



**UiT** The Arctic University of Norway

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

## **Queer Norwegian Cinema Doesn't Exist**

An explanatory critique of *Norsk filmhistorie: spillefilmen 1911-2011*

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# 1 Introduction

On august 22, 2018, Katja Eyde Jacobsen published an article for the internet film magazine *Montages* which was supposed to be a review for the book *Blant hodejegere og nazizombier. Generasjonen som gjenreiste norsk film* (2017) by Kjetil Lismoen:

Jeg har lyst til å lese om norsk film og om 90-tallet og alt som skjedde da, med oss og med verden. I boka leser jeg om regissørene Holst, Sletaune og Skjoldbjærg, og bølgen Norwave som skylte innover Cannes-festivalen i 1997. Om generasjonen som gjenreiste norsk film. Jeg husker noen av filmene som ganske fine og sikkert proffere enn mye som ble laget før dem. Det var stas at Norge laget film som ble sett i Amerika. Jeg leser at filmene vant publikum tilbake, om priser og publikumstall. Det står ingenting om hva som skjedde i verden, i Norge og rundt oss på denne tiden. Jeg lurere på hvordan en bok skrevet om film fra slutten av 1930-tallet hadde fremstått uten kontekst, hvordan den hadde vært å lese.

Jacobsen criticized the author of the book for excluding women from the Norwegian film history discourse. Her expectations were a Norwegian film history book. Lismoen responded in *Montages* the next day, explaining how that wasn't the purpose of the book, it was merely a personal anecdote of his experience in the film industry. However, he agrees that he has been selective in his choices, but his intentions weren't what Jacobsen was expecting:

Beklageligvis oppfatter noen boken som en akademisk oppsummering og et forsøk på en kanonisering av mannlige filmskapere fra de siste 50 årene – i hvert fall får man inntrykk av det gjennom Jacobsens innlegg.

Denne utbredte misforståelsen om at jeg har skrevet et offisielt verk “på vegne av norsk film”, som er ment å oppsummere norsk filmhistorie i et halvt århundre, har ført til mange underlige reaksjoner.

Lismoen argued that Jacobsen misunderstood the book, expecting it to be a comprehensive historical presentation of Norwegian film.

## 1.1 Background

The *Montages* article gave me the idea of researching how gender and sexuality are discussed in literature about Norwegian film history. The project took a queer perspective because of a previous curiosity in finding Norwegian queer films. In 2011, I took a course that combined Scandinavian studies and gender studies: studies in Scandinavian films with topics of gender and sexuality. In this class, I noticed there were a lot of Swedish films. Thanks to the films of Ingmar Bergman and Lukas Moodyson in particular. Norwegian film history seemed to be more marginalized in comparison to Swedish and Danish film history. Do Norwegian filmmakers shy away from the topic? What does the literature say? How can someone interested in film history find out which films there are with queer topics?

To begin with, I attempted to outline queer representations in Norwegian films by reading literature on Norwegian film history. I found little information there and had to look elsewhere for help. I attempted to find information by looking through queer cinema books, asking people and watching Norwegian films. My original plan was then to watch as many Norwegian movies as I could. I started to take notes on the films I watched, taking notice of images or dialogue that stood out. It was mostly small remarks here and there which would hardly make for a whole research project. Also, I discovered that Norwegian films are not easy to get a hold of unless they are considered classics. Lesser known films are either unavailable or they are of lesser quality in terms of sound and picture.

The research project then oriented towards literature on Norwegian film history. How are queer gender and sexuality discussed in the Norwegian film history discourse? With writing history, there is a danger of social exclusion. I noticed that a lot of the literature on Norwegian film history discussed women's rights movement, however, I did not find anything related to queer rights movement. That led me to question: Where are all the queer Norwegian films? Are there no films with the presence of queer gender or sexuality? Even if there aren't any, where is the acknowledgement of this absence?

As this is a master's thesis, limited time is available to complete the project. Therefore, some limitations had to be made in order to research the Norwegian film history discourse. In order to formulate a clear and concise research question for this study, a research object had to be selected. In this way, the three levels of analysis described by Astrid Erll (2010) could be used. I analyzed a research object through its intra-, inter-, and pluri-medial strategies, which



entailed analysis of its devices, representations, and media network. These levels are discussed in the methods chapter.

## 1.2 Research object – thesis statement

The choice of material depends on the researcher's knowledge of relevant material within the social domain of interest (Jørgensen and Phillips, 78). Through the research of the Norwegian film history domain, the most prominent work is the book *Norsk filmhistorie: spillefilmen 1911-2011* by Gunnar Iversen. The book *Norsk filmhistorie (2011)* was chosen because it is the newest, most used, and most up to date historical overview of the Norwegian film.

Frykholm (2012) attributes *Norsk filmhistorie (NFH)* with being the main source in the field:

Det ska också sägas att i den mån Norsk filmhistorie reser spørsmål kring historiska drivkrafter återspeglar detta vissa problem som är förknippade med historieskrivande mer generellt, t.ex. hur varje avgränsning tycks kräva att vissa orsakssamband privilegieras på bekostnad av andra. I detta avseende faller med andra ord ingen skugga på Iversen, som med Norsk filmhistorie har givit oss ett lika välkommet som välförfattat bidrag till historieskrivningen om norsk film, en bok som borde ha alla förutsättningar att fungera som standardkälla på området under lång tid framöver. (80)

There have been many attempts at recounting Norwegian film history (Evensmo 1967, Hanche et al. 2014, Dahl et al. 1996, Cowie 1999), but none are as complete and up to date as *NFH* (Diesen et al. 2016). These books on Norwegian film history have been concentrated on economic politics (Evensmo 1967), international film and television in Norway (Dahl et al. 1996) or simply a collection of summaries (Braaten et al. 1995). *Norsk filmhistorie (2011)* is a historical presentation of the Norwegian film. I found through e-mail enquiry that the book is used as mandatory literature for the two film history subjects in Norwegian university education at Høgskolen i Lillehammer and NTNU.

I found that the author, Gunnar Iversen, is a co-author on several books relating to Norwegian film history (Diesen et al. 2016, Hanche et al. 2014, Dahl et al. 1996, Bakøy et al. 2011).

Iversen has held lectures and written many books and articles on the topic, therefore it can be concluded that Iversen is an expert in the field of Norwegian film history. I have then constructed a research question:

How are issues of queer gender and sexuality represented in *Norsk filmhistorie* (2011)?

The aim of this study is to highlight how queer gender and sexuality is represented in *Norsk filmhistorie* and make visible possible misrepresentations or omissions through a critical reading. My goal is to improve the current discourse on Norwegian film history by making it more inclusive.

### 1.3 Previous research

This study is about how queer gender and sexuality is represented in Iversen's book *Norsk filmhistorie*. There is no previous research on the specific topic of queer representations in the Norwegian film history discourse. There exists little research on the topic of queer Norwegian cinema because both Norwegian film history and Norwegian queer history are small research fields. The combination is even more limited.

Research on queer history in Norway is quite limited, *Norsk homoforskning* (2001) attributes this to a lack of interest or the fear of being labeled a queer researcher:

Imidlertid er det stadig svært få fast ansatte universitetslærere som har homoforskning som en sentral del av sin faglige virksomhet – og en kan spørre om dette temaet fortsatt er for stigmatiserende i akademia. Kanskje må det en ny generasjon homoforskere til, som er queer nok til å ynde å utfordre det bestående. (21)

There is also a lack of interest in Norwegian film history research, Diesen et al. (2016) attributes this to the domination of Hollywood, quality of Norwegian films and the availability of Norwegian films. Previous research in queer Norwegian cinema is therefore even more limited as mentioned. I found one master's thesis that analyzed homosexuality in three modern Norwegian films (Eldøen 2007). Some master's theses and doctoral dissertations discuss queer representations or lack thereof in films of specific directors or film genres (Lunde 2002, Grenness 1994, Moseng 2012, Larsen 1998, Feiring 2015). All of these were studies of films. This thesis, in contrast, investigates queer representations in literature about Norwegian film history. I found one thesis that analyzed the film literature of three Norwegian authors (Grønnestad 1994). However, Grønnestad focused on the political beliefs of authors who wrote about film in general and not Norwegian film history. No studies were

found that that combined Norwegian queer cinema and Norwegian film history literature. This study attempts to fill that knowledge gap.

## **1.4 Reading guide**

This study is divided into seven chapters. In chapter two, I present the theoretical framework of this thesis. I discuss queer theory and I introduce queer cinema internationally and in Norway. In chapter three, I present the research design of this study. I explain how I collected and analyzed data through explanatory critique and with theories about cultural memory.

In chapter four, I present the results of the analysis of the book *NFH*. I describe its limitations, major themes, images, and producers. I also discuss its rhetorical strategies, earlier representations that it is based on, and the book's reception in its media network.

In chapter five, I present a queer reading of the book *NFH*. I highlight the representations of the films *Cecilia*, *Fjols til fjells* and *Is-slottet* in *NFH* and compare it to earlier representations.

In chapter six, I present the analysis of a central example of queer Norwegian cinema. The representations of the filmmakers Wam and Vennerød and their films were analyzed and compared with earlier representations. The representations of the film trilogy were also compared to the films. Also, some exclusions in *NFH* are also discussed.

In chapter seven, I summarize and conclude the findings of this study.



