

“Realness is to be able to blend” (Dorian Corey, 1990):

Trans-blending and heteronormativity in popular film.

Katherine McElvenny

Contents Page

“Realness is to be able to blend” (Dorian Corey, 1990): *Trans-blending* and heteronormativity in popular film.

Introduction	3
Chapter 1: <i>Trans-blending</i> and Gender Theory	5
Chapter 2: <i>The Crying Game</i> (Neil Jordan, 1992)	10
Chapter 3: <i>Silence of the Lambs</i> (Jonathan Demme, 1990) and <i>Boys Don't Cry</i> (Kimberly Peirce, 1999)	17
Chapter 4: <i>The Danish Girl</i> (Tom Hooper, 2015)	23
Conclusion	29
Bibliography	34

Introduction

This dissertation is inspired by the documentary *Paris is Burning* (Jennie Livingston, 1990) in which queer and transgender people explain what it is like to experience the need to hide their identity when they step outside of their queer club. Within this documentary, transgender woman Dorian Corey suggests that, “Realness is to be able to *blend*. If you can pass the untrained or even the trained eye and not give away the fact that you are gay, that’s when it’s real” (Dorian Corey in *Paris is Burning*, 1990).¹ Indeed, Corey’s suggestion of *blending* proposes that it is expected of someone in the LGBTQ+ community to have to hide who they truly are so they are safe within heteronormative society. I want to analyse how this notion of *blending* and proposed violence towards LGBTQ+ people are represented in popular fiction films.

Before the 1990s, the film industry almost systematically presented their transgender characters as murderous psychopaths as evidenced in films such as *Glen or Glenda* (Ed Wood, 1953), *Homicidal* (William Castle, 1961) and *Sleepaway Camp* (Robert Hiltzik, 1983). This was until 1992 when B. Ruby Rich joyously propositioned that there was a new wave of cinema, or rather New Queer Cinema. Within this study, Rich discusses how suddenly queer and transgender characters were finally being depicted as attractive. This again peaked my interest regarding the way in which transgender characters are represented on screen and whether after Rich’s proposition these characters were more in line with their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts, or whether not much had changed at all. I will be discussing the representation of transgender characters with words such as ‘fair’, ‘accurate’, ‘authentic’ and ‘progressive’ as to establish how far removed they are from cisgendered, heterosexual characters.

¹ Emphasis mine.

To drive this aim of analysing trans-blending and heteronormativity in popular film I will be utilising Judith Butler's work of 'gender performativity' extensively, evaluating whether her claims that the existence of transgender people proves that gender is not sufficiently stable, can be withheld when in conversation with the rhetoric transgender people voice or whether the very foundations of her arguments are too utopian for the society in which she is trying to forge her propositions.

Within this dissertation, I aim to look at four popular films which all have a transgender character at their centre over two decades: *The Crying Game* (Neil Jordan, 1992), *Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991), *Boys Don't Cry* (Kimberly Peirce, 1999) and *The Danish Girl* (Tom Hooper, 2015). I want to establish how and why these transgender characters are represented in the way that they are and whether this representation changes over time? And should we consider these as "problematic" texts, that is texts that are perpetuating harmful stereotypes surrounding transgender people who no longer *trans-blend* into heteronormative society.

Chapter 1 - *Trans-Blending* and Gender Theory

The concept of gender and what it indeed means has been debated and analysed extensively by a number of scholars to determine both its 'place' and its wider 'effect' on society.² Within this debate contains the distinction between gender and sex. Sex refers to the anatomy of an individual, whereas gender is defined according to Stonewall as, "largely culturally determined" (2017) meaning gender is subject to change based on the society that a person is placed in. For cisgender people, their gender and sex align, but for transgender people, their gender and sex differ.

This view of gender and its separation from sex can be drawn upon from the work of Judith Butler who famously coined the term 'gender performativity' in her seminal book, *Gender Trouble* (1990). Butler proposes the idea that *all* people somehow *perform* their gender and it is in fact the gender in which they perform that becomes their identity, rather than their biological sex. She states, "Gender proves to be a performance - that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing" (1999: 33). For Butler, a person's gender then is constituted by the performance they undertake. Further, whilst Butler believes in the idea that gender is a societal construct, she also insists that sex should be too. She uses transgender people to explain this as she formulates the idea that transgender people's need to transition is perpetuated by the urge to fit into heteronormative society, which in her view means that sex is also socially constructed (J.T. Ton, 2018).

² Some seminal examples of theorists that I will be referring to throughout here are Butler, Connell, de Beauvoir and their respective texts *Gender Trouble* (1990), *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (1987) and *The Second Sex* (1949).

Butler seems to reach this conclusion from the heavy influence of Michel Foucault's work on the body and bodily inscriptions; the proposition that the body was specifically constructed for the purpose of holding its own power. Foucault states that, "Nothing in man [...] - not even his body - is sufficiently *stable* to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men" (1976: 153).³ For Foucault, the body is constructed only by culture, it is subjective to the person who owns it, meaning that there is not one male idealised body that a man can reference. Indeed, this perpetuates the idea that power and the body is arguably individualistic, and it is up to the individual in how they present themselves and their "bodily inscriptions". Butler developed her work on gender based on this premise and argued that these inscriptions have led to the idea of performance, in stating, "the illusion of an inner gender core or substance, inscribed on the surface of the body, is the product of actions that are - 'performative'" (Butler, 1990: 139 cited in Kathleen Ennis, 2008: 68). For Butler, performances are the body's way of producing 'norms'; it is linked to the idea that the body is singular and subjective to the person who holds it as it instructs individual performances as a way of fitting into society.

However, whilst this perhaps seems rather forward thinking in terms of gender politics it may be appropriate to acknowledge that this could in fact belittle the struggles and needs of transgender people. Jay Prosser (1998) creates an analogy which compares the neurological inability to track one's body, called bodily agnosia, to transgender people who feel like they should not have breasts, or should have a penis. For Prosser, people who are transgender have a need for their body and mind to match beyond the means of a rather abstract idea of performance. Whilst this theory discusses the body as if all of its achievements and challenges are inscribed on its surface, this may be a reductionist approach that leaves out a community of people that don't fit the mould.

³ Emphasis mine.

Further, Butler also states that gender is, “a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance” (1990: 25). However, whilst for Butler this confirms the belief that gender is a performance, she is also reducing gender as an essence that can be forged by repeated acts. This gives the impression that people should be categorised in society based on which set of acts they repeat. Whilst this is something that will be unpacked further later, it may be important to acknowledge whether the proposition of gender as a performance is enough when discussing transgender people and their need to transition in relation to their discrimination. For example, within the first case study film, Neil Jordan’s *The Crying Game* (1992) Dil (Jaye Davidson), the film’s transgender female is accepted when she performs as a ‘cisgender woman’, but when her biological sex is revealed, her love interest Fergus immediately assaults her before vomiting in disgust in her bathroom. As the, albeit filmic, example here alludes, for transgender people, they may not be simply accepted for their repeated gendered actions; typically, once their biological sex is revealed they are subjected to abuse. Therefore, whilst the idea of gender as a performance proved to be ground-breaking - once rationalised for the transgender community, Butler’s theory is inherently utopian and not necessarily realistic to the society from which it is forged, that is, transgender people are often discriminated against and rejected for ‘performing’ the same acts as their gender identity.

