knowledge, Culture and Writing...for Nina Lykke*. Linköping: Linköping University.

Hornscheidt, Lann, 2005, "GenderPerformance nonverbal: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen. Die Relevanz des ‚Sehens' von ‚Körpersprache' für Genderwahrnehmungen". In: *1-0-1 [one ‚o one] intersex. Das Zwei- Geschlechter-System als Menschenrechtsverletzung*, Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (ed.), Berlin: NGBK, pp. 100–107.

Hornscheidt, Lann A., 2007, "Sprachliche Kategorisierungen als Grundlage und Problem des Redens über Interdependenzen. Aspekte sprachlicher Normalisierung und Privilegierung." In: Lann Hornscheidt, Gabriele Dietze, Kerstin Palm, Katarina Wagenbach (eds.) *Gender als Interdependente Kategorie. Intersectionalität, Diversität, Heterogenität*. Opladen: Budrich, pp. 65–106.

Hornscheidt, Lann, 2012, f*eministische w_orte ein lern-, denk- und handlungbuch zu sprache und diskriminierung, gender studies und femnistischer linguistik.* Frankfurt/ M.: Brandes und Apsel.

Hurd, Mary G., 2007, *Women Directors and their Films*. Westport: Praeger.

Ingram, Gordon Brent, 1997, "Marginality and the Landscapes of Erotic Alien(nations)". In: Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne Marie Bouthillette, and Tolanda Retter (eds), *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance*, Seattle: Bay Press, pp. 27–52.

Irigaray, Luce, 1974, *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Ithaka: Cornell University Press.

Jagose, Annamarie, 1996, *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. New York: New York University Press.

Jameson, Frederic, 1986, "On Magic Realism in Film", *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 301–325.

Jay, Martin, 1988, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity". In: Hal Foster (ed.) *Vision and Visuality.* Seattle: Bay Press, pp. 3–23.

Jay, Martin, 1993, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jenkins, Henry, 2000, "Reception Study and Audience Research: The Mystery of the Vampire's Kiss". In: Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (eds.) *Reinventing Film Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 165–182.

Jones, Amelia, 2003, *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Jones, Amelia, 2012, *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts.* New York: Routledge.

Jones, Jordy, 2006, "Gender without Genitals: Hedwig's Six Inches". In: Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (eds) *The Transgender Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 449–267.

Kam, Wai Kui, 2009, "20 Jahre Trans- und Intersex Themen im Programm der Lesbisch-Schwulen Filmtage Hamburg". In: Dorothée von Diepenbroick and Skadi Loist (eds), *BildSchön. 20 Jahre Lesbisch-Schwule Filmtage Hamburg*, Hamburg: Männerschwarm, pp. 252–257.

Koivunen, Anu, 2010a ,"Yes We Can? The Promises of Affect for Queer Scholarship", *Lambda Nordica*, Vol. 15, No. 3–4, pp. 40–64.

Koivunen, Anu, 2010b, "An Affective Turn? Reimagining the subject of feminist theory". In: Marianne Liljeström and Susanna Paasonen (eds), *Disturbing Differences: Working with Affect in Feminist Readings,* London: Routledge, pp. 8–28.

Koobak, Redi, 2013, *Whirling Stories: Postsocialist Feminist Imaginaries and the Visual Arts*. Linköping: Linköping University Press.

Kotsopoulos, Aspasia and Josephine Mills, 1994, "The Crying Game: Gender, Genre and 'Postfeminism'". In: *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*. Available online at: http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC39folder/CryingGameK-M.html

Kristeva, Julia, 1982, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (trans. Leon S. Roudiez), New York: Columbia University Press.

Lash, Scott and John Urry, 1994, *Economies of Signs and Space,* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Laws, Catherine, 2010, Editorial, *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, Vol. 15, No. 33, pp. 1–3.

Leung, Helen Hok-Sze, 2001, "Queerscapes in Contemporary Hong Kong Cinema", *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 423–447.

Leung, Helen Hok-Sze, 2012, "Trans on Screen", In: Howard Chiang (ed.) *Transgender China*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 183–198.

Liljeström, Marianne and Susanna Paasonen, 2010, "Feeling Differences – Affect and Feminist Reading". In: Marianne Liljeström and Susanna Paasonen (eds) *Disturbing Differences: Working with Affect in Feminist Readings*. London, Routledge, pp. 1–7.