## 2 Queer theory

*Gender is the poetry each of us makes out of the language we are taught.*

*Leslie Feinberg (1998). "Trans liberation: beyond pink or blue"*

The above quote describes well what queer theory is about. In a queer theorist view, gender is socially constructed through language. There is no arbitrary connection between someone's biological sex and their gender expression. Biological sex means the chromosomes, proteins, hormones, sexual organs, and body parts that collectively define someone as either male or female, while gender expression refers to the culturally predisposed masculine and feminine outward appearances and roles. An individual born with an extra X chromosome or born with both male and female parts is considered intersex. An individual whose outward appearance doesn't align with their biological sex is considered transgender. There are so many different identities which makes up an alphabet soup. Therefore, "queer" is an umbrella term used for everything challenging binary norms relating to gender and sexuality.

The word "queer" has many definitions, I follow David Halperin's definition:

Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence. (Halperin in Sullivan 43)

Queer theory critically assesses what society views as normal in relation to gender and sexuality, and the power dynamics behind those views. I use queer theory to critically analyze how films are represented in *NFH* and how they came to be. There is no arbitrary connection between the films and the representations of the films because they are socially constructed through language.

There is no canon literature of queer theory. Many are influenced by Judith Butler and Michel Foucault. In *Gender Trouble* (1999), Butler argued for subversion of identity by asking how identities were created, what purpose they serve and how are they able to be presented as real, natural, and universal. Subversion is questioning the established and dominant view of reality. In *The History of Sexuality* (1978), Foucault argued that sexuality is a discursive construct that takes culturally and historically specific forms. Institutions such as hospitals and churches

have defined sexuality as a disease (medical discourse) or immoral in god's eye (religious discourse). Knowledge is power and those who define it steer the discourse on the topic in society.

Butler theorized this power formation into a heterosexual matrix, a discursive realm where the construction of gender is constituted (Varela 65). Society is structured around heterosexuality being the norm and there are expectations that people will act in certain ways. Femininity and masculinity are social constructs of gender in the heterosexual matrix which is also called heteronormativity. Warner (1991) points out that heteronormativity is much more than a social practice as it structures much more than gender:

Every person who comes to a queer self-understanding knows in one way or another that her stigmatization is intricately with gender, with the family, with notions of individual freedom, the state, public speech, consumption and desire, nature and culture, maturation, reproductive politics, racial and national fantasy, class identity, truth and trust, censorship, intimate life and social display, terror and violence, health care, and deep cultural norms about the bearing of the body. Being queer means fighting about these issues all the time, locally and piecemeal but always with consequences. (6)

Media reinforce these heteronormative views of society. Straight relationships are typically seen in films as the norm, while queer relationships are rare. Those queer representations often follow a forbidden love narrative, furthering the notion that hetero is the norm.

## **2.1 Queer cinema**

The earliest known queer representation in cinema is the Swedish 1916 film *Vingarne* (Dyer 2003, 8). Germany had many early representations, but most of them were negative. However, the films *Anders als die Anderen* (1919) and *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931) were both positive and remarkable in dealing with homosexuality, according to Dyer (2003).

Vito Russo wrote a book called *Celluloid Closet* (1981) which was later turned into a documentary (1995). Russo mapped queer representations in American cinema, highlighted how queer identities had been portrayed in Hollywood. As the production code prohibited of same-sex attraction, the films found other ways to represent the queer community. By

dressing characters in a certain way or having homosexual couples somewhat visible in the background. Film history also showed that homosexual men were made fun of. A “sissy” was an effeminate man that was on screen for comic effect. Queer murderer is another bad stereotype, where transgender women have often been portrayed as psychotic killers. Such as the murderer in *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) and *Psycho* (1960). These representations have made society fear gender nonconforming people, making them look like deviants.

## 2.2 Queer Norwegian cinema

Queer gender and sexuality in Norwegian film history goes back to the 1950s and 1960s. Solvejg Eriksen’s film *Cecilia* (1954) is a film often referred to as the first Norwegian film with “lesbian love” (Iversen 2013, Seehuus 2009, Eldøen 2007). In the film *Bustenskjold* (1958), Ernst Diesen appeared in drag (Wynn 2015). Nils R. Müller, the most productive director in Norwegian film history, portrayed themes of homosexuality in the film *Equilibrium* (1965) (Braathen et al. 1995). Larsen (1998) analyzed Norwegian romantic comedies of the 1950s-60s and found implicit themes of homosexuality in Edith Carlmar’s film *Fjols til fjells* (1957).

It wasn’t until the 1980 and 90s when queer representations were fully present. Several studies show queer representations in the films of Svend Wam and Petter Vennerød (Eldøen 2007, Grenness 1994, Moseng 2011, Ophus 2012). Particularly the films *Liv og død* (1980) and *Sebastian* (1995). The former is mentioned in the queer international cinema book *Now You See It* (Dyer 2003). Iversen himself has written about queer gender and sexuality in Wam and Vennerød’s films (1995, 2013 and 2017). The film *Is-slottet* (1987) is about two young girls that have an emotional connection and one night they experience a strong confrontation of their feelings (“Is-slottet”). *Salige er de som tørster* (1997) is an adaptation of Anne Holt’s crime novel, with a main character who identifies as queer. It won an Amanda award, the Norwegian Oscar, for best film in 1998 (“Salige er de som tørster”).

In the early 2000s there were a couple of romantic comedies with queer identified side characters, the films *37,5* (2005) and *Kvinnen i mitt liv* (2003) (Eldøen 2007). In 2008, there were at least three films with queer identified characters: *Lønsj*, *Mannen som elsket Yngve* and *De gales hus*. In 2011, came Ole Giæver’s *Fjellet* which is about two women who embark on a hiking trip while grieving the loss of their five-year-old son (Hanssen 2015). A few studies

have pointed out a theme of bisexuality in the 2005 film *Tommys Inferno* (Eldøen 2007, Moseng 2011).

Since the publication of *Norsk filmhistorie* (2011) there have been a couple films with queer identified characters: *Thelma* (2017) and *Barn* (2019). Even though there are Norwegian films with queer gender and sexuality, there still has been a of lack of queer representations. Sigurd Evensmo (1971) wrote a book about sex in the movies and discussed queer sexuality in a few international films while mentioning the lack of queer sexuality in Norwegian films (141). Almost fifty years later, Norsk filminstitutt (2019) found only three queer characters out of 182 Norwegian feature films between 2013 and 2018. Only one of those was a main character and two of them were from the same film, *Thelma* (2017). The other side character was from the film *Rett Vest* (2017). Queer representation is important because all people should feel included in the world. If there are no representations that reflect certain social groups, they are seen as unimportant. This was the main argument by Vito Russo which I discussed above. He was one of the founders of the organization formerly known as Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation which is now called GLAAD, an organization that promotes understanding and acceptance of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-, and Questioning/queer (LGBTQ) community through fair and equal media representations. GLAAD "...works through entertainment, news, and digital media to share stories from the LGBTQ community that accelerate acceptance" ("Our work").<sup>1</sup> When people see these representations, they know that they exist in the real world and they will become more tolerant to diversity.

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<sup>1</sup> It is only called GLAAD now to be more inclusive.



### 3 Research design

*Remembrance of the past may give rise to dangerous insights, and the established society seems to be apprehensive of the subversive contents of memory.*

*Herbert Marcuse (1964). "One-Dimensional Man"*

This study is an explanatory critique of the Norwegian film history discourse which aims to contribute to the rectification of marginalized queer representations in the current discourse. Explanatory critique is a critical research approach which I borrow from Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. It is a critical approach committed to social change by taking the side of oppressed social groups (Jørgensen and Phillips, 64). I identified a problem in the Norwegian film history discourse and wanted to disclose any possible "misrepresentation" in the book *Norsk filmhistorie* (2011) by Gunnar Iversen. The problem is that there exists knowledge of queer Norwegian cinema, but it is marginalized in the dominating work of the Norwegian film history discourse. This exclusion of knowledge has brought about inequality for the queer community.

Knowledge is power and the ones that hold that power decide what a culture should remember of the past. I argue that *Norsk filmhistorie* (2011) is a medium of cultural memory which contributes to how Norwegian feature films are remembered. This study is about how queer films are remembered. What people remember from the films is not necessarily from the films themselves, but the representations of them. These representations make up the cultural memory of Norwegian film history and this study analyzed how *Norsk filmhistorie* contributes to it. How they are represented are how they are remembered, and I researched this by asking:

How are issues of queer gender and sexuality represented in *Norsk filmhistorie*?

I answered this by analyzing how queer films are represented in *Norsk filmhistorie* (NFH) through analysis of its intra-, inter-, and pluri-medial strategies described by Astrid Erll.

### 3.1 Media of cultural memory

In the article “Literature, Film and the Mediality of Cultural Memory” from the book *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (2010), Astrid Erll asks: “What is it that turns *some* media (and not *others*) into powerful “media of cultural memory,” meaning media which create and mold collective images of the past?” (390). Erll writes about fiction media.

However, it becomes apparent that *NFH* uses comparable rhetoric to create specific historical meanings and modes of remembering. This is the first intra-medial dynamic that describes the phenomena within the medium. I analyzed how the book represents films by looking at its genre, producers, and devices for presenting information. The second inter-medial dynamic describe the phenomena between media. I analyzed how representations in the book *NFH* interplay with other representations. These are earlier representations that the book is based on and representations that are overlooked. The third pluri-medial dynamic describes the phenomena around the medium that actualize or suppress the meaning-making potentials offered at intra- and inter-medial levels. I investigated how the book *NFH* has been received, used, framed, and promoted after publication.