From this, it may be important to introduce another theorist, R. W. Connell to the discussion. Connell, a sociologist, develops the idea that gender, specifically in terms of social theory is, “not a tightly-knit logical system” (1985: 261). Connell indeed accepts gender as something which is multidimensional and something that changes throughout history. One example of this may be the formalised association that comes with high heeled shoes.

Wearing high heels originally started with men, particularly royalty in the 17th century to represent their high social status (Lisa Wade, 2013), yet in contemporary society they are now indeed worn almost exclusively by women.⁴ This transition then can perhaps signal societies indexical relationship to gender, in this case what was considered masculine attire may now be considered feminine as societies perceptions on gendered divisions (and its requisite 'accoutrements') evolve.

To take this further, I also want to determine the links between what is represented on screen and what is happening within society. Film scholar, Richard Dyer states, "How social groups are treated in life, [...] harassment, self-hate and discrimination...are [...] instituted by representation" (2002: 1). Indeed, for Dyer there is some correlation between filmic representation, that is the way characters are presented on screen and the way real people are being treated in similar circumstances or backgrounds. And so, whilst looking at A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, "It is part of social and legal convention in the United States to discriminate against, ridicule, and abuse transgender people...society blames transgender [...] people for bringing the discrimination and violence on themselves" (Grant, M. Jaime et al 2011: 8). From this proposition that transgender people are to blame for their own discrimination, the following examination will be looking firstly at the way in which Hollywood films respond to the *transitioning* ways in which the media portrays transgender people, whether they are projecting transgender people negatively. Secondly, whether Hollywood cinema is representing transgender people 'fairly' and 'accurately' against their cisgender, straight counterparts or if there is still room for improvement to be made. And finally, I will turn towards an analysis of how each of my case study films conclude, especially for their transgender protagonists/antagonists. Are transgender people always somehow punished for being transgender at the end? And if so

⁴ Although, there has been some recent use from the male gay community.

is it propping the idea that transgender people should see some kind of retribution when they no longer *blend* into the parameters of heteronormative society?

Chapter 2 - *The Crying Game*

This chapter will turn to Neil Jordan's thriller/crime drama, *The Crying Game*. The backdrop of the film revolves around the conflict between the IRA and British army. However, arguably the real battle of the film is a conflict between an acceptance of oneself in around the realms of heteronormative society. Indeed, the characters within this film are perhaps politically and socially making a statement from the outset. Jody (Forest Whitaker), a British soldier who is captured by the IRA, and Jude (Miranda Whittaker) an IRA member, are both deliberately given ambiguously un-gendered names; already possibly highlighting some kind of gendered mobility within this film.⁵ Later, whilst gagged and tied Jody develops a kinship with Fergus (Stephen Rea), one of the men who are holding him hostage. From their first meeting there are several hints that these two men are forming a connection that goes beyond the limitations of heteronormative male bonding. For example, when Jody is alone with Fergus, Fergus asks Jody (who is blindfolded) what he thinks he looks like, he responds with, "You are about 5'10 with a killer smile...Are you the handsome one?". This is taken further in a subsequent scene in which Jody convinces Fergus to take him outside to urinate. Fergus not only does not seem bothered by seeing Jody's penis but he also helps Jody take it out and put it back in his trousers, referring to it as "just a piece of meat".⁶ In addition, despite the fact that Jody's death may be imminent Jody sends Fergus on a quest to seek

⁵ To add to this many of the slasher films also share this trope, for example the female protagonist Laurie Strode in *Halloween* (John Carpenter, 1978) and Sydney Prescott in *Scream* (Wes Craven, 1996). According to Clover (1992), "The Final Girl is, on reflection, a congenial double for the adolescent male. She is feminine enough to act out in a gratifying way...but not so feminine as to disturb the structures of male competence and sexuality" (2015: 51). For Clover, these women are given un-gendered names so as to keep them away from either gendered binary. Stephen Marcus writes that these names are, "both a defence against and disavowal of the fantasy it is simultaneously expressing - namely, that a *boy* is being beaten - that is, loved - by another man" (Marcus, in Clover, 2015: 52). Therefore, perhaps for *The Crying Game*, arguably Jody's name is presented this way so to allow him to fall in love with another 'man' (as will be discussed later).

⁶ Perhaps by Fergus referring to Jody's penis as "just a piece of meat" alludes to that fact that sex (or rather sex organs) do not hold the same signifying power for him. Fergus seems to have a fluid way of looking at gender and sex.

out his girlfriend, Dil. Interestingly, when Dil is first discussed, it is not mentioned that she is in fact transgender. Indeed, throughout the film, other than what is positioned as arguably a quickly resolved 'knee jerk' reaction (which I will come to later) nobody seems to mind this fact, which sets the film up to potentially be quite progressive in terms of its representations of transgender characters and sexual politics; Dil's identity is not presented as something that Fergus needs to be forewarned about.

Further, in a way as to contend with these seemingly 'knee jerk' reactions, it may be important to mention that this film was originally created with two endings.⁷ Whilst in prison the first ending (the one which was ultimately used) concludes with Fergus retelling The Scorpion And The Frog parable Jody had told him earlier.⁸ Within this parable it is made clear that despite the scorpion reassuring the frog that he will not sting him, he does so anyway, not by any vicious choice but because it is in his nature to do so. To apply this to *The Crying Game*, perhaps the idea that Jody and Fergus are sexually ambiguous and Dil is transgender, gives voice to the idea that their differences are simply "in their nature" as it is in the scorpion's nature to sting the frog. They did not choose to be different nor is it their fault, but rather it is intrinsic to who they are. However, and this is important, the financial backers of the film originally rejected this ending, according to director Jordan, this was because they believed it would not be sellable as it did not have the traditional happy ending

⁷ The original (and the used) ending of *The Crying Game* causes Dil to shoot Jude for sexually seducing her original boyfriend, Jody, which led to him dying. Dil wanted to kill Fergus too only stopping stating that Jody would not let her and so she turns the gun on herself. Fergus convinces her not to do this and instead wipes her fingers prints off the gun she used to kill Jude and tells her to hide. Fergus is subsequently arrested in her place. The second ending sees Dave arrested for Jude's murder and on the surface allows Dil and Fergus (now Clive) to have a traditional, Hollywood fairytale ending.