Lindner, Katharina, 2012, "Questions of Embodied Difference: Film and Queer Phenomenology", *Necsus – European Journal for Media Studies*, Autumn No 12, 2012. Available online at: http://www.necsus-ejms.org/questions-of-embodied-difference-film-and-queer-phenomenology/

Lorde, Audre, 1984, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power". In: Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider,* Berkeley: Crossing Press.

Lorenz, Renate, 2012, *Queer Art: A Freak Theory*, Bielefeld: Transcript.

Lukic, Jasmina and Adelina Sanchez Espinoza, 2011, "Feminist Perspectives on Close Reading". In: Gabriele Griffin, Nina Lykke and Rosemarie Buikema (eds), *Theories and Methodologies in Postgraduate Feminist Research: Researching Differently*, New York: Routledge, pp. 105–119.

Lykke, Nina, 2002, "Feminist Cultural Studies of Technoscience and Other Cyborg Studies: A Cartography", *The Making of European Women's Studies* Vol. 4, pp. 133–143.

Lykke, Nina, 2006. "Intersectionality – A Useful Concept for Feminist Theory?" In: T.-S. Pavlidou (ed.), *Gender Studies: Trends/Tensions in Greece and Other European Countries,* Thessanoliki: Zitis, pp. 151–160.

Lykke, Nina (2010a) *Feminist Studies: A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing*. New York: Routledge.

Lykke, Nina (2010b), "Welcome to the Conference Transgender Studies and Practices: Building Up the Field in a Nordic Context", *Graduate Journal of Social Sciences, special issue transgender studies and practices. Building up the field in a Nordic context*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 19–24.

Lykke, Nina, 2014 (forthcoming), "Passionate Disidentifications as Intersectional Writing Strategy." In: Nina Lykke (ed.), *Writing Academic Texts Differently: Intersectional Feminist Methodologies and the Playful Art of Writing.* New York: Routledge.

Manning, Erin, 2007, *Politics of Touch*, Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.

Marks, Laura U., 2000, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Marks, Laura U., 2002, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Marks, Laura U., 2008, "Thinking Multisensory Culture", *Paragraph*, Vol. 31, No.2, pp. 123–137.

Martin, Fran and Josephine Ho (eds), 2006, special issue on "trans/Asia, trans/gender", *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 185–187.

Massey, Doreen, 1992, "Politics and Space/Time", *New Left Review*, Vol. 1, No. 196, pp. 65–84.

Massumi, Brian, 2002, "The Autonomy of Affect" In: Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Affect, Movement, Sensation*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 23–42.

McClintock, Anne, 1995, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Imperial Contest*. New York: Routledge.

McCuller, Carson, 1993, *The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter*. New York: The Modern Library.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 2005, *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.

Minh-Ha, Trinh T., "Inappropriate/d Artificiality", Interview with Marina Grzinic. Available online at: http://trinhminh-ha.squarespace.com/inappropriated-articificiality/

Mirzoeff, Nicholas, 2006, "On Visuality", *Journal of Visual Culture*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 53–79.

Mulvey, Laura, 1975, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", *Screen, Vol.* 16, No. 3, pp. 6–18.

Muñoz, José Esteban, 1999, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Muñoz, José Esteban, 2006, "Thinking Beyond Antirelationality and Antiutopianism in Queer Critique", *PMLA*, Vol. 121, No. 3, pp. 825–826.

Muñoz, José Esteban, 2009, *Cruising Utopia;. The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: New York University Press.

Mychajlowycz, Kasia, 2014, Interview with Rae Spoon and Ivan E. Coyote, "Rae Spoon and Ivan E. Coyote's *Gender Failure* and the danger of 'he' and 'she'". Available online at: http://www.chartattack.com/features/interviews/2014/04/25/rae-spoon-gender-failure/

Namaste, Viviane, 2000, *Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Neuss, Norbert 2002, "Leerstellen für die Fantasie in Kinderfilmen – Fernsehen und Rezeptionsästhetik", *Televizion* 15, 2002. Available online at: http://www.br-online.de/jugend/izi/text/neuss15_1.htm

Nicodemus, Katja, 2006, "Im Schatten der Bombe", *Die Zeit*. Available online at: http://www.zeit.de/2006/43/Korea

Ouzounian, Gascia, 2006, "Embodied Sound: Aural Architectures and the Body", Contemporary Music Review, Vol. 25, No. 1–2, pp. 69–79.

Papenburg, Bettina and Zarzycka, Marta, (eds), 2013, *Carnal Aesthetics: Transgressive Imagery and Feminist Politics*. London: Tauris.