I applied Astrid Erll’s levels of analysis to analyze the strategies which turns *NFH* into a medium of cultural memory. These levels were analyzed through examples of queer Norwegian cinema. I explored how the strategies described by Erll played a role in constructing the representations of queer films. Then, I applied those findings to a central example of queer Norwegian cinema for a more detailed analysis. A main focus was directed at the filmmakers Svend Wam and Petter Vennerød because of their overt treatment of queer themes in their films (Cowie 1999, Grenness 1994, Iversen 1995, Iversen 2017, Moseng 2011, Eldøen 2007). *NFH* is divided into eight chapters and the chapters are categorized according to time period and recurring themes within that time period. Within these chapters, there are subchapters. In the sixth chapter called “Modernistiske provokasjoner og samfunnskritikk” there is a subchapter called “Fenomenet Wam & Vennerød.” This subchapter was selected as the corpus and was analyzed to explore what exactly is said about them and their films.

The book *NFH* was critically analyzed with an eye on how queer themes in films are discussed and which aspects dominate or are excluded. Specifically, I investigated the heteronormative narrative in *NFH* in connection to central examples of queer Norwegian

cinema. I compared with other sources to see which narratives dominate and to disclose any misrepresentations in *NFH*.

### 3.2 Research questions

In order to collect and analyze data, I formulated some research questions for guidance. My thesis statement was: How are queer gender and sexuality represented in *Norsk filmhistorie* (2011)? This could be answered with Erll's (2010) levels of analysis.

1. Intra-medial strategies: What rhetorical strategies does Iversen utilize in *NFH*?
  - a. Which films are discussed with terms relating to queer gender and sexuality?  
How are films with queer motives treated by Iversen?
  - b. In what ways are the queer films represented? How do the rhetorical strategies play a role?
2. Inter-medial strategies: Which narratives dominate queer representations?
  - a. How are films with or without themes of queer gender and/or sexuality represented?
  - b. How does Iversen and others write about queer gender and sexuality in earlier publications? How do they compare with *NFH*?
3. Pluri-medial strategies: How has the reception of *NFH* been in its media network?
  - a. How is *NFH* used, pushed, and framed after publication? How are queer gender and sexuality affected by these uses?
  - b. How are queer gender and sexuality represented after the publication?

### 3.3 Data collection and analysis

In the intra-medial level, I analyzed the phenomenon within the medium by analyzing the book as a document. I collected data through reading the book several times and taking notes. A list of keywords relating to queer gender and sexuality helped me find relevant data. Words with prefixes such as "homo-," "hetero-," "kjønn-," "mann-," and "kvinn-" were looked for in *NFH* to find films discussed with themes of queer gender and sexuality, while also taking into account images. The list of keywords was a means to help find a corpus for further analysis. However, this was not of much help in finding a corpus as I only found one term relating to queer gender and sexuality in the entire book. Therefore, a corpus was selected in the pluri-medial level. Other texts discussing queer gender or sexuality in Norwegian films led me to the corpus selection of the filmmakers Svend Wam and Petter Vennerød. The absence of the

terms I looked for is an important finding of this study. This finding points out the marginalization of queer gender and sexuality in *NFH*.

Then, I analyzed the text and images in *NFH* through a queer lens. I looked more closely at films that are known to have queer themes to see how Iversen treated them. I looked for rhetorical strategies utilized by Iversen in *NFH*. After identifying these rhetorical strategies, I looked at how they played a role in the representations of the films with queer themes. Also, I analyzed the images in *NFH* and what they represented while noting any repeating themes. The text accompanying the images were analyzed in seeing the connection between text and image use.

Further, I looked more closely at the corpus selection to assess the representation of the films of Wam and Vennerød. I investigated what and how rhetorical strategies were applied, highlighting any implications of the choices made. Then, I identified categories in Iversen's treatment of Wam and Vennerød which may have implied queer motives and analyzed how they were used in the representation of the films. Also, I identified any overarching discourses present in the representation of Wam and Vennerød.

In the inter-medial level, I analyzed the phenomenon between the medium by analyzing the book's interplay with earlier representations. I took my findings from the intra-medial level and compared it to other sources. These sources were earlier representations that *NFH* is based on. I also looked at how *NFH* represented these earlier representations by Iversen and others. The literature list of *NFH* was analyzed to find dominating narratives and pinpoint any missing perspectives. I also looked at how literature relating to gender and sexuality was represented in the text. The references which were available were analyzed to see how Iversen represented them in *NFH* and to make visible any misrepresentations.

Then, I analyzed the dominating narratives through a queer lens. I compared queer films that were represented in *NFH* and in earlier representations in which it is based upon. These were explicitly identified by Iversen in the introduction of *NFH* or were listed in the literature list. I looked at how Evensmo (1967), Dahl et al. (1996), Hanche et al. (2004) and Haddal (1992) represented specific films with queer motives and compared this to the narratives in Iversen's *NFH*.

Also, other sources which were referenced in the text of *NFH* were investigated to give insight to Iversen's text and dispel possible misrepresentations. These were explicit citations in the text. I compared the representation of the film *Fjols til fjells* in *NFH* to Leif Ove Larsen's dissertation (1998). Since *NFH* is based up Evensmo (1967), I also investigated Evensmo's book *Den nakne sannheten: sex i filmene* (1971) for discussions on queer gender sexuality because I saw it as a part of the cultural memory of Norwegian film history. It provided some historical context in terms of reception of queer themes in Norwegian cinema.

Further, I did the same for the films of Wam and Vennerød through a more detailed analysis of the sources mentioned above. I compared the overarching discourse I found in Iversen's treatment of Wam and Vennerød to earlier representations of Wam and Vennerød. I also investigated literature on the filmmakers and their films with different narratives for comparison. I compared the representations in *NFH* to a study on Wam and Vennerød (Grenness 1994) and film reviews of the 1995 film *Sebastian* (Iversen 1995, Haddal 1995, Engseth 1995). The categories identified in the intra-medial level were explored in these sources to compare how they were used in structuring the representations of Wam and Vennerød and to give insight into what Iversen means by these categories. I also looked at the films that were available at [filmarkivet.no](http://filmarkivet.no). These were the films of the *Sangen om den knuste drømmen* trilogy and *Lasse & Geir*.

In the pluri-medial level I analyzed the phenomena around the medium by analyzing the book's reception in its media network. I explored how the book was received, used, framed, and promoted after publication. I looked at how the book was framed by the publisher and booksellers. I searched for book reviews in Oria and duckduckgo. I read through many papers, studies, articles, and books to find any reference to the book. I contacted professors in the subject of film history to find out what literature they use for their classes. I asked people who work within the film industry about how and what they learned about Norwegian film history. I watched documentaries about Norwegian film history. Then I looked at how these uses affected any future representations of queer gender and sexuality.



## **4 Norsk filmhistorie (2011) as a medium of cultural memory**

This study researched how queer gender and sexuality are represented in the book *Norsk filmhistorie* through its intra-, inter-, and pluri-medial strategies. The book was analyzed with a queer theoretical perspective focusing on films with queer themes. Results are presented in four parts. First, I present the book's organization, structure and uses of text and images. Second, I present the strategies that has made *NFH* a contributor into specific historical discourses. These are its rhetorical strategies, the representations it is built on, and the media network in which it belongs. Third, I present how a few historical Norwegian queer films are represented through those strategies. I look at how the films *Cecilia*, *Fjols til fjells* and *Is-slottet* are represented in *NFH* and compare with other sources to give a historical perspective of how queer films have been discussed. Fourth, I present how the films of Wam and Vennerød are represented as a central example of Norwegian queer cinema. I did detailed analyses of what Iversen writes in *NFH* and compared it to earlier representations. The film *Lasse og Geir* (1976) and the trilogy *Sangen om den knuste drømmen* were also looked at to compare with *NFH* and other publications.

### **4.1 Norsk filmhistorie: spillefilmen 1911-2011**

The book *NFH* is today seen as the standard work on Norwegian film history. Published in 2011, Gunnar Iversen's 366-page work consists of eight chapters and is composed of text and images. Before the main text there is an introduction. After the introduction, there is the main text of eight chapters. These chapters are presented chronologically in ascending order (1911 to 2011). The first chapter discusses the 1910s, the second chapter 1920s and so forth. Chapter six and seven have combined two decades, 1960-1970s and 1980-1990s, respectively. The first chapters discuss fewer films than later chapters as more films were made in the later decades. The combination of decades in chapters six and seven indicate that a more selective approach shaped these chapters. The different chapters focus on certain time periods and are attributed a headline title that describes the general trend of that period. Titles such as "Det nasjonale gjennombruddet" and "Sunn og folkelig latter." The first sentence of each chapter begins with a date which shapes the time frame of the chapter. In these chapters, Iversen has further categorized the trends of the periods with subchapter headlines.

Within each chapter, there are subchapters which take up specific issues such as genres, firsts, styles, motifs, historical events etc. Together, chapters and subchapters serve to label specific films and filmmakers. There are no subchapters that have any indication of relating to sexuality. The subchapter titled “Fra bygdekritikk til bonderomantikk” mentions romance, but there is no acknowledgement of lack of queer representations. This is true for all of *NFH*. For example, in chapter five there is a subchapter titled “Komedietiden” where Iversen discusses “ekteskapskomedier” of the 1950s and 60s. Nowhere does Iversen define what he means by marriage and nowhere does he acknowledge queer representations or lack thereof in these films. Another example is in his discussions of teen sexuality, nowhere does Iversen discuss queer sexuality or mention any lack of representations in the films.