⁸A scorpion, which cannot swim, asks a frog to carry it across a river on the frog's back. The frog hesitates, afraid of being stung by the scorpion, but the scorpion argues that if it did that, they would both drown. The frog considers this argument sensible and agrees to transport the scorpion. Midway across the river, the scorpion stings the frog anyway, dooming them both. The dying frog asks the scorpion why it stung the frog despite knowing the consequence, to which the scorpion replies: "I could not help it. It is in my nature".

of a 'Hollywood' film, arguably the financial backers of the film wanted to depoliticise this film by adding this seemingly perfect ending. Yet in doing this, they also added another political inflection that would see the film conclude with the line "nobody is perfect". This would indeed promote the idea that Dil's transgender identity is an *imperfection* of hers and not just in her nature. As discussed in the previous chapter, there is evidence to suggest that the transgender person is often blamed for their own downfall and so, perhaps the desire to change this ending arguably exposes the conservative, heteronormative thinking of the canon/film industry who presuppose that audiences would prefer a conservative ending that would supplant the gender mobility on display for the films previous trajectory. Further, as discussed by Peter Chumo, in this revised though original ending, "*The Crying Game's* hero finds himself finally defined by his relationship to his beloved. Admittedly, it is an uneasy definition that Fergus does not embrace wholeheartedly but seems to accept" (1995: 252). For Chumo, the notion that Fergus is allowed to *accept* his own identity and Dil's perhaps highlights a change in the film industry from the negative depictions of transgender characters previously.⁹ The film arguably encourages the message that acceptance is more valuable than discrimination and phobia of the transgender character. However, given that the financial backers actually only relented publicly releasing the film with their revised ending because they perceived only the "tone" of the film to be lost rather than because they reached some kind of liberal epiphany,¹⁰ perhaps gives the indication that not much had changed at all from films before the 1990s.

More precisely, to unpack the character of Dil, her being transgender, and perhaps why the original ending was kept could be as a result of something else happening more broadly in the filmmaking community at this time. In 1992 B. Ruby Rich states in her now seminal

⁹ See introduction for some examples.

¹⁰ The realisation that there was a second ending to *The Crying Game* came from the Collector's Edition of this DVD released in 2005 in which a special feature showed this alternate ending.

article *New Queer Cinema*, “There, suddenly, was a flock of films that were doing something new...the message has been loud and clear: queer is hot” (B. Ruby Rich, [1992], 2017). Indeed for Rich, the period saw the release of films like *Basic Instinct* (Paul Verhoeven, 1992), *The Hours and Times* (Christopher Munch, 1991), and *Swoon* (Tom Kalin, 1992) all depicting queer characters as attractive.¹¹ And moreover for Rich, culturally there was something happening more politically beyond the lens, it was becoming identifiable that being queer was something that could actually be appealing and attractive, and not something that should be seen as a kind of pathology. For *The Crying Game*, a film made in the very epicentre of this movement, this positions Dil in a very positive light as she is also ultimately seen as “hot” on screen, as Rich suggested.¹²

However, as discussed previously, in line with Rich’s proposition, it seems clear that this film was at least attempting to be progressive in terms of its representation as Dil is shown in the film’s conclusion to be unharmed and in a seemingly loving and tolerant relationship. However, before this happens at the beginning of the film, Fergus and Dil initially meet in a bar after Fergus recognises Dil from Jody’s pictures. At this point Fergus is still none-the-wiser regarding Dil’s identity and so to insert Butler, perhaps Dil’s “repeated acts” (1990: 25) are that of a cisgender woman and so on the surface, her successful, trans-blending performance leaves her unquestioned. However, when Dil invites Fergus to her home, during a moment of sexual intimacy, it is revealed that Dil is biologically male. Fergus’s

¹¹ Attractive to the same extent as their straight counterparts.

¹² However, on the other side of the political coin, the militia backdrop of *The Crying Game* also, perhaps inadvertently uncovers the debate as to whether LGBTQ+ people should be allowed to serve in the US military. In 1992, the same year that the film was released the United States presidential election campaigns began to take place. The support of LGBTQ+ soldiers was endorsed by the democratic party but was hugely opposed by the republicans. Indeed, Pat Buchanan, the republican candidate at the time had written newspaper columns which alluded to the idea that AIDS was God’s retribution against homosexuals (Maureen Dowd, 1992). This led to a vast amount of negative media attention directed towards LGBTQ+ people from across the pond and also in the UK and so, the very year *The Crying Game* was produced, the LGBTQ+ community were already seen as ‘lesser’, if not simply put, inherently problematic.

reaction is potent. He immediately assaults her and throws up in the bathroom before leaving. Indeed, Fergus's reaction is extreme, though it perhaps sheds light on these common attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people at the time.

Judith Butler, using Gayle Rubin's 'The Traffic in Women' formulates that the first foundations of 'gender trouble' come from sexual practice, the idea that, "normative sexuality fortifies normative gender" (1999: xi). For Rubin and Butler, this suggests that any diversion from the 'norm' leads to fear and anxiety of being different. Butler continues that, "[there is a] fear of losing one's place in gender or of not knowing who one will be if one sleeps with someone of the ostensibly 'same' gender" (1999: xi). Fergus perhaps encompasses the fear and anxiety of being seen as gay, particularly at the time, but also the fear of being confused about his own identity. Indeed, whilst he did not know that Dil was biologically male, Fergus had what is pitched as a almost involuntary impulse perhaps as a result of the growing transphobic abuse particularly deriving from the media at this time. To further this, Kristin Handler states that, "This culture strenuously insists on the absence of sexual desire in relationships between heterosexual men and demands that men homophobically police themselves and each other for signs of incipient homosexuality" (Handler, 1994). For Handler, the blaming of this is with culture, and thus also the media. The constant fear of being seen as gay leads to aggression as men are having to police themselves to check that they still fit into the society's 'norm'.

This traverses a scene from earlier in the film in which the bar tender, Col (Jim Broadbent) seems to try to tell Fergus that Dil is a transgender woman before he is interrupted by the start of Dil's performance on stage.¹³ As Dil says to Fergus when he initially discovers Dil's

¹³ As Dil is a performer in a bar, the theme of performance is perpetuated throughout this film and perhaps is a subtle hint toward the vast amount of performances Dil seems to undertake.

sex, "I thought you knew". It may be appropriate here to mention that the notion that people have to be forthcoming about their identity to avoid abuse is one rooted in *bigotry*, yet this film arguably catalysed through the New Queer Cinema movement, suggests people are quick to 'adapt'. Indeed, in contradistinction to many of the conservative positions of the period, for B. Ruby Rich, people were becoming more accustomed to accepting queer people, in and beyond cinema at this time. It may be pertinent then to look at the trajectory that plays out after Fergus's 'knee jerk' reaction. The following scene shows Fergus returning to the bar in which he met Dil, seemingly to *apologise* for the way he reacted. On this Stephen Rea asserts," Neil [the director] used to say that if it was one of the Italians – De Niro or Pacino – they would have smashed [her] up. I suppose there's something odd and touching about the complexity of Fergus's reaction" (2017). As stated previously, the abuse that LGBTQ+ people faced has become normalised and part of society, yet the touching reaction Fergus has to come back to Dil, shows that for Fergus it doesn't matter who she is. Typically, she would have been abused, if not murdered, yet Fergus only initially panics before quickly rationalising the situation. Moreover, it's a representation of a kind of emancipation in the film; Fergus's character is no longer tied up and constrained by the politics of gender, Dil is accepted and Fergus is capable of accepting.