Papenburg, Bettina, 2010, "Touching the Screen, Striding through the Mirror: The Haptic in Film". In: Kiwi Menrath & Alexander Schwinghammer, (eds), *What does a Chameleon look like? Contesting Immersive Cultures*, Cologne: Herbert von Halem, pp. 112–136.

Patel, Geeta, 2007, "Time to tell how to tell the proper time? Finance and Cinema", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2–3, pp. 273–300.

PBS, 1999–2000 "People and events: Stephen Collins Foster, 1826-1864". Available online at: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/foster/peopleevents/p_sfoster.html

Peraino, Judith A., 2003, "Listening to the Sirens: Music as Queer Ethical Practice". In: *GLQ: Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 433–470.

Phillips, John, 2006, *Transgender on Screen*, Hampshire/ New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pidduck, Julianne, 2001, "Risk and Queer Spectatorship", *Screen*, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 97–102.

Plato, 360 BCE, *Symposium*, (translated by Benjamin Jowett). Available online at: http://philosophy.eserver.org/plato/symposium.txt

Pollock, Griselda, 1998, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art*. New York: Routledge.

Pramaggiore, Maria and Tom Wallis, 2005, *Film: A Critical Introduction*. London: Laurence King Publishing.

Probyn, Elspeth, 1996, *Outside Belongings*. London: Routledge.

Probyn, Elspeth, 2005, *Blush: Faces of Shame*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Prosser, Jay, 1998, *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rachel, 2014, "Here's The Real Story of How Oscar Nominee Jared Leto Got Called Out for Transmisogyny at the Virtuosos Awards", Available

online at: http://www.autostraddle.com/heres-the-real-story-of-how-oscar-nominee-jared-leto-got-called-out-for-transmisogyny-at-the-virtuosos-awards-223239/

Rainer, Yvonne, 1965, "No manifesto". Available online at: http://www.1000manifestos.com/yvonne-rainer-no-manifesto/

Raymond, Janice, 1974, *The Transsexual Empire*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Rich, Adrienne, 1986, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence". In: Adrienne Rich, *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979–1985.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Richardson, Laurel, 1997, *Fields of Play: Constructing an Academic Life*. New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press.

Richardson, Laurel, 2007, "Writing: A method of inquiry". In: N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* (2nd ed., pp. 923–948). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rogoff, Irit, 2008, "First Roundtable" (A conversation at Burren College of Art). In: James Elkins and Michael Newman (eds) *The State of Art Criticism.* New York: Routledge, pp. 130–179.

Rouse, Steve, 2005, "Program Note". Available online at: http://www.manhattanbeachmusic.com/html/wayfaring_stranger.html

Ruhlmann, William, 2014, "Review". Available online at: http://www.allmusic.com/album/the-crying-game-sbk-mw0000095128

Ryan, Joelle Ruby, 2009, *Reel Gender: Examining the Politics of Trans Images in Film and Media.* PhD dissertation. Bowling Green State University.

Sandell, Jillian, 2010, "Transnational Ways of Seeing: Sexual and National Belonging in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*", *Gender, Place and Culture*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 231–247.

Sargent, Lyman Tower, 1994, "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited", *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 1–37.

Sargisson, Lucy, 1996, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism.* New York: Routledge.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, 1997, *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings of Fiction*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, 2003, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Sedwick, Eve Kosofsky, 1993, Tendencies. Durham: Duke University Press.

Serano, Julia, 2007, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity.* Berkeley: Seal Press.

Shildrick, Margrit, 2002, *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self.* London: Sage.

Shildrick, Margrit, 2005, "Unreformed Bodies: Normative Anxiety and the Denial of Pleasure", *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 34 No. 3–4, pp. 327–344.

Shildrick, Margrit, 2009, *Dangerous Discourses of Disability, Subjectivity and Sexuality*. New York: Palgrave.

Shor, Naomi, 2007, *Reading in Detail*, New York: Routledge.

Singer, T. Benjamin, 2006, "From the Medical Gaze to *Sublime Mutations*: The Ethics of (Re) Viewing Non-Normative Body Images." In: Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (eds), *The Transgender Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge, pp. 601–620.

Skysquids, 2014, "is genderqueer an appropriation of trans identity and experience?" Available online at: http://skysquids.tumblr.com/post/80953385257/is-genderqueer-an-appropriation-of-trans-identity-and

Smith, Ali, 2007, *Girl Meets Boy: The Myth of Iphis*. Edinburgh: Canongate.

Smith, Nigel M., 2014, "Tilda Swinton Tells SXSW How She Feels About Cinema". Available online at: http://www.indiewire.com/article/tilda-swinton-tells-sxsw-what-cinema-means-to-her-and-its-beautiful

Sobchack, Vivian, 2004, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*. Berkeley: California University Press.