Subchapters with the category of “firsts” are films or filmmakers attributed with being the first. Such as the subchapters called “Den første norske filmkomedien,” “Vår første barnefilm,” and “Norsk films førstedame.” The last one describes Edith Carlmar as the first lady of Norwegian cinema. This is one of two subchapters which is related to gender. The second is titled “kvinnebølgen” and discusses a handful of female directors. This subchapter about Edith Carlmar attributes her as Norwegian cinema’s first lady and is in the fifth chapter. Earlier in the chapter, Iversen acknowledges Astrid Henning-Jensen who was another female director active at the same times. As she was “imported” from Denmark, Iversen only discusses the two Norwegian feature films she directed in 1951 (*Kranes Konditori*, *Ukjent mann*). The national identity is important in Iversen’s definition of the first Norwegian film lady.

No other women have their own subchapters. There is no “first male director” equivalent to the first lady of Norwegian cinema. Being a man is not a category in *NFH*, while being a woman is. Men are seen as the default, while women are seen as the other sex as described by Simone de Beauvoir (1972). Even though the categorization is done to include women, in a way it further oppresses women as they are looked at as an object of study. In the case of Edith Carlmar, the focus of her subchapter is on her identity as a woman, not her work. In contrast, male directors have subchapters reflecting their work: “Peter Lykke-Seets filmfabrikk,” “Breisteins bygdekritikk,” “Tancred Ibsens krigsproduksjon,” “Skouens gategutter” and “En norsk auteur.” The last one is about Bent Hamer who is labeled as an auteur with a unique style. In all these headlines, the focus is on the work of the creator.



There are many subchapters attributed with film genres, such as “Storbydramaer,” “Villmarksdramaet,” “Komedietiden,” “Barnefilmen blir etablert,” “Sosialmodernismen” and “Sosialrealismen.” Iversen has not only attributed films with these genres, he has found a common trait between films within time periods. In other words, he has also attributed time periods with certain genres. Defining the dominant themes present within the time periods by picking out a handful of films to highlight. Some films their own subchapters, such as “Mysteriets fiskerlivets farer,” “En norsk filmserie – Olsenbanden,” “Fenomenet Flåklypa grand prix,” “Orions belte og fortellingens triumf.” Attributing these films with their own subchapter show that they are important to Norwegian film history, according to Iversen. These decisions are based heavily on previous representations of these films, many written by Iversen himself.

#### **4.1.1 *NFH* and its limitations**

The book *NFH* is a monograph authored by an academic in the field of film studies. It has elements of both a history textbook and a film analysis book. A history textbook indicate that it is an educational non-fiction book. Information is presented as factual.

A film analysis book indicate it is also a non-fiction book, but theory based. Text in a film analysis book follows a different style. Such a book presents interpretations through a film analytic tradition. Many terms that stem from film studies are used to convey meaning to the cinematic elements of film such as film noir, auteur, and femme fatale. In both cases, there is a limitation as to what to include in a book.

Between 1911 and 2011, there were about 700 Norwegian feature films from which Iversen made his selection. Who says which films are the most important or the best? As there are many films to choose from, some criteria must be implemented in order to weigh some films with more importance than others. In the introduction of the book, Iversen (2011) discusses what elements have been considered in choosing movies to highlight:

De filmene jeg vier ekstra oppmerksomhet, er ikke bare filmene som har vært de mest viktige, eller som er de aller beste filmene som er laget her i landet, men det er også filmer som er eksemplariske på ulike måter og som får illustrere ulike perioder, motiv, gener, holdninger eller stiler. (12)

There are limitations in constructing a historical presentation of Norwegian feature films. Iversen does not offer any specific criteria of what makes a film important or the best. What he believes are the most important or best films is shaped by his memory and the cultural memory of Norwegian film history. *NFH* also discusses the relationship between the Norwegian film's role in society and vice versa, but Iversen stresses that this is not the main concern of the book and establishes a canon of Norwegian film (for the issues of canon and canonization, see Assmann 2010). Iversen (2011) points out that, "... i store deler av historien har ikke ambisjonene til norske filmfolk vært annet enn å underholde" (13). Many of the films highlighted in the book are examples of this. Along with historical context, Iversen attributes categories to films and filmmakers to justify their inclusion. As described in the quote above, Iversen attributes categories such as time periods, motifs, genres, attitudes, and styles to films. He does this without adequately explaining his reasoning.

#### **4.1.2 *NFH* and its major themes**

Iversen stresses that labeling what is classified as "Norwegian" is difficult. Short films, documentaries, and co-productions with other countries where little Norwegian input was involved, are not included in the book (331). Defining and canonizing the Norwegian film is a running theme throughout the book. Iversen (2011) claims that the Danish attraction films of the 1910s were not characteristic of the Norwegian film:

De nasjonalromantiske bygdefilmene som ble produsert i kjølvannet av Breistein og Olsens filmer i 1920, skilte seg kraftig fra de spillefilmene som var blitt produsert på 1910-tallet. Nå lå vekten på det nasjonale. Norsk identitet gjennom valg av fortellinger, innspillingssteder, bygninger og klær har bidratt til at dette gjerne kalles det nasjonale gjennombruddet. (38)

Iversen describes this further by saying, "Nå var det norske temaer og bilder som i hovedsak ble laget, og det gjaldt å være norsk som mulig, framfor alt i bruk av den norske naturen og det norske landskapet og bygda" (66). According to Iversen, this was done to distinguish the Norwegian films from the Danish and Swedish.

According to Iversen, many have characterized the 1930s as the golden age for Norwegian cinema, especially 1937 to 1940 (101). Iversen (2011) gives a reason for this:

En av grunnene til at Tancred Ibsens filmer *Fant* og *Gjest Baardsen* er blitt stående som filmer som representerte et kunstnerisk gjennombrudd for norsk film, er at disse filmene oppfylte de kravene både kritikere og publikum hadde til spillefilmer. Krav som ikke var blitt formet av amerikansk film, som dominerte norske lærreter. En gjennomgående innvending kritikere hadde til norske spillefilmer, var deres stil og ikke minst deres tempo. (102)

The critics have played a huge role in shaping the Norwegian film. They have decided which films were good and reflective of Norwegian culture. Maybe Iversen should be a little critical of the critics of that time? The critics of that time were probably very conservative and didn't care for any depictions of sexuality? Iversen also claims the audience liked these films but neglects to explain why. Is this information based solely on ticket sales? He mentions American films were dominating, indicating the standard which Norwegians tried to hold up to was that of the American Hollywood film.

Iversen attempts to distinguish the Norwegian film from the Hollywood film throughout *NFH*. He discusses which films exhibit a national identity or shows characteristics of the Norwegian film. An example is how Iversen discusses the crime genre in the seventh chapter. Iversen claims both the films *Insomnia* (1997) and *Blackout* (1986) are examples of film noir, but the former is more Norwegian. The film *Insomnia* has characteristics of a "sterkere nasjonal identitet" than *Blackout*, according to Iversen (268). He doesn't describe what exactly made this film more Norwegian. Instead, Iversen describes why it was a better film. The film *Blackout* is described as much more erotic than *Insomnia*. This is also seen with how Iversen discusses the *Olsenbanden* films. The Norwegian remakes were less erotic, therefore, were more Norwegian. Iversen writes:

De norske Olsenbanden-filmene ble imidlertid mer og mer «norske» etter hvert, og det er viktige forskjeller mellom de danske og norske filmene. Noen scener ble brukt i både den norske og den danske versjonen, men langsomt ble de norske filmene mer tilpasset et norsk publikum og dets smak. De norske filmene var mindre sentimentale

enn de danske, og mer forsiktige i sin satire og sine vitser. I de norske filmene er det mindre sex og mer øl og alkoholvitser. (224)

Here, Iversen describes exactly what makes the *Olsenbanden* remakes more Norwegian than the original. He gives a definition to “norwegianness” which is less sex and more beer. Iversen asserts the Norwegian audience prefer beer over sex on film. This must have come from somewhere. Is he assuming based on what critics say or the people? Is it solely based on what was popular and sold more tickets at the box office? The point is that Iversen acquires the power to define what the Norwegian film is and according to the quote above, Norwegians do not like to talk about sex. Same is true for *NFH*, it is quite limited on discussions surrounding the notion of sex and sexuality. There are no chapters or subchapters that are devoted specifically to these topics. The images of these films give an insight into what is classified as Norwegian. The picture from *Olsenbanden* is of the gang in a bar, the picture from *Blackout* is of a woman dressed in a black dress in front of the eyes of a man, the film *Insomnia* is depicted by the main character in nature with the mountains of northern Norway in the background. These images have been carefully selected. The same is true for the entire book as images represent what is framed as major themes in Norwegian film history.

#### **4.1.3 *NFH* and its Images**

Not only are films carefully selected in *NFH*, but Images are also. Iversen utilizes images to represent common themes in Norwegian film history. The images in *NFH* only depict films and not historical events. There are images on the front and inside cover of the book, and inside the book along the text. The images are not necessarily from the actual film print. I can identify three images with Kristoffer Joner in the eight chapter, and three images with Vibeke Løkkeberg in the sixth chapter. There is text under each image with the title of the film it is from and a description. This description varies, but generally includes the name of the film and some sort of interpretation of the film to connect the film to the image.