Though discussed earlier, here it may be important to reiterate the idea of Foucault and Butler's inscriptions on the body. Could the argument be made that Fergus's reaction to Dil's biological body is in relation to Dil's performance being unhinged? Whilst there is some comfort perhaps in performance and categorising people's identities into boxes, as discussed earlier, this perhaps doesn't work when applied to transgender people. For Dil, when she is performing like a 'typical cisgender woman' she passes, yet the idea of her performance becoming ruptured consequently leads to Fergus assaulting her; arguably she is no longer a transgender person able to *blend* into society and once her identity is

highlighted as a performance it fails, reiterating the point that Butler's proposition does not seem to be enough when discussing transgender people. Indeed, the idea that our bodies hold all power is a hindrance to Dil as its reveal immediately stops the accepting of her gender identity. Whilst taking all of this into consideration, it seems that compared to films containing a transgender character before this time (see introduction), *The Crying Game* arguably presents a rather progressive performance of its protagonist; it arguably presents society around Dil adapting, rather than her being punished for who she is. But at the same time, it is not made clear what she is accepted for, that is she is no longer seen as a 'normal' woman, but she is accepted for being different. Dil does leave the film in a seemingly loving relationship, yet her partner is in prison. It does not seem to promote the traditional 'fairytale' ending that is often apparent in similar romantic thrillers that inhabit heteronormative relationships. Therefore, despite this being a seemingly progressive text, there still seems to be a lot that needs to be done in the way of representing transgender characters fairly and in line with their cisgender, straight counterparts rather than presenting their 'downfall' once they no long blend into heteronormative society.

Chapter 3 - *Silence of the Lambs* and *Boys Don't Cry*

This next chapter aims to unpack and analyse the violence transgender characters are subjected to and whether this somewhat 'improves' through the decade of the 1990s with a staple Hollywood film made just before Rich's proposition *Silence of the Lambs* (1991) and *Boys Don't Cry* (1999) made at the end of this decade.

Ray Blanchard in 1989 coined the term 'autogynephilia', derived from its Greek roots meaning love of one-self as a woman. However, Blanchard subverts this definition to conclude that being a transgender woman is, "a male's propensity to be sexually aroused by the thought of himself as a female" (Blanchard, 1989: 616). This idea was and still is an incredibly damaging typological study into the transgender community. Blanchard suggests that whilst he supports the need for transgender people to transition, they cannot wholly identify as women because he did not believe that transgender people were 'transsexual' at all, despite them benefiting from transitioning.¹⁴ The argument could be made that this gives some context to the abuse that transgender people face. For example, reports and typologies that were being produced (such as Blanchard's) at this time were in direct contrast to the dialogue transgender people were conveying alongside them who themselves were stating that these people have gender dysphoria (a medical condition) rather than something inherently wrong with them along the lines of perversion. Instead of accepting transgender women as women, even if self-identified, these studies perpetuated the rhetoric that they were not 'truly' women which arguably opens up a channel to debate and criticise transgender people's identities from the ground up.

¹⁴ The word 'transsexual' is now outdated within the transgender community, yet at this time it was the language used when discussing who would now be referred to as transgender.

Further, as stated previously through Richard Dyer, there is a connection between societal opinions and what is available on screen. For example, Jonathan Demme's *Silence of the Lambs* (1991) was released just two years after Blanchard's provocative position. The film follows Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster), an FBI trainee who is volunteered to entice information out of serial killer, Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), to apprehend another serial killer, a transgender female named Buffalo Bill, or Billy (Frank Theodore Levine) as she is also dubbed in the film. Billy's transgender identity is not only unacknowledged but is *villainised* from the outset, because Billy has been rejected from three sexual reassignment clinics she starts to skin her female victims' corpses to sew together her own female suit.¹⁵ Lecter uses the metaphor of the moth that Billy includes in all of her murders; the idea that the moth signifies change, the 'change' that Billy wants too.¹⁶ To pursue this further, arguably a moth is used as an allegory instead of a butterfly as it is less attractive; signifying that to 'change' is not always to become more beautiful. Lecter states, "Billy is not a real transsexual. But he thinks he is, he tries to be". To apply Blanchard's typology to this, Billy would have been categorised in line with this, creating an almost perverted and erotically embedded idea surrounding what Billy is trying to do.

Melissa Rigney argues, "[*Silence of the Lambs*] implies that biological sex is fixed at birth, that the desire to change one's biological sex is rooted in abnormality and psychosis, and that the ultimate and unattainable wish to change one's sex leads to both madness and murder" (2003: 5). This idea is incredibly poignant to this film as the film won the Big Five Academy Awards, only the third film to accomplish this (Terry Pristin, 1992), yet the

¹⁵ Despite the fact that Billy was referred to with male (he/him) pronouns in the film, this dissertation will be using she/her pronouns to respect Billy's gender identity

¹⁶ Within Billy's murders, she captures 'over-weight' women and keeps them in a well in her house till they starve to death (this apparently causes their skin to be easily removed). She then inserts a death's head moth into the victim's throat as she is intrigued by the insect's metamorphosis, a process that she potentially wants to undergo by transitioning.

damaging portrayal of the transgender character was not highlighted as a criticism.¹⁷ For Rigney, this film is rooted in the want to repress change, arguably connected to the idea of autogynephilia, this film makes the root of Billy's villainy her desire to transition. Here, it may be important to mention that Billy is actually never given the opportunity to seemingly *blend* into society.

Furthering this, Wibke Straube develops ideas of how we might think about naked transgender characters suggesting that there is a constraint within these representational dynamics, "This notion of constraint emphasises the element of gendered control and restraint in relation to the limiting oppressive forms of gender normativity directed towards the trans characters (2014: 46). For Straube, the abuse that transgender characters, like Billy receive is surrounded in the idea of gendered control, to limit diversity and to keep a 'cap' on gender fluidity. With this comes the idea of deception which is arguably the core problem with the next case study I turn to, *Boys Don't Cry* (Kimberly Peirce, 1999) released some eight years after Demme's inherently problematic text.

Boys Don't Cry is based on the true story of Brandon Teena, a transgender male who moves to Falls City, Nebraska with his newfound friends. Whilst he hasn't revealed he is transgender, he passes, and unlike Billy within *Silence of the Lambs*, Brandon is only later discovered to be transgender, yet both of these characters are seemingly 'punished' for their identity. To compare these two films, it may prove pertinent to distinguish between the way transgender women and men are depicted on screen. Wibke Straube asserts that transgender males are often subjected to sexualised violence, in that they are not just physically beat, but they are often raped too; it becomes a conventionalised narrative device.

¹⁷ Best Picture, Best Director (Demme), Best Actor (Hopkins), Best Actress (Foster), and Best Adapted Screenplay (Ted Tally).

This is often the case when the transgender character tries to pass as a cisgender male, the passing is used to punish the character for 'over-stepping' gender binaries. This also happens in *Boys Don't Cry*, Brandon passes and seemingly 'blends in' to life in Falls City; when they are mud surfing on the back of trucks he states, "I'm just doing what guys do around here". This need and want for Brandon to blend ultimately becomes his downfall and he is punished for doing so.