Solander, Tove, 2013, "*Creating the Senses": Sensation in the Work of Shelley Jackson*, Dissertation, Umeå: Umeå University Press.

Spade, Dean, 2013, "Impossibility Now – A Manifesto". Available online at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU8D343qpdE

Spitz, Ellen Handler, 2011, *Illuminating Childhood: Portraits in Fiction, Film, & Drama,* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Spivak, Gayatri, 1987, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Methuen.

Stacey, Jackie and Sarah Street, 2007, "Introduction: Queering Screen". In: Jackie Stacey and Sarah Street (eds), *Queer Screen,* New York: Routledge, pp. 1–18.

Stacey, Jackie, 1994, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship*. New York: Routledge.

Steinbock, Eliza, 2011, *Shimmering Images: On Transgender Embodiment and Cinematic Aesthetics*. PhD dissertation. Amsterdam: University of

Amsterdam/ Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis.

Stone, Roseanne Alluquère "Sandy", 2006, "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto". In: Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (eds), *The Transgender Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 221–235.

Stryker, Susan, 2004, "Transgender Studies: Queer Theory's Evil Twin", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 212–215.

Stryker, Susan, 2006a, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies". In: Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (eds), *The Transgender Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–17.

Stryker, Susan, 2006b (orig. 1994) "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage". In: Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (eds), *The Transgender Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 244–256.

Stryker, Susan, 2011, "Transgender Studies 2.0: New Directions in the Field." Conference Paper, Scandinavian Trans* Studies and Trans* Politics: Rights, Activism, and Studies, December 9+10, 2011, Center for Kønsforskning, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Stryker, Susan, Paisley Currah and Lisa Jean Moore, 2008, "Introduction: Trans-, Trans, or Transgender?" In: Susan Stryker, Paisley Currah and Lisa Jean Moore (eds) *Trans-, Women Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 36, No. 3–4, pp. 11–22.

Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright, 2001, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sullivan, Nikki and Samantha Murray (eds), 2009, *Somatechnics: Queering the Technologisations of Bodies*. London: Ashgate.

Swan, Rachel, 2001, "Review: *Boys Don't Cry*", *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 3, pp. 47–52.

Sypniewski, Holly M., 2008, "The Pursuit of Eros in Plato's *Symposium* and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 558–586.

Turner, Graeme, 1999, *Film as Social Practice*, Oxford: Psychology Press.

Ulaby, Neda, 2014, "On Television, More Transgender Characters Come Into Focus", Available online at: http://www.npr.org/blogs/monkey-see/2014/04/23/306166533/on-television-more-transgender-characters-come-into-focus?sc=tw

Valentine, David, 2007, *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Verwoert, Jan, 2008, "Talk to the Thing". In: James Elkins and Michael Newman (eds) *The State of Art Criticism*. New York: Routledge.

Wagner, Anthony Clair, (forthcoming), *Be(com)ing Other: Monsters, Transsexuals and the Alien Quadrilogy*. Vienna.

Wagner, Anthony Clair, 2010a, "On Elves and Beasts: An Intervention into Normative Imaginaries", *Graduate Journal of Social Sciences, special issue: Transgender studies and practices: Building up the field in a Nordic context*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 44–56.

Wagner, Anthony Clair, 2010b, "Monster or Messenger? – Queer Interventions as a Beast and an Elf", paper delivered at conference *Queer Again? Power, Politics and Ethics*, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany, September 23–25, 2010.

Wagner, Anthony Clair, 2011, "Die Emanzipation der Monster", In: *Kulturrisse* 1/2011. Available online at: http://kulturrisse.at/ausgaben/queere-de-konstruktionen/oppositionen/die-emanzipation-der-monster

White, Patricia, 1999, *Uninvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

White, Patricia, 2001, "Girls Still Cry", *Screen*, Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 217–21.

Whittle, Stephen, 2006, "Foreword". In: Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (eds), *The Transgender Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge, pp. xi–xvi.

Wickman, Jan, 2003, "Masculinity and Female Bodies", *Nora,* Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 40–54.

Wiese, Doro, 2003, "Abschied vom Objekt. Die Kategorien der Feministischen Filmtheorie orientieren sich an klassischen Geschlechterbildern. Ein Plädoyer für neue Perspektiven." *In: Freitag*, 07.02.2003. Available online at: http://www.freitag.de/politik/0307-blickwechsel

Wiese, Doro, 2012, "Interventions and Inventions: Dandy Dust and the Emergence of the Body-Image." In: M. Michaela Hampf und Maryann Snyder-Körber (eds), *Machine: Bodies, Genders, Technologies.* Heidelberg: Winter, pp. 279–296.