What are the images of? There are many images of what appears to be families, some holding babies. There are many pictures of men and women looking at each other flirtatiously, embracing, holding each other, or lying in bed. This indicates the major themes in Norwegian film history, according to Iversen. By focusing on what he presents as the majority, Iversen has excluded minorities. The images in *NFH* are only of heterosexual couples which has

marginalized homosexual couples. If these representations didn't exist in Norwegian film history, where is the acknowledgement of the heteronormativity of the films? Not acknowledging its heteronormativity only strengthens the hegemonic discourse.

Similarly, there are images on the cover that represent major themes in *NFH*. The images on the front cover and on the inside of the front cover are of films presented in a film roll. There is no image list over these images. The film images are a mix of color and black and white photographs. I count fifteen images on the cover. I can identify nine of the images, five images I am unsure about, one image I cannot make out. Many of the images are repeated in the book, the ones repeated are from the films: *Dæmonen* (1911), *Salmer fra Kjøkkenet* (2003), *Orions Belte* (1985), *Veiviseren* (1987), *Ti kniver i hjerte* (1994), *Elling* (2001). There are images of films on the cover that differ from the images in the book: *Støv på hjernen* (1959), *Max Manus* (2008), *Gategutter* (1949). There is another image that I recognize but it is not repeated in the book and that is from the film *Drømmeslottet* (1986).

On the cover there is an image from the film *Dæmonen* which I know because it is repeated in the book. It is difficult to see what the image depicts on the cover, but inside the book the full image is presented. It is of two people holding hands, a woman with long hair and dark dress and a man in a white shirt and pants with short hair and a top hat. On the cover, only the man in white is visible and if I look closely, I can see part of the woman's dress and her arm. It is visible that they are holding hands. This represents romanticism in Norwegian films. Another image from the film *Ti kniver i hjerte* also represents romance. They are both of heterosexual couples. The rest of the images represents different genres in Norwegian film history.

Another image on the cover is from *Max Manus*, a different image from this film is also found in the book. It is of the main character Max Manus (Aksel Henie) holding his hands up. A different image on the cover which is placed below it and a little to the right is of a man pointing a gun<sup>2</sup>. It appears that the man is pointing the gun at the man holding his hands up. Another image is from the film *Veiviseren* where the main character, an indigenous person, is targeting with an arrow. It is also located below but to the left and it appears to be pointing to the same image. Together the images represent action and suspense genres in Norwegian film

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<sup>2</sup> I think this is from the film *Trysil-Knut* (1942) but haven't been able to verify it.

history, and they are all of men. The character from *Veiviseren* also represent indigenous communities, but there is a lack of representation of the queer community.

Another image is from the film *Salmer fra kjøkkenet*. This image is repeated in the book which depicts a man sitting at a table smoking a pipe while a man is sitting on a tall chair in the corner with a notebook. The image on the cover is cropped and only shows the man in the tall chair. The comic element has been selected for the cover to represent comedy films in Norway, but also the director's unique style. Another comedy representation is of a woman laughing. This image is from the film *Støv på hjernen*. I recognize this because I have seen the film and there is a different image in the book with the same character. The image on the cover appears to be a woman smiling.

On page 174 Iversen includes an image of what appears to be about six adult women, one adult man and two children. The text below it says, "Vaskeglade husmødre i Øyvind Vennerøds populære Lambertseterkomedie *Støv på hjernen*." Here, Iversen describes the scene which is depicted in the image while also naming the director, the film, the film series, and genre. He also provides an interpretation of the image by using the phrase "vaskeglade husmødre." Seeing as there are three people that do not fit in the category of housemothers, Iversen is defining the image by providing text. Had he used "boys" instead of "housemothers," the meaning of the scene depicted in the image would change. The focus would be on the children and the reader would think that this specific scene is about them. This film represents the many comedies of the 1950s and 1960s in Norwegian film history, a dominant theme of that period. Another image is from the film *Elling* on the inside cover of *NFH*, which is repeated in the book. This image represents the many films of the early 2000s about male friendships, the dominant theme of that time period.

There is also an image of the film *Drømmeslottet* on the inside cover. This film is briefly discussed in *NFH* but there is no image in the text. As there is no reference list to the images and that there is no image from the film in the book, it is difficult for a reader to make out this image. The same is true for the five other images I do not recognize. The choice of not including them in the actual book raises to the question why are these images depicted on the cover? Seeing as Wam and Vennerød is my analysis focus, I have been able to identify one of the images not repeated in the book. I saw the image and thought it looked familiar as I had seen the film. I found the scene that is depicted in the image; however, the image is from a

different angle. The image depicts three women sitting in a window corner. This image can possibly exhibit queer connotations if one knew that one of the female character's expresses interest in one of the other women in the film. The choice of exactly this image is unclear as Iversen doesn't discuss the film much in *NFH*. What lies behind the choices of images to represent films and which films to represent?

#### **4.1.4 *NFH* and its Producers**

There are many factors that contribute to choices made in *NFH*. These choices are shaped by values of the producers of *NFH*. The producers of *NFH* are the author and the publisher. They influence the type of memory created in the document. There is a picture of the author Gunnar Iversen on the inside cover with a short text. Iversen is described as a professor in film studies at the institute for art and media studies at NTNU in Trondheim. The text tells us that he is interested in Norwegian film history and documentaries. He is described as having many publications nationally and internationally. The text mentions that he is the co-author of other books published by the same publisher Universitetsforlaget. This short text on the book's cover gives the book validity by attributing Iversen status as an expert on Norwegian film history.

The publisher is also a producer of the book. *NFH* was published by Universitetsforlaget in 2011. There is only one edition. The publisher is an important factor in the construction of the social status of the book that predisposes its potential influence on discourse. The publisher also reflects an academic importance through its name and history. Universitetsforlaget is an academic publisher based at the University of Oslo. The publisher is an important aspect because the beliefs and values of the publisher can influence content and impacts of the final product. What the author creates will not necessarily make it through to the final product as the publisher is the main authority. Their intention may not align with the author's. Universitetsforlaget has a reputation of high-quality academic publications and will shape the finished product to maintain its established status.

The producers of the document have the power to influence representations. The way words and concepts are represented can be influenced by them. In *NFH*, Iversen has the power to choose what represents Norwegian film history and define the films. He chooses what contexts and categories to include and applies those contexts and categories to the films he

best thinks represents them. What Iversen selects will reflect a certain agenda, be it intentional or not. The publisher also helps shape the published document, together they attempt to represent the majority of Norwegian film history, but there will always be exclusion. There will be consensus of what should be remembered, and the dominant position of Norwegian film history will come through the document. Inferior positions will be viewed as unimportant and therefore excluded. This is an implication when it comes to the reader. A queer reader will feel unimportant if their story, their representations do not exist. The producers have an intended audience which is one of the guidelines the publisher Universitetsforlaget is transparent about. Not only do the producers define the intended audience, but the genre does as well. *NFH* is a film history book which is in the genre of Norwegian history and film studies. People interested in film and Norwegian history are the intended audience. Since the book is published by an academic publisher, the book is also intended for students and other academics. *NFH* therefore asserts its own significance for Norwegian film history discourse.

## 4.2 Rhetorical strategies

The intra-medial level describes the phenomenon within the medium which has the power to produce cultural memory. Through analysis of the intra-medial level, I have identified four rhetorical strategies Iversen uses to invite particular understandings in *NFH* and therefore asserts its role as a device of cultural memory. The rhetorical strategies contextualization, categorization, naturalization, and gendering influence the kind of memory created in *NFH* by inviting specific historical meanings and modes of remembering. Together, I argue, these strategies have contributed to a heteronormative narrative in *NFH*. These strategies all involve some type of selection. What Iversen weighs of more importance are highlighted, while others are overlooked. Iversen's choices of films, historical events, interpretations, and the language to describe them reflect what he weighs of more importance.

The first rhetorical strategy that is involved in making memory in *NFH* is contextualization. Iversen provides context around the films and filmmakers he discusses. *NFH* has a sense of chronology and ascends from the year 1911 to the year 2011 and each chapter begins with a date such as in the first chapter. Iversen starts the book by saying, "På sensommeren 1911 ble en helt ny type film spilt inn i Norge" (15). From the first sentence he makes a choice in which historical context to incorporate. Historical events are recollected with supporting facts and figures. Iversen discusses Norwegian cinema politics, "Våren 1920 foreslo regjeringen at



alle kinoer skulle betale en luksusskatt på 10% av spilleinntektene” (66). The date and year place the period discussed in a certain time period and he provides statistics from official government documents. He provides further information after this sentence about the events that took place. Iversen describes protests following the tax proposal. Contextualization matters because it involves a selection of what weighs of more importance. Iversen chose to include this information and to describe the context of around the films that came out at that time. This means that there are contexts which are not chosen. The exclusion of events can marginalize social groups. Queer history is excluded in *NFH* and the goal of this study is to make this marginalization visible. Iversen’s recollection of the past comes from somewhere and this is discussed in the inter-medial level of analysis.

As mentioned, the book *NFH* is a monograph authored by an academic in the field of film studies which has elements of both a history textbook and a film analysis book. In a film analysis book presents interpretations through a film analytic tradition. Terms such as the male gaze, auteur theory, new wave cinema, film noir and femme fatale are all used by Iversen in *NFH*. These analytic terms are used to describe films and images from the films. For example, there is an image from the film *Liv* (1967) and the text below it reads “Påfuglkvinnen og det mannlige blikket. Vibeke Løkkeberg som fotomodellen Liv i Pål Løkkebergs film *Liv*” (213). Here, Iversen provides elements of a history book by providing the name of the film, the director, and the actress. These are facts which he combines with an interpretation by attributing the film to “det mannlige blikket.” Iversen offers a potential to open up for questions about gender and gendered elements by attributing the film with a gendered perspective. He makes them look naturally related, which is what I call the naturalization strategy that *NFH* uses to invite particular understandings.