Further, the director of *Boys Don't Cry*, Kimberly Peirce, arguably creates a reactionary piece which victimises the transgender character but does so in order to silence the attackers (that is to cause the spectators to sympathise with Brandon and reject binary forms of masculinity). This becomes even more poignant when it is revealed that this actually happened to the real Brandon Teena. Rather than the media sympathising with Brandon over his harrowing murder, they often berated him and blamed him for being deceitful as well as having "posed for two months as a man" in *The New Yorker* (January 4, 1994). This itself gives credence to the idea that the media has been known to make links to the idea of being transgender and also being predatory. Nevertheless, the focus of these media reports depicts Brandon as a female who is *lying*. John Sloop argues that news media accounts like this not only perpetuated "caricatures of transgender [...] people" but also function to reaffirm traditional ideals of gender and heterosexuality and to discipline transgressors like Brandon Teena who challenged hegemonic and binary norms" (Slope, 2000: 169, cited in Cooper, 2002: 45). For Sloop, the media made Brandon a villain and so when Peirce made Brandon's life into a film in 1999, she attempted to combat this yet instead made a victim out of Brandon. In doing this the violence Brandon is subjected to still reinforces some of the problematic notions within films that contain transgender characters. That is, in rendering Brandon naked to reveal his biological sex, Peirce prevents Brandon from seemingly being able to continue *trans-blend*. The scene in which Brandon is stripped by John (Peter

Sarsgaard) and Tom (Brendan Sexton III) equates Brandon with his biologically female body. The camera lingers, forcing the spectator to watch, despite Brandon becoming increasingly distressed. 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 an expression of a deep, essential true” (2006: 9). For Stryker, the ‘unveiling’ of a transgender person’s body on screen, no matter the context, brands them as being deceitful in not disclosing their biological sex. Further, Jack Halberstam suggests that, “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 cited in Straube, 2014: 40). Halberstam’s proposition gives further substance to how damaging the portrayal of Brandon as “technically female” is, invalidating his masculinity and putting him within the category of a masculine female is not a politically progressive representation of the transgender community.

On the other hand, according to Jeremy Russell Miller, “if a transgender person is attacked and beaten, the way the event is represented shapes how it is understood by the society as a whole” (2012: 7). For Miller, if a transgender person is depicted in a changing room and is then beaten up, it perpetuates and supports the narrative that the transgender person is at fault for, “deviating from heteronormative standards for gendered behaviour” whereas if they were minding their own business and then attacked, it is supporting the argument that they were not at fault and in fact the abuser is at fault. As Miller suggests, “The event still occurred, but the way it is represented impacts our understanding of the event” (2000: 8). For *Boys Don’t Cry* the film does present Brandon as a victim who does not provoke his own

attack, but it also perhaps endemically makes Brandon and his transgender identity, a kind of victim-in-waiting too.

From this, Brandon is subjected to a thirty-minute-long beating, rape and subsequent murder which arguably makes for a harrowing watch but one that is pertinent to understanding the context of why this abuse was re-created by director, Pierce. Indeed, in *Silence of the Lambs* if Billy was allowed to transition perhaps, she may not have committed her heinous crimes and so by portraying Brandon as a victim perhaps this is trying to show the audience that Brandon is not at fault for being transgender. According to Cooper, “The harsh consequences of such bigotry is underlined by the film’s concluding soundtrack, when we’re reminded that Brandon’s dream of masculine self-actualisation, like his life, “ended way too soon”” (2002: 58). This nicely concludes the idea that whilst there is a debate over how to present and protect transgender people, they are people whose lives “ended way too soon”.¹⁸ However, in trying to make a reactionary film, Pierce does arguably portray that transgender people are victims waiting for their lives to end, rather than using her platform to allow Brandon to fight back.

¹⁸ Indeed, even Billy perhaps would not have had a tragic ending had her identity been acknowledged and accepted.

Chapter 4 - *The Danish Girl*

In my search for one last film that does not represent its transgender character as inherently 'problematic', I will turn my focus to the most recent Hollywood film surrounding a transgender character, Tom Hooper's biographical romantic drama film, *The Danish Girl* (2015).

The Danish Girl is loosely based on the lives of Lili Elbe (Eddie Redmayne) and Gerda Wegener (Alicia Vikander); real Danish painters who were married before Lili (formerly known as Einar) came out as transgender.¹⁹ Unlike *The Crying Game*, *Silence of the Lambs* and *Boys Don't Cry*, *The Danish Girl* does not conclude with the stance that Lili is a predator, liar, or somebody who is likely to disrupt heteronormative society. Instead, it arguably attempts to debunk these labels and, on the surface, highlights the beauty in the self-discovery of a transgender woman by giving Lili the freedom to explore her own gender identity. However, this film *still* does not present a wholly positive narrative for its transgender character; Lili *still* dies at the end, and Lili's transition is arguably *still* presented as a cautionary journey. The narrative thread arguably emphasises the difficulties of this transition and perhaps uncovers some intrinsically conservative and inherently essentialist tones. In short, even in a film which seems on the surface unproblematic, the transgender character is *still* presented as ultimately fatal.

Right from the beginning of this film, it seems clear that Lili (Einar at this point in the film) is different to 'other men' before it is made clear she is transgender. There are several scenes in which she is seen taking on the role of another female character or is presented as a man who is outside of the 'norm'. For example, in the theatre Lili watches Ulla (Amber Heard), a

¹⁹ Lili and Gerda were granted an annulment as Denmark in the 1920s didn't recognise the marriage of two women.

close friend of Gerda, get her ballet outfit fitted. To the seemingly disgusted reaction of the tailor (Angela Curran), Lili is made to feel very uncomfortable as she is caught peering in-between costumes to watch Ulla. Yet Ulla excuses her by saying that “you do not need to be worried about [her]”. Indeed, arguably within another context, Lili would have been presented as simply an objectifying sleaze who is trying to sexualise women, in line with Laura Mulvey’s (1975) concept of the male gaze.²⁰ However, when applying this concept to *The Danish Girl*, the very idea seems to be subverted. Indeed, it is Lili who seems to be ‘performing’ the gaze, yet Lili does not fit the mould of a heterosexual man, instead she indeed seems to be ‘let off’ from staring by Ulla. A further example of this is back in Lili and Gerda’s house, as Lili fixes Gerda’s lipstick before she leaves their home; Lili perhaps takes on the role of another woman, rather than the ‘husband’ the audience are first introduced to.

Further, this preliminary analysis is one of a plethora of examples of Lili performing herself as a woman, the first glimpse of any form of cross dressing taking place is in the form of a game.²¹ Lili and Gerda go to the theatre and find a *costume* for Lili to wear to a painting gala. Here, it may be interesting to create a comparison between Lili and the character of Brandon, as both of these characters had people ‘help’ them pass. However, Brandon was limited on what was permissible. For example, when Brandon first gets his haircut, his cousin, Lonny (Matt McGrath) won’t let him cut his hair any shorter or he will “look like a boy”, whereas Gerda puts her own makeup on Lili and picks out a dress for her whilst teaching her how to walk and ‘practice her performance’. Even though Lili’s female performance was at first a *game*, she was allowed to ‘perform’ without being mocked or rejected straight away. Perhaps this is indicative of some kind of social change in the way

²⁰ Within film arguably the camera takes on the perspective of a male, heterosexual that highlights women as sexual objects for the pleasure of the male watching coined by Mulvey in 1975 as the ‘male gaze’.

