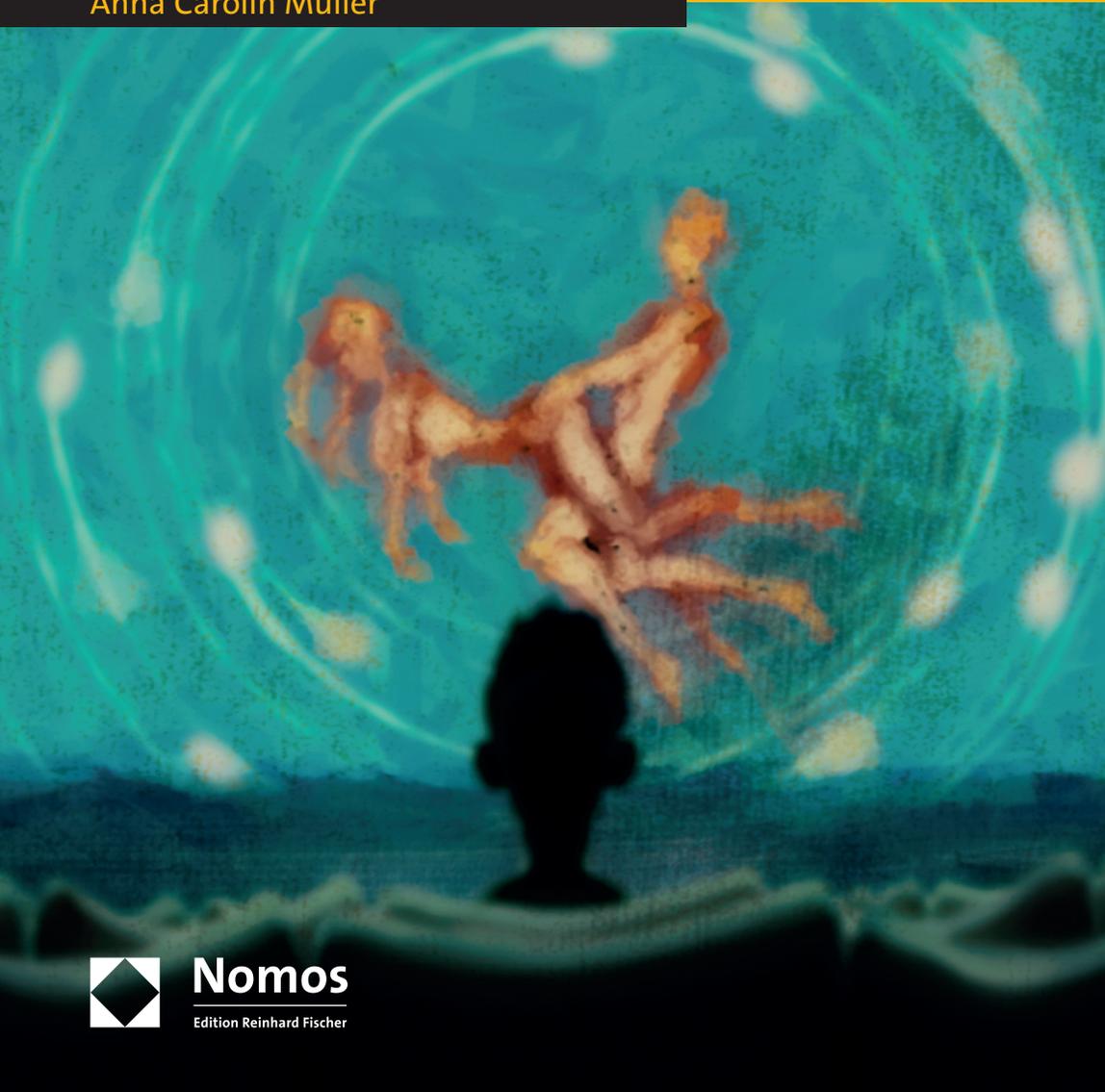


Queer Enough?

Homonormativity and Hegemonic Gay Masculinity
in Contemporary Biopics

Anna Carolin Müller



Nomos
Edition Reinhard Fischer

Series „Filmstudien“

Edited by

Prof. Dr. Oksana Bulgakowa und Prof. Dr. Norbert Grob

Founded by Prof. Dr. phil. Thomas Koebner

Volume 82

Anna Carolin Müller

Queer Enough?

Homonormativity and Hegemonic Gay Masculinity
in Contemporary Biopics



Nomos

Edition Reinhard Fischer

© Coverpicture: Oscilloscope Laboratories. Film still from *Howl*, The Monk Studios, film by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, USA, 2010.