The second rhetorical strategy involved in marking memory in *NFH* is naturalization. A definition is given to the representation by combining elements of a history book and film analysis making it look natural. Naturalization is often created through Iversen’s use of images. In the text below the image from the film *Liv*, the phrase “mannlige blikket” would be equivalent to the male gaze, pointing to very established term by Laura Mulvey (1989). Iversen doesn’t explicitly explain what it means but describes it in the text. Iversen writes in the text, “Både menn og samfunnets diskriminerende holdninger til kvinner og eksponering av kvinnekroppen, er et av de viktigste temaene i filmen” (212). This would refer to the image which he provides. Iversen gives an example of it by the image. The image shows Vibeke

Løkkeberg laying on a bed with a half open shirt. Further, Iversen explains how Vibeke Løkkeberg was unhappy about the film and that she felt that the film was oppressive to women. Iversen (2011) defends the film by saying:

Dette er en tolkning av *Liv* som det er vanskelig å være helt enig i, men filmen er og forblir tvetydig i forhold til kvinnen. Først og fremst er det et oppgjør med menns kvinneundertrykkende holdninger, men dette er utført på en så forsiktig, indirekte og ironisk måte at filmen lett kan misforstås – ikke minst fordi Vibeke Løkkeberg selv kjærtegnes av kamera i hver eneste scene. (215)

Iversen claims the film is often misunderstood even though he said that Vibeke Løkkeberg, critics and others saw her as a sex object in the film. Even though he doesn't agree with the interpretation, he still acknowledges it by using the male gaze term to describe the image from the film. A gendered perspective has been actualized as a feminist interpretation has been emancipated. Most if not all images in *NFH* have some sort of interpretation; be it film analytic terms or attribution of categories. This is what leads to the next rhetorical strategy – categorization.

The third rhetorical strategy involved in making memory in *NFH* is categorization. As described above, Iversen attributes categories such as time periods, motifs, genres, attitudes, and styles to films. This is the categorization rhetorical strategy which is involved in making memory in *NFH*. Continuing with the examples of images, Iversen provides an image of the film *Villmark* (2003) which depicts people in the woods and the text below it reads, “Med Pål Øies *Villmark* startet skrekkeventyret i nyere norsk film” (303). He attributes the film with the genre category of “skrekkeventyr.” Further, Iversen gives a detailed summary of the film. He mentions a male murderer wearing women's clothes. This small detail seems out of place and unnecessary and Iversen does not acknowledge that “transgender murderer” is a stereotypical and a derogatory queer representation. Compared with the previous example, the film *Liv* is connected to a feminist interpretation while *Villmark* is not connected to a queer interpretation. This implies that Iversen is either unaware of this or has overlooked its existence.

An image that appears to not have an interpretation is for the film *Elling* (2001). Iversen writes “Kjell (Sven Nordin) bærer Elling (Per Christian Ellefsen) i *Elling*” (312) below an

image of a man carrying another man. This description doesn't give an interpretation, but the main text does. The text describes the film as a film about male friendships and Iversen has chosen this image to represent what these male friendships look like. Naturalization has occurred because he has provided a definition of the category and connected this interpretation to facts of the film. Through the words of Lorentzen (2004), Iversen acknowledges homophobia might exist in the audience who sees such images. Iversen writes, "Homofobi regulerer framstillingen av vennskap mellom menn og tvinger fram skildringen av en naiv mannlighet (Lorentzen, 2004, s. 208)" (312). This is the only place in *NFH* where Iversen uses any explicit term relating to queer gender and sexuality. He doesn't discuss his use of the term any further and he doesn't give his opinion like he did in the *Liv* example. In the text about *Elling*, Iversen uses someone else's representation to represent the film. He provides a quote and a citation at the end of his description of the films with the male friendships theme. This is discussed further in the inter-medial level of analysis.

Naturalization is when an interpretation or category is attributed to a film and they appear naturally related. The choice of interpretation or category implies that it is the only possible one and therefore does not need any explanation or problematization. In a historical presentation such as *NFH*, a selection of interpretations and categories must be made. When queer interpretations are excluded, the narrative becomes heteronormative because it naturalizes the hetero perspective as the only possible or relevant perspective. In the *Liv* image example, Iversen uses feminist film theory to describe the film even though he states that he doesn't agree with the interpretation. In the *Villmark* example, Iversen doesn't show a different interpretation. The queer interpretation has been left out. In the *Elling* example, there is a somewhat queer interpretation in the text, but is vague and not explained. Also, Iversen doesn't give his opinion with *Elling* as he did in the text about *Liv*. What these two film representations have in common is the use of previous representations. Iversen cites others in these representations, something he doesn't do with the *Villmark* example. He makes it appear that a queer interpretation of this film doesn't exist. A possible way for a reader to break free from this rhetoric is through "remembrance" as described by Marcuse (1964): "Remembrance is a mode of dissociation from the given facts, a mode of "mediation" which breaks, for short moments, the omnipresent power of the given facts" (98). This critical thinking allows a reader to know that there are other possible interpretations or categories connected to the film. In this study, I was familiar with the Norwegian film history discourse which made me aware

of these other possible interpretations and categories. These are explored further in the inter-medial level of analysis.

The fourth rhetorical strategy is gendering which is constituted by assigning or attributing a gender category to someone or something. This is a normal way of writing, but I argue Iversen uses this device more frequently than a regular book for aesthetic purposes, and that it has an impact on the kind of memory created in *NFH*. Iversen creates new words by attributing ideas and concept gender categories. Words such as “mannekollektiv,” “mannlig begjær,” “kvinnemotivet,” “mannsverden,” “kvinnebølgen,” and “kvinnefilm” are all present in *NFH*. Iversen doesn’t apply this strategy when discussing films that relate to queer gender and sexuality.

There are many uses of terms relating to man in *NFH*. In many plot descriptions of films there are phrases such as “mannkollektiv,” “mannlighet,” “mannlig troløshet,” “oppgjør mot mannsverdenen,” “mannssamfunn” and “mannlig begjær.” Such as in a description of the film *Jakten* (1959): “Guri er den minst interessante av de tre hovedpersonene i Jakten, og først og fremst handler filmen om et mannlig begjær” (184). Gendering lets Iversen define the narrative of the films. He has made his own poetry by constructing words out of gender categories. Terms relating to women are not used as much, however, in the subchapter about women, the prefix kvinn- is used over twenty times in a span of nine pages. Here, there are words such as “kvinnebilder,” “kvinnesak,” and “kvinnepolitisk.” These are all used to describe the film *Hustruer* (1975). The phrase “kvinnelig regissør” is a common phrase in *NFH*, while “mannlig regissør” is never mentioned. It can be concluded that the female gender is generally related to the gender of the director, while the male gender is generally related to the plot of films. Women are categorized solely on basis of sex and there are only two subchapters dedicated to women. One subchapter is called “Kvinnebølgen” which discusses female directors. The other is called “Norsk films førstedame” which discusses Edith Carlmar who is attributed as the first female director. Gendering lets Iversen categorize women into one group to create an expected narrative. These categories are done to include women, but is the grouping them into a category turning them into “the other”?

Iversen also uses gendered terms to describe people. As described above in the image example of *Støv på hjernen*, Iversen attributes a gender to characters. Since the film is about “housemothers” or housewives, this is a legitimate attribution of gender to a word. However,

in the introduction of the book, Iversen attribute a gender to film critic and author Sigurd Evensmo. Iversen calls him the “father” of Norwegian film history as he wrote *Det store tivoli* (1967). Alternatively, Iversen could have used a gender-neutral word such as “founder” or even “parent” would suffice. The use of the word “father” signifies a patriarchal and heteronormative figure. Even the use of parent would be heteronormative because having children is a norm, while not having children is challenging that norm in the eyes of a queer theorist.

Iversen would not be able to write this book without gendering. Take for example the film *Stella Polaris* (1993) where none of the characters have names. It would be impossible for Iversen to describe this film without assuming the gender of the characters. This is a critique of queer theory. If everything is socially constructed and we can never assume anything, how do we make sense of the world? There must be some belief that there are gender differences or else everything is all relative and does not matter. What is the difference between a boy and a girl? Sure, there are specific biological processes which makes one a boy or a girl, but how does Iversen know that by looking at pictures? There are cultural cues that give an idea of what a person’s gender is. Such as clothes, hair, and stature. Gender is much more than just penis and vagina. There are chromosomes which may not align with the gonads. There are certain proteins that influence what will be of certain characteristics. These are biological sex differences that are not arbitrary to gender expression. A kilt is practically a skirt, but it has been culturally attributed a gender by its uses. There is no arbitrary connection between the fabric and a person’s gender.

### **4.3 Representations**

What turns *NFH* into a medium of cultural memory is not only its rhetorical strategies, but also its inter-medial interplay with earlier representations. How films are remembered are represented repeatedly in different media and the inter-medial level involve the interplay between them. What people recall of the films is not necessarily from the films themselves but can also come from the representations of them. The representations in *NFH* are based on films, historical events, and earlier representations of films and events. All of these provide schemata for the representations constructed in *NFH*. Here I explore what sources *NFH* bases its representations on and how they are represented.