²¹ Indeed, when Lili is first introduced to the audience it was not her transition beginning to take place, she was playing ‘dress up’.

of acceptance for transgender people, that the proposition of 'gender-bending' is something that is arguably 'normalised' in contemporary heteronormative society or at least not seen as inherently 'outside' of society.

Whilst attending the painting gala, Lili does in fact perform as Lili 'successfully'. She seemingly passes to everybody other than Henrik (Ben Wishaw), yet he is immediately accepting of her, and in fact finds her attractive and kisses her. This idea also links again to the New Queer Cinema movement; like Dil in *The Crying Game*, there seems to be a return of the seemingly attractive transgender character. However, when Gerda does not approve of this Lili runs away and takes solace in the theatre in which her performance of a female was first enacted. Scholar Annalene Lorenz (2016) observes a direct correlation between Lili's gender identity and the theatre, in which director Hooper arguably creates almost a 'perfect world' that Lili can escape to. Indeed, unlike the films analysed previously in this dissertation, for the first time, the transgender character is *allowed* to strip themselves naked, rather than it being forcibly done for them or done in an act of horror like Billy's reveal in *Silence of the Lambs*. Rather, for Lorenz, "The theatre gives [Lili] the possibility to hide, but it also enables [her] to discover [herself] and perform Lili - in safety - on [her] own private stage" (2016). Throughout this scene Hooper shows Lili looking at herself in the mirror, first staring blankly at her biologically male body and then observing her transformation as she curves her hand to create a breast-like shape and tucks her penis before posing in a typically feminine stance. To take this further and into psychoanalytical territory, it may be appropriate to apply psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's Mirror Theory to this reading. Lacan explores the way in which infants recognise themselves in mirrors, and how this is linked to a person's id, ego and superego.²² According to Martin Hall, the mirror theory lent itself to further studies of film including Christian Metz, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary*

²² Id is a person's instincts; the ego is a person's reality and the superego is a person's morality.

Signifier, where, “Metz’s appropriation of Lacan’s mirror allowed for a complex discussion of the pleasure available to the spectator through her positioning within the womb-like, Imaginary plenitude of the darkened auditorium” (2004). For Metz, the spectator has an active role in providing a mirror for the protagonist and so for Lili the spectator is positioned to almost ‘allow’ her to self-identity and not necessarily be put at a distance from her. That is, she is not interrupted.²³ Unlike, Dil, Billy and Brandon where the revealing of their biology unhinges their performance, at no point has Lili’s biology reputed her performance, she is never found out based on her body.

For Simone de Beauvoir, “one is not born, but rather *becomes* a woman” (Beauvoir, 1941 cited in Shira Tarrant, 2013: 194).²⁴ This seems pertinent to the ‘creation’ of Lili through the lens of the camera. Indeed, within *The Danish Girl*, there are several scenes in which Lili is seen to be ‘copying’ other cisgender women: at the market she copies a woman handling jewellery and another where she pays to go to a brothel, not to view the woman for sexual pleasure, but as stated, to learn the way in which she *can* successfully perform her gender. Interestingly, within this scene, Lili enjoys the imitation of the woman until the woman touches her own genitals. In contradistinction to Butler, arguably Hooper is showing that being transgender is much more than a performance and with it comes a crippling sense of gender dysphoria.²⁵ Arguably then performance theory works until sex and anatomy are involved as transgender characters are not accepted on the pure basis of their “repeated acts”. Indeed, and to usher in some reflection here, perhaps it is too reductionist to claim

²³ According to J. R. Miller, “Transgender representations generally distance the transgender characters from the audience as objects of ridicule, fear, and sympathy” (2012: iii). This seemingly applies to Billy and Brandon in the way they are presented as victim and villain and yet this does not necessarily seem to be the case with Lili. Lili is the protagonist of the film and the spectator follows her along in her transition.

²⁴ Emphasis mine.

²⁵ Gender Dysphoria is, “Used to describe when a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity” (Stonewall, 2017)

that gender *is* purely repeated acts. Moreover, if the idea that Butler perpetuates that gender is flexible and purely a performance, then why do transgender people exist? For example, if *any* person can choose how they present their gender and that performance is *accepted* by society purely on the logic that gender is intrinsically a performance, then surely transgender people would not feel rejected by society and would not want to alter their body. Yet, they do.

Further, despite the fact that Lili Elbe was a real woman, she was depicted of course by a cisgender man, Eddie Redmayne. This is an area of transgender film that is immersed in controversy, some believing performing outside of your gender is simply acting whereas others, particularly from the transgender community, believe it is a damaging message to send out. Transgender woman and activist, Paris Lees stated on this topic, “I don’t think that if and when they make a biopic of my life, I would want a cisgender man playing me...Politically, it makes me groan” (Lees, 2015). This gives the impression that whilst, as stated, the film does seem to be moving in a progressive way as to allow Lili her self-discovery, perhaps the very fact that Lili is not depicted by a female actor actually prevents any progression from being fully recognised. This is a recurring theme throughout all four films and is arguably politically incorrect. For *The Crying Game*, Dil is played by *male* Jaye Davidson, for *Silence of the Lambs*, Billy is played by *male* Ted Levine, for *Boys Don’t Cry*, Brandon is played by *female* Hilary Swank and as stated, in *The Danish Girl* Lili is played by *male* Eddie Redmayne. By having a male play somebody who is still a transgender woman, even without any transition having taken place, it is perpetuated through the casting of film that this is ‘really’ a man and not simply a woman. Lees’ statement perhaps gives a sense that there is sensitivity which comes with portraying the life of a transgender woman, and yet it is still being ignored by these films being created.

Not only this, as stated earlier, whilst Lili is permitted to have gender reassignment surgery, her subsequent death from the treatment is still emphasised. The very idea of being transgender is presented as cautionary within this film, that is by showing Lili's death at the end, perhaps it insinuates that being transgender is something that is a dangerous path to go down. Ultimately, the makers of the film turn Lili's life into a tragedy. Indeed, the fact that this film is the most recent film analysed perhaps perpetuates the idea that there is still work to be done in terms of transgender representation on screen.

Therefore, to pose a concluding question, what more can be done to aid with the acceptance of transgender people? What more can popular film be doing to ensure that they are not sending out damaging information regarding transgender people? And if Butler states that gender is all a performance, what is wrong with a man performing as a transgender female?

Conclusion

As evidenced throughout this dissertation, there seems to be a back and forth in positive representation for the transgender community, that is the acceptance of Dil and allowing Lili to self-identify are positive steps forward in the film industry and yet not one of these films 'fairly' represents its transgender character, none of them end the film throughly happy. As stated in the introduction, before the 1990s, films mostly depict their transgender protagonists/antagonists as murderous psychopaths, showcased as people to be avoided. Yet in the beginning of the 1990s with *The Crying Game*, Dil is accepted. However, clearly there is still so much work to be done with the level of violence that is initiated in a film that can be qualified as more mainstream, *Silence of the Lambs*. Throughout the whole film, Billy is not once referred to with the correct pronoun, in fact when evaluated with Blanchard's 1989 typological study, the argument could definitely be made that Billy would have been seen aligned with autogynephilia.