The title is adapted from the poem *Howl* by 20th century American poet Allen Ginsberg, whose life and work is dealt with in the film. In this study, the author examines how the films *Howl*, *Stonewall* and *Milk* enact the emancipation of their protagonists, while simultaneously reproducing their oppression and aestheticising their discrimination, thus making it consumable.

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>

a.t.: Kassel, Univ., Fachbereich 02: Geistes- und Kulturwissenschaften, Diss., 2022
Date of disputation: 21.03.2022

ISBN 978-3-7560-0583-3 (Print)
978-3-7489-4096-8 (ePDF)

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-3-7560-0583-3 (Print)
978-3-7489-4096-8 (ePDF)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Müller, Anna Carolin

Queer Enough?

Homonormativity and Hegemonic Gay Masculinity in Contemporary Biopics

Anna Carolin Müller

263 pp.

Includes bibliographic references.

ISBN 978-3-7560-0583-3 (Print)
978-3-7489-4096-8 (ePDF)

Up until and including volume 61 published by Gardez! Verlag Michael Itschert, apart from volumes 57 and 60.

1st Edition 2023

© Anna Carolin Müller

Published by

Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG

Waldseestraße 3–5 | 76530 Baden-Baden

www.nomos.de

Production of the printed version:

Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG

Waldseestraße 3–5 | 76530 Baden-Baden

ISBN 978-3-7560-0583-3 (Print)

ISBN 978-3-7489-4096-8 (ePDF)

DOI <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748940968>



Onlineversion
Nomos eLibrary



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to Susanne Bach and Mechthild Bereswill for their guidance, academic encouragement and helpful advice as well as the Otto-Braun-scholarship for their financial support.

I am also grateful for the proofreading, brainstorming, and emotional support of my friends and colleagues, in particular that of Michaela Frey, Ulla Stackmann, and Marc Stein, who offered helpful and always encouraging comments. Thanks also go to the members of the colloquia I participated in for being willing to listen to and discuss my ideas: Promos, Autonomes Studentisches Kolloquium Kassel, and Literaturwissenschaftlich-kunsthistorisches Kolloquium. Many thanks also go to Sabrina Mittermaier, Lars Heiler, Murat Sezi and Tamara Schmitt.

However, this project would not have been possible without the love, support, guidance, and patience of my friends, family, and chosen family. Many thanks go to my parents Roland and Jutta, my brother Moritz, my grandparents, my aunt Susanne, Ulla, Micha, Laura, Barbara, Franz, Moritz, Konny, Eva, Regina, Kathrin, Lisa, Catha, Anja, Martin and Tim for being there through this process, believing in me and providing so much help at every level. And last but not least, all the love to Joschi, my furry friend who was always by my side.

Table of Contents

Introduction: an Interdisciplinary Approach to LGBTQIAN+ Cinema	11
1. Queer Cinema	21
1.1 From the Celluloid Closet to New Queer Cinema	21
1.2 More Visibility, More Normality?	24
1.3 After <i>Brokeback Mountain</i> : New Paradigms in LGBTQIAN+ Cinema	28
2. Queer Theory	41
2.1 Heteronormativity and Queer Subversion	42
2.2 Homonormativity and Hegemonic Gay Masculinity	59
2.3 Formal-Aesthetic Features of Queer Cinema	75
2.4 Heteronarrative and the Gaze	79
2.5 Historical Background and the Biopic Genre	84
3. Queer Biopics?	105
3.1 Modes of Oppression: The Negative Depiction of Heteronormativity	106
3.2 Coming Out: The Emancipation of the Central Characters	140
3.3 Between Authentication and Intimacy: Queer or Homonormative Gaze?	167
3.4 Genius, Rebel, Martyr: Archetypes of Hegemonic (Gay) Masculinity	198
Conclusion: The Commercialisation of Diversity	237
Works Cited	251

When a few people are frank about homosexuality in public, it breaks the ice. Then people are free to be frank about anything and that's socially useful. Homosexuality is a condition, and because it alienated me, or set me apart from the beginning, it served as a catalyst for self-examination, or a detailed realization of my environment and the reasons why everyone else is different and why I am different.

(Allen Ginsberg in Howl)

Is that really what you want? What, to blend in? I mean, we are different, right? You know, I'm beginning to realize just how different we really are. [...] You know, I'm getting to really feel like – like I just want to break something, you know?

(Danny Winters in Stonewall)

If a bullet should enter my brain, let it destroy every closet door. I ask for the movement to continue because it's not about personal gain, and it's not about ego and it's not about power. It's about the 'us's' out there.

(Harvey Milk in Milk)