*NFH* is a film history book which represents films, historical events and earlier representations of films and events. Earlier representations are summaries, reviews and analyses of films, biographies and interviews with filmmakers, and documents of historical events. Previous historical presentations of Norwegian film history are also earlier representations. Iversen discusses these in the introduction of *NFH*. He begins by discussing Sigurd Evensmo's film history book *Det store tivoli* (1967):

Alle som skriver norsk filmhistorie, må på en eller annen måte forhøde seg til Sigurd Evensmo fordi han er en slags far for alle som ser på norsk films fortid. Boken *Det store tivoli* kom i 1967, og var den første større film- og kinohistoriske framstillingen her i landet. Evensmos bok var et pionerarbeid.

He mentions that it was so successful that it was re-released in 1992 with a few afterword by other authors. Iversen also mentions that he has attempted to edit and supplement Evensmo's book several times but without luck. It can be concluded that Evensmo's *Det store tivoli* is a template or scheme for *NFH*. After this, Iversen gives an overview of other previous representations of Norwegian film history.

Iversen says Evensmo is not the first to present Norwegian film history. Gustav Adolf Olsen made a film catalogue in 1925. This was more of a list of all films released rather than a historical film presentation. Iversen mentions the research project *Levende bilder i Norge* in the 1990s which resulted in the book *Kinoens mørke, fjernsynets lys: Levende bilder i Norge gjennom hundre år* (Dahl et. al, 1996). Iversen is a co-author of this book. He also mentions that some shorter attempts have come in the recent years, but none are as complete as *NFH*. All of these contain representations of film that Iversen is basing his representations on and all of them are listed in the literature list, except for Olsen. I identify the shorter attempts Iversen describes as Per Haddal's addition to *Det store tivoli* (1992), and *Bedre enn sitt rykte: en liten norsk filmhistorie* (2004) by Øyvind Hanche, Gunnar Iversen and Nils Klevjer Aas.

Not only is Iversen the co-author of two previous Norwegian film history books but has written many books and articles about the topic. Iversen discusses this in the introduction of the book by stating that much of the book is built upon his earlier publications. This is seen in the literature list, where Gunnar Iversen is cited the most with 9 references. That is not counting any other publications that he is involved where his name is not listed first, such as

the two previously mentioned. The second person referenced the most is Bjørn Sørenssen with 6 references. Here, Iversen has cited both a doctoral dissertation by Sørenssen and the book version of the dissertation on Norwegian “arbeiderfilmer.” Rest of the top ten most cited have 3 references each: Øyvind Hanche, Sigurd Evensmo, Olav Dalgard, Anne Marit Myrstad, Dag Lutro, Pål Nordseth, Leif Sinding and Ola Solum. There is only one female author in the top ten which is Myrstad. Upon analysis, there are 34 references overall that are authored by females and 96 that are authored by males in the literature list. Of those 34 references of female authors, there are 31 unique authors. Of the 96 other references, there are 66 unique male authors. Overall, 97 authors were cited, and the percentage rate was then 68% male and 32% female<sup>3</sup>. This indicates that the field of Norwegian film history is male dominated.

In the intra-medial level, I found that queer history, themes, and interpretations are underemphasized in *NFH*. This is reflected in the literature list, which does not include any explicit queer related books, studies, or articles as discussed in the literature review of this study. For example, Eldøen (2007), Grenness (1994) and Dyer (2003) are not present in the literature list of *NFH*. Iversen was one of the supervisors on the master thesis by Grenness (1994), its exclusion is a key finding of this study as I discuss further later. It is possible that some of the literature listed in the reference list discuss queer motives, but they are not reproduced in *NFH*. As previously mentioned, the only term relating to queer gender and sexuality is homophobia. This comes from Lorentzen’s book *Maskulinitet*. There are a few similar references in the literature list. Such as the Anne Marit Myrstad’s doctoral dissertation *Melodrama, kjønn og nasjon – en studie av norske bygdefilmer 1920-1930* (1996), Carol Clover’s book *Men, Women, and Chain Saws* (1992), Tommy Gustafsson’s Swedish book *En fiende till civilizationen – manlighet, genusrelationer, sexualitet och rasstereotyper i svensk filmkultur under 1920-talet* (2007), and Tonje Reiersen Skar’s master’s thesis *Tilbaketrukket maskulinitet – mannlige skikkelser i tre filmer av Hans Petter Moland* (2008). There is a slight pattern in these as three of them are related to masculinity. Only one has sexuality in the title but is about Swedish films. In analysis of the text, I found that Myrstad’s dissertation is utilized in a different context than in relation to gender. Iversen writes:

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<sup>3</sup> I do not believe in assuming someone’s gender based upon their first names, therefore, this should be taken lightly.

Ikke alle var like begeistret for alle de nye «bondefilmene», og dette ble flittig diskutert av anmeldere og skribenter i disse årene (Myrstad, 1996, s. 152-153; 2000, s. 37). (49)

It discusses the film reviews of the “farm films” during the 1920s. Iversen also cites a different source by Myrstad for this single sentence. The second source is utilized more in Iversen’s text. This source is a chapter on the filmmaker Rasmus Breisten in a book about Breisten (*På optagelse i friluft – om Rasmus Breistens filmliv*). Although Myrstad is not cited in relation to gender or sexuality, Lorentzen is as previously discussed in relation to male friendships is. After the representation of Lorentzen, Iversen continues to discuss masculinity with the use of Skar Reiersen:

Medieviter Tonje Skar Reiersen har karakterisert mange mannlige norske filmkarakterer med begrepet «tilbaketrukket maskulinitet». Dette er menn som er alene, avsides, kjølige, stille og som lever så å si ubemerket (Skar Reiersen, 2008, s. 28).

Iversen uses this as a template to discuss 14 different films in the next seven pages (313-319). Iversen discusses mostly the films of Moland, Joachim Trier, and Erik Poppe. Not once does he use the word “seksualitet” in this entire discussion of men in modern Norwegian films. It appears that all these characters have no sexual desire, according to Iversen. If these male characters had no sexual desire, Iversen could have discussed asexuality, making it more inclusive. He does use the word “kjærlighet” to describe the plot of the film *Hawaii, Oslo* (2004) as “...der fem historier om kjærlighet flettes i hverandre og ender i samme gatekryss på Grunerløkka i Oslo på årets varmeste dag” (314). There are also several mentions of the gender-neutral term “kjæreste.” For example, for the film *Upperdog* (2009), Iversen writes:

Den første av de fire vi møter i *Upperdog* er Axel (Hermann Sabado), som innledningsvis slår opp med sin kjæreste og flytter hjem til mor og far. Han har fått sin beste venn til å sjekke opp kjæresten for å se om hun er trofast, men når hun lar seg friste, gjør han slutt på forholdet. (318)



The character Axel then gets into a relationship with the polish housecleaner Maria. Iversen describes the character Maria in detail but neglects to explicitly acknowledge the intersectional issues with her relationship to the Axel character. A possible reason for this is that Iversen focuses the representation of this film on its devices. Iversen calls the film a “komplisert flettverksfortelling” and constructs his representation of the film around this notion. He has categorized and labeled the film as such, making it look like the only possible interpretation of it. The character Axel’s relationships in the film *Upperdog* are the closest Iversen gets to in discussing sexuality in the section about masculinity. As Iversen uses the female pronoun “hun” we know that the relationships are heterosexual. There is also a mention that the main character in *Reprise* (2006) who gets help from “gamlekjæresten Kari” (315).

Although there is no discussion of sexuality in relation to masculinity in *NFH*, there is some discussion of sexuality in relation to women in horror films. In the subchapter about horror films, Iversen discusses the film analytic term “final girl” by Carol J. Clover. Iversen (2011) finds a characteristic among the Norwegian horror films of the 2000s and that is that they restructure the view on women and sexuality and applies Clover’s term:

Filmforskeren Carol J. Clover pekte i en klassisk studie av den amerikanske moderne grøsseren på at den kvinnen som oftest overlever til slutt har noen spesielle egenskaper. Hun kalles *Final Girl*, og er den kvinnen som er mest uskyldig eller jomfrunalsk, og som ikke har partner, seksuelle erfaringer eller et utsvevende live (Clover, 1992, s. 35ff.). Dette er snudd opp ned i de norske filmene. (305)

Iversen says that the opposite of Clover’s term is true of the Norwegian films, by presenting proof:

I en scene i *Fritt Vilt* får vi se hvordan Ingunn (Viktoria Winge) nærmest beleires av sin kjæreste, som vil at de endelig skal ligge sammen, men hun nekter og beskytter sin uskyld. I en tradisjonell grøssersammenheng skulle dette tilsi at hun var den fremste kandidaten til å bli *Final Girl* og overleve. Ingunn er imidlertid den første som drepes, mens den mer selvsikre og erfarne Janicke overlever alle andre. (305)

According to Iversen, in the films *Fritt vilt* (2006) and *Rovdyr* (2008), it is “Den selvsikre, oppfinnsomme og erfarne kvinnen overlever, men den jomfrunalske uskylden går en blodig død i møte” (306). He has given his interpretation of these films by applying the term to only disprove it. The whole concept of virginity is a gray area. What is virginity? This concept generally means heterosexual intercourse where the hymen of a woman is broken. Iversen seems to assume no queer interpretation is possible here. Before introducing the final girl term, he discussed the film *Villmark*:

Etter en serie spennende scener avsløres til sist at morderen er en mann i kvinneklær, og Gunnar ofrer sitt eget liv og dreper samtidig morderen. I en epilog forklares det at mannen var en tysk turist som ble gal da hans kjæreste druknet. (304)

Iversen does not discuss any detail of this film in relation to the final girl term. Even though he is clear that all of the Norwegian horror films have the characteristic of restructuring the view on women’s sexuality. Is the “final girl” term relevant to this film? Iversen is quite vague in which films this applies to; he only describes two of them. What does it mean that the murderer in *Villmark* was wearing a dress? What was the gender of his lover? These are some questions a queer theorist wonders when reading Iversen’s representation of Norwegian horror films in *NFH*. It becomes apparent that he discusses gender and sexuality but neglects to incorporate any possibility of there being anything queer about it. A queer reader will feel invisible in these representations in *NFH*.