Further, Riki Wilchins in the early 1990s co-founded 'Transsexual Menace' the very first transgender charity which aimed to put transgender murders into the public eye, rather than hidden away. Wilchins stated, "When trans people were killed the only way we would find out about it was there would be four paragraphs in the back of the local paper... 'Man Found Wearing Articles Of Women's Clothing Murdered In Alley'...and that meant that a transgender woman had been violently murdered" (Wilchins cited in Allyson McCabe, 2019). It seems clear that this changed with the incident surround Brandon Teena in 1993. When the original story of Brandon was reported, it made its way into mainstream media, it was not put at the back of a newspaper. However, this did not mean that Brandon was given a positive representation when this story was retold on celluloid. As discussed earlier, Brandon was berated and accused of causing his own death through lying about his appearance.

The film includes the exact way Brandon was killed, surrounding a thirty minute long murder and rape sequence. However, whilst this was a realistic representation of what happened, arguably Director Peirce, could have done something more than represent Brandon as a victim-in-waiting. Indeed, Peirce had the power to allow Brandon to fight back, and yet she did not, further promoting hardly any positive representation for the transgender character on screen.

From here, I turned to *The Danish Girl*, the most recent Hollywood film about a transgender character. Whilst on the surface, this film presented Lili in a rather positive light allowing her to create her identity without being interrupted (that is the scene within the theatre), Lili *still* died at the end. In fact, all of these transgender protagonists were killed at the end, other than Dil who is left with her lover residing in prison with a sheet of prison glass between them. This arguably formulates the lasting impression that transgender characters are either a danger or their lives are seen as some kind of cautionary tale, a subjective opinion which is false.

This dissertation also aimed to evaluate whether Judith Butler's theory was still applicable to transgender people and whether the idea of "repeated acts" was enough when relating it to the make-up of gender identity. This dissertation concludes that Butler's theory is indeed not enough, so to speak, as her ideas are seemingly utopian which is why her assertions are problematic. Perhaps to wholly accept this idea of performance and gendered mobility, the hegemony would need to be dismantled, yet thirty years after her original proposition, this does not look like it is going to happen any time soon.

In 2019, Rick Rojas and Vanessa Swales stated, "In the United States this year, at least 18 transgender people [...] have been killed in a wave of violence that the American Medical

Association has declared an ‘epidemic’” (September 27, 2019). This is indeed an incredibly worrying report, the films analysed in this dissertation lead up to 2016 and yet the brutal violence against transgender people is still happening. This suggests perhaps that the film industry needs to do more to send out positive and less damaging messages surrounding transgender people. As discussed previously, Richard Dyer made the claim that, “How social groups are treated in life...[is] instituted by representation” (2002: 1). Whilst it has been made clear that not one of these films presents a completely positive depiction of a transgender character, arguably the film industry needs to be doing more to protect transgender people in society against the influx of negative media attention evidenced throughout this dissertation.

Furthermore, along with this, in 2019 there was also political controversy on social media with reports that Scarlett Johansson had been cast as a transgender male mobster in *Rub & Tug* (Rupert Sanders, n.d.). This sparked outrage from transgender activists online after Johansson stated, “As an actor I should be able to play any person, or any tree, or any animal, because that’s my job and the requirements of my job” (Kevin Fitzpatrick, 2019). Already, this perhaps connotes some of the narrow perspectives people have within heteronormative society about the transgender community. Indeed, it should not be the case that it is entirely acceptable and common place for a woman to play a transgender man nor a man to play a transgender woman, as evidenced, it declares the message through casting these films that these people are not their true gender identity but these people ‘were’ men or ‘were’ women. It should go without saying that these people should be played by either transgender actors or at the very least, one of the same gender.

Later, Johansson retracted this statement stating,

“Our cultural understanding of transgender people continues to advance, and I’ve learned a lot from the community since making my first statement about my casting, and realize it was insensitive. I am thankful that this casting debate...has sparked a larger conversation about diversity and representation in film” (Kevin Fitzpatrick, 2019).

This is a promising viewpoint that will hopefully provide future accurate representation for the transgender community, one which positions them as *equal* to cisgender people and more areas of research that can add to this examination in the future. Indeed, if we are to agree with Butler that we have nothing innate about our gender identity and everything is learnt behaviour then why are we subjective and critical about who can play who on screen? But as evidenced, it is often real people who are being depicted on screen, and these people deserve the same accurate representation as cisgender characters. This debate about representation on screen reaches other minority groups as well such as the #MeToo movement,²⁶ and the white washing at the Oscars.²⁷ Both of these uncovered platforms to reiterate that all people deserve equality and to be treated fairly within society and on screen.²⁸

Therefore, in accordance with Dorian Corey, indeed it seems that “Realness is to be able to blend” (1990) and yet this should categorically not be the case. These transgender characters are murdered, left without a fairytale, or even a happy ending and are played by actors that are not the same gender as their characters. There is unjust treatment for these

²⁶ A movement which was initially used for women to come together to combat sexual harassment and assault. This movement was plunged into the media following reports of Harvey Weinstein who had multiple sexual assault charges brought against him from women in the film industry.

²⁷ White washing at the Oscars was indeed noticed that on the Red Carpet, it was predominantly white people in attendance which sparked debates into why black people were not equal in the amount of Oscars each race held.

²⁸ On top of this, in 2019 it was suggested that Julia Roberts was to play the 19th century black civil rights activist, Harriet Tubman in a biopic of her life. This is, of course, incredibly problematic and perhaps reinforces the importance of getting representation politically right on screen.

characters on screen which hopefully, in future years to come, can be unequivocally removed from the film industry and society as a whole.

Bibliography

1. Blanchard, R. (1989). "The concept of autogynephilia and the typology of male gender dysphoria". *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 177(10), 616-623.
2. Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.
3. Butler, J. (1999). Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 86(11), 601-607.
4. Butler, J. (1999 [1990]). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
5. Brady, T. (2017, 1 August). "The Crying Game: 'They wanted me to cast a woman that was pretending to be a man'. *The Irish Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/film/the-crying-game-they-wanted-me-to-cast-a-woman-that-was-pretending-to-be-a-man-1.3167472>
6. Carr, S. (2002). Flawless. *British Medical Journal*, 321(7272), 1354.
7. Chumo, P. (1995). "The Crying Game", Hitchcockian Romance, and the Quest for Identity. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 23(4), 247-253.
8. Clover, C. (1992). *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
9. Clover, C. (2015). *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film - Updated Edition*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
10. Connell, R.W. (1985). Theorising Gender. *Sociology*, 19(2), 260-272.
11. Connell, R.W. (1987). *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*. Oxford: Polity Press.
12. Connell, R.W. (2012). Transsexual Women and Feminist Thought: Toward New Understanding and New Politics. *Signs*, 37(4), 857-881.