Williams, Jonathan, 2011, *Trans Cinema, Trans Viewers*. PhD dissertation. Melbourne: University of Melbourne.

Willox, Annabelle, 2003, "Branding Teena: (Mis)Representations in the Media", *Sexualities: Studies in Culture and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 3–4, pp. 407–25.

Winter, Rainer, 2006, "Raymond Williams, the 'long revolution' and the art of willfulness: Cultural Studies as an analysis of reflexive modernity in

terms of cultural sociology", Paper presented at the Raymond Williams conference in Vienna, May 2006.

Yekani, Elahe Haschemi, 2007, "Transgender-Begehren im Blick. Männliche Weiblichkeiten als Spektakel im Film". In: Robin Bauer, Josch Hoenes und Volker Woltersdorff (eds) *Unbeschreiblich Männlich. Heteronormativitätskritische Perspektiven*. Hamburg: Männerschwarm, pp. 265–278.

Zamora, Lois Parkinson and Wendy B. Faris (eds), 1995, *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Durham: Duke University Press.

FILMOGRAPHY

20 Centimetros (Dir.: Ramon Salazar, ES 2005)
52 Tuesdays (Dir.: Sophie Hyde, AUS 2013)
Beautiful Boxer (Dir.: Ekachai Uekrongtham, TH 2005)
Boys don't Cry (Dir.: Kimberly Pierce, USA 1999)
Breakfast on Pluto (Dir.: Neil Jordan, IR/UK 2005)
By Hook or By Crook (Dir.: Silas Howard/Harry Dodge, USA 2001)
Cheonhajangsa Madonna (Dir.: Hae-jun Lee/Hae-yeong Lee, South Korea 2006)
Elvis and Madonna (Dir.: Marcelo Laffitte, Brazil 2010)
Gun Hill Road (Dir.: Rashaad Ernesto Green, USA 2011)
Hedwig and the Angry Inch (Dir.: John Cameron Mitchell, USA 2001)
Laurence Anyways (Dir.: Xavier Dolan, CAN 2012)
Ma vie en rose (Dir.: Alain Berliner, FR/B/JAP 1997)
Open (Dir.: Jake Yuzna, USA 2010)
Orlando (Dir.: Sally Potter, USA 1992)
Riot Acts: Flaunting Gender Deviance in Music Performance (Dir.: Madsen Minax, USA 2010)
Romeos (Dir.: Sabine Bernardi, GER 2011)
The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros (Dir.: Auraeus Solito, PH 2005)
The Brandon Teena Story (Dir.: Susan Muska, Gréta Olafsdóttir, USA 1998)
The Crying Game (Dir.: Neil Jordan, UK/JPN 1992)
Tomboy (Dir.: Céline Sciamma, FR 2011)
Transamerica (Dir.: Duncan Tucker, USA 2005)
XXY (Dir.: Lucía Puenzo, AR/FR/ES 2007)

trans cinema
AND ITS EXIT SCAPES

Trans embodiment is a growing trope in contemporary film. Particularly since the early 1990s, **trans images** have become more widespread and frequent within **popular culture**. Films such as ***Hedwig and the Angry Inch*** (2001), ***Transamerica*** (2005), ***Romeos*** (2011) and ***Laurence Anyways*** (2012) have become well-known referents for what is here termed **Trans Cinema** and for broader cultural understanding of what it means to live in a **gender-dissident body**.

In conversation with recent **transfeminist** and **queer theory** as well as **cultural studies**, this doctoral thesis by Wibke Straube sets out to investigate the **utopian potential** of Trans Cinema and makes a novel contribution to the emerging research field of **transgender studies**. The book offers an entrance to trans films by mapping out the so-called **"exit scapes"** that appear in scenic moments of **dancing, singing** or **dreaming**. These provide openings for **alternative ways of imagining reality**, and are thus key to the experiencing of **trans-affirmative futures**.

TRANS CINEMA AND ITS EXIT SCAPES is the doctoral dissertation of transfeminist scholar and Berlin-based activist **Wibke Straube**. Straube is also a researcher and teacher at **Tema Genus (Gender Studies)**, Department of Thematic Studies (Tema), **Linköping University**, Sweden.

Linköping University

Linköping Studies in Arts and Science No. 628, 2014

Department of Thematic Studies
Gender Studies
Linköping University
SE-581 83 Linköping, Sweden

www.liu.se