13. Cooper, B. (2002). Boys Don't Cry and Female Masculinity: Reclaiming a Life & Dismantling the Politics of Normative Heterosexuality. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19(1), 44-63.
14. De Beauvoir, S. (1941). *The Second Sex* (C. Borde, S. Malovany-Chevalier, Trans.). Paris: Editions Gallimard.
15. Dowd, M. (1992, 15 January). THE 1992 CAMPAIGN: REPUBLICANS; Buchanan's Alternative: Not Kinder or Gentler. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/15/us/the-1992-campaign-republicans-buchanan-s-alternative-not-kinder-or-gentler.html>
16. Dyer, R. (2002). *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representation*. London: Routledge.
17. Ennis, K. (2008). *Michel Foucault and Judith Butler: Troubling Butler's Appropriation of Foucault's Work*. Warwick: University of Warwick.
18. Fitzpatrick, K. (2019, 14 July). "I Should Be Able to Play Any Person, Tree, or Animal," Scarlett Johansson Says of Casting Controversies. *VanityFair*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2019/07/scarlett-johansson-casting-controversy-tree>
19. Flynn, P. (2015, 11 August). Eddie Redmayne: An Education. *Out Magazine*. Retrieved from https://www.out.com/movies/2015/8/11/eddie-redmayne-education?source=aw&awc=12391_1588610637_11563bc1399bdb2d2b56f746011fa682&utm_source=AWIN&utm_medium=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2F&campaign=Editorial+Content
20. Halberstam, J. (2005). *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press.
21. Hall, M. (2004). Time and the Fragmented Subject in *Minority Report*. *Rhizomes*, 8(1).
22. Handler, K. (1994). Sexing "The Crying Game": Difference, Identity, Ethics. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 47(3), 31-42. doi: 10.2307/1212957

23. Jaime, G.M., Mottet, L.A., Tanis, J., Harrison, J., Herman, J.L., & Keisling, M. (2011). *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.
24. Kaplan, A. (1978) . *Women in Film Noir*. London: British Film Institute.
25. Lorenz, A. (2016). The Danish Girl (2015) and the De/Construction of Gender Identity. *Inquiries*, 8(6), 1-2.
26. Lacan, J. (1989). *Écrits: As Selection* (A. Sheridan, Trans). London: Routledge.
27. McCabe, A. (2019, 21 October). 20 Years Later, 'Boys Don't Cry' Still Inspires Admiration And Debate. *National Public Radio*. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2019/10/21/771451650/20-years-later-boys-don-t-cry-still-inspires-admiration-and-debate?t=1588255517204>
28. Metz, C. (1982). *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*. (C. Britton et al) London: Macmillan.
29. Miller, J. R. (2012). *Crossdressing Cinema: An Analysis of Transgender Representation in Film*. (PhD Thesis), Texas A&M University, Texas. Retrieved from <https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/ETD-TAMU-2012-08-11672>
30. Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. *Screen*, 16(3), 6-18. doi: 10.1093/screen/16.3.6
31. Pristin, T. (1992, 31 March). 'Silence of the Lambs' Sweeps 5 Major Oscars : Movies: Thriller is only the third film to take all key categories. Palance, Ruehl win for supporting roles. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-03-31-mn-104-story.html>
32. Prosser, J. (1998). *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality*. New York: Columbia University Press.

33. Rigney, M. (2003). Brandon goes to Hollywood (1): Boys Don't Cry and the transgender body in film. *Film Criticism*, 28(2), 4-23.
34. Rojas, R., Swales, V. (2019, 27 September). 18 Transgender Killings This Year Raise Fears of an 'Epidemic'. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/27/us/transgender-women-deaths.html>
35. Sight and Sound. (2017 [1992]). *British Film Institute*. Retrieved from <https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/features/new-queer-cinema-b-ruby-rich>
36. Schmitt, E. (1992, 26 August). Marine Corps Chaplain Says Homosexuals Threaten Military. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/08/26/us/marine-corps-chaplain-says-homosexuals-threaten-military.html>
37. Sloop, J. M. (2000). Discipling the Transgendered: Brandon Teena, Public Representations, and Normativity. *Western Journal of Communication*, 64(2), 165-189.
38. Stonewall. (2017). *Stonewall*. Retrieved from <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/glossary-terms>
39. Straube, W. (2014). Trans Cinema and its Exit Scapes. A Transfeminist Reading of Utopian Sensibility and Gender Dissidence in Contemporary Film. (PhD Thesis), Linköping University, Sweden. Retrieved from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:742465/FULLTEXT02.pdf>
40. Stryker, S. (2006). *The Transgender Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.
41. Tarrant, S. (2006). *When Sex Became Gender*. New York: Routledge
42. The Associated Press. (1994, 4 January). Woman Who Posed As a Man Is Found Slain With 2 Others. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/01/04/us/woman-who-posed-as-a-man-is-found-slain-with-2-others.html>

43. Ton, J.T. (2018). Judith Butler's notion of Gender Performativity: To What Extent Does Gender Performativity Exclude a Stable Gender Identity? (MSc Thesis). Villanova University, Pennsylvania. Retrieved from <https://www.studocu.com/en-us/document/villanova-university/partnership-taxation/essays/jtton-bsc-thesis-judith-butler-gender-performativity-final/4276741/view>
44. Wade, L. (2013, 6 April). From Manly to Sexy: The History of the High Heel. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/high-heel-history_b_2613029

Filmography

1. Carpenter, J. (Director). (1978). *Halloween* [Film]. United States: Compass International Pictures.
2. Castle, W. (Director). (1961). *Homicidal* [Film]. United States: Columbia Pictures.
3. Columbus, C. (Director). (1994). *Mrs Doubtfire* [Film]. United States: 20th Century Fox.
4. Craven, W. (Director). (1996). *Scream* [Film]. United States: Dimension Films.
5. Demme, J. (Director). (1991). *Silence of the Lambs* [Film]. United States: Orion Pictures.
6. Gosnell, R. (Director). (2000). *Big Momma's House* [Film]. United States: 20th Century Fox.
7. Hiltzik, R. (Director). (1983). *Sleepaway Camp* [Film]. United States: United Film Distribution Company.
8. Hooper, T. (Director). (2015). *The Danish Girl* [Film]. United States: Focus Features.
9. Jordan, N. (Director). (1992). *The Crying Game* [Film]. United States: Palace Pictures, Miramax Films.
10. Jordan, N. (Director). (2005 [1992]). *The Crying Game: Collector's Edition* [Film]. United States: Palace Pictures, Miramax Films.
11. Kalin, T. (Director). (1992). *Swoon* [Film]. United States: Fine Line Features.
12. Livingston, J. (Director). (1990). *Paris is Burning* [Film]. United States: Off-White Productions.
13. Munch, C. (Director). (1991). *The Hours and Times* [Film]. United States: Good Machine.
14. Peirce, K. (Director). (1999). *Boys Don't Cry* [Film]. United States: Fox Searchlight Pictures.
15. Schumacher, J. (Director). (1999). *Flawless* [Film]. United States: MGM Distribution Co.
16. Verhoeven, P. (Director). (1992). *Basic Instinct* [Film]. United States: TriStar Pictures.
17. Vidor, C. (Director). (1946). *Gilda* [Film]. United States: Columbia Pictures.

18. Wilder, B. (Director). (2014). *Some Like it Hot* [Film]. United States: United Artists.

19. Wood, E. (Director). (1953). *Glen or Glenda* [Film]. United States: Screen Classics.

Final Word Count - 8,618