Although none of the literature *NFH*’s reference list explicitly implies queer themes, there are a couple references I have discovered discuss queer themes in a few films. First is Paal-Helge Haugen’s 1980 article “Angst og Karneval” which is discussed in relation to Wam and Vennerød below. Then there is Leif Ove Larsen’s 1998 doctoral dissertation *Moderniseringsmoro – Romantiske komedier i norsk film 1950-1965. Sjangeren, publikum, sosialhistorien*. Iversen uses this dissertation to shape a subchapter called “Komedietiden” where “ekteskapskomedier” are heavily emphasized. Larsen is cited twice, the first time to describe comedies popularity during the 1950s to 1970s: “Filmhistorikeren Leif Ove Larsen har pekt på at 30% eller omtrent hver tredje film var en komedie i årene 1950 og 1975, 70 av 225 spillefilmer (Larsen, 1998, s. 7)” (171). Iversen presents the film *Vi gifter oss* (1951) as a huge audience success and continues to describe the film in detail. Next, he describes what was characteristic of the films during these times and applies more of Larsen’s representation:

Filmene i denne komedietiden varierte fra den revyaktige og karikerte farsen *Fjols til Fjells*, der Leif Justers hysteri og både verbale og kroppslige akrobatikk var den fremste attraksjonen til den romantiske komedien *Vi gifter oss*. At komiske versjoner av kjærlighetstrøbbel eller ekteskapsproblemer var så populært i etterkrigstiden, er blitt knyttet til endringene i det norske samfunnet i denne komedietiden. Filmhistorikeren Leif Ove Larsen har kalt disse filmene for «moderniseringsmoro» (Larsen, 1998). (172)

Nowhere does Iversen explicitly define what he means by “ekteskapskomedier,” however, Larsen (1998) does:

Særlig populære var komedier av den romantiske typen. Med romantisk komedie mener jeg, som en foreløpig definisjon, morofilmer hvor forholdet mellom et heteroseksuelt par er den sentrale handlingstråden i historien, og hvor konflikter og motsetninger mellom kjønnene er den vesentligste kilden til humoren. (8)

By saying “foreløpig,” Larsen points out this could change in the future. He acknowledges that these films have been heteronormative, something Iversen does not. This is something that is missing within the entire book by Iversen. *NFH* does not acknowledge the heteronormativity present in Norwegian feature films or in its own presentation of them.

Iversen wrote his dissertation *Framtidsdrøm og filmlek* (1992) on the films of Erik Løchen. His supervisors were Leif Furhammar and Birgitta Steene at Stockholm University. In *NFH*, Iversen cites Steene’s term “barnvoksenfilm” in relation to the film *Is-slottet* (1987) which is discussed below. Much of Iversen’s previous work does not discuss queer gender and sexuality, but he has discussed it more after the publication of *NFH* (Iversen 2013, Iversen 2017, Iversen 2018). I discuss an earlier publication in relation to the Wam and Vennerød film *Sebastian* (1995) later.

How do the sources Iversen discusses in his introduction represent queer films? This is answered in chapter 5 of this study. I explore the earlier representations that *NFH* is based upon. I look at how Evensmo (1967), Dahl et al. (1996), Haddal (1992) and Hanche et al. (2004) discuss queer films. I also discuss other representations that have been overlooked. I

found that Iversen mentions a few queer Norwegian films in *NFH*. These are *Cecilia*, *Fjols til fjells*, *Fjellet*, *Is-slottet* and *Tommys inferno*. However, he does not discuss them explicitly in terms of queer gender and sexuality. I explore how others discuss these films and if they discuss any other films that Iversen doesn't. Then I discuss and compare all publications' representation of the filmmakers Wam and Vennerød.

#### 4.4 Media network

The media network which a medium belongs to actualizes its potential for becoming a medium of cultural memory. The people who read, cite, promote, or recommend *NFH* in various media are a part of its media network.

The publisher Universitetsforlaget promotes the book *NFH* by providing a favorable summary of it. This helps them sell their product. The book is for sale on their website and it is described as ("Norsk filmhistorie"):

«Norsk filmhistorie» er en samlet framstilling av den norske spillefilmens historie, fra produksjonen virkelig startet i 1911 og fram til i dag. Gunnar Iversen gir oss lange linjer, korte glimt, gode analyser og spennende fortellinger fra filmens verden. Vi får innblikk i sjangerutvikling, bransjeutfordringer, filmpolitikk og rammebetingelser, men i denne boka er det filmene selv som spiller hovedrollen.

Norsk film er inne i en spennende tid og har opplevd et stort løft de siste årene, fra publikum og bevilgende myndigheter, og i form av prestisjetunge priser i utlandet. Veien fram til dagens situasjon er imidlertid en spennende fortelling, full av overraskelser og skuffelser, glemte mesterverk og tider preget av motgang.

Universitetsforlaget calls *NFH* a collected presentation of the Norwegian feature film's history. This description makes *NFH* seem important. The publisher also includes a couple of good reviews:

«Norsk filmhistorie er ein glimrande gjennomgang av hundre år med norsk film»  
Alf Kjetil Walgermo, Vårt land

«[Gunnar Iversen] arbeider seg kløktig gjennom tiår for tiår, og veksler smidig mellom handlingsreferater, tendensanalyse og filmpolitikk. Iversen har en uanstrengt pedagogisk stil med rom for både kuriositeter og filmteoretiske referanser. Ja, boken vil egne seg like godt for den opplyste allmennhet som for studenter»

Ingunn Økland, Aftenposten

These are provided to further their claim of the book's importance. The first praises the book with the word "glimrande" and the second recommends it for both students and the "enlightened public." The publisher also provides a marketing text which is seen on multiple online stores (CDON.no, adlibris.no, norli.no, haugenbok.no, akademika.no). This text says:

I denne boka fortelles endelig norsk filmhistorie med fokus på spillefilmene. Iversen trekker frem noen av høydepunktene og de magiske øyeblikkene i norsk filmhistorie. Her analyseres filmenes fortellinger og estetiske dimensjoner, samtidig som leseren også får innblikk i sjangerutvikling, bransjeutfordringer, filmpolitikk og rammebetingelser. Boka kan leses som en historiebok, et innblikk i norsk filmbransje og filmfortellingsfaget, eller som en bok full av tips om gode norske filmer som både har tålt tidens tann, og som holder et internasjonalt nivå.

The book is framed as a history book with focus on Norwegian feature films as the text says, "endelig norsk filmhistorie." If you want to know the history of Norwegian cinema, this is *the* book to learn about it. The book is promoted in academia too. This is seen with *NFH* as mentioned in the beginning of this study with a quote by Frykholm (2012) which praises the book:

Det ska också sägas att i den mån Norsk filmhistorie reser spørsmål kring historiska drivkrafter återspeglar detta vissa problem som är förknippade med historieskrivande mer generellt, t.ex. hur varje avgränsning tycks kräva att vissa orsakssamband privilegieras på bekostnad av andra. I detta avseende faller med andra ord ingen skugga på Iversen, som med Norsk filmhistorie har givit oss ett lika välkommet som välförfattat bidrag till historieskrivningen om norsk film, en bok som borde ha alla förutsättningar att fungera som standardkälla på området under lång tid framöver. (pp)

This further actualizes *NFH* into a medium of cultural memory. Frykholm mentions that there is always a danger of marginalization of social groups in the construction of a historical presentation but doesn't acknowledge if this has happened or not. In this study I have researched how queer gender and sexuality has been marginalized in *NFH*.

It has also received good reviews internationally: “*Norsk filmhistorie* is an excellent textbook and/or resource for teaching courses on Norwegian and Scandinavian film history and aesthetics, as well as thematic trends” (Korynta 113). The book is important as it paints a picture of what is classified as *the* Norwegian film nationally and internationally. By other scholars using this book as a resource, the information is reproduced into articles, books, and studies. None of them seem to notice the lack of queer aspects in *NFH*.

As mentioned in the beginning of this study, *NFH* is used as teaching material. The book is used as “pensum” for both subjects that study Norwegian film history. Further, the other books discussed in his study are listed as recommended reading for the classes. This means that students of these classes will think that queer Norwegian cinema does not exist. When I tell people about this project, they always ask if this book is still being used. Yes, it is still being used because no one has pinpointed this issue. That is why I did this study, to make this marginalization visible and improve the current Norwegian film history discourse.

As *NFH* is used as teaching material, it is referenced by multiple master's studies relating to Norwegian film (Bern 2012, Feiring 2015, Sola 2016, Grundstad 2017, Aune 2018, Govertsen 2019). The book is being actualized into a medium of cultural memory by being used again and again. *NFH* is referenced in the third edition of *Bedre enn sitt rykte* by Hance et al. (2014). A new chapter was added, written by Gunnar Iversen. In it, Iversen (2014) discusses the film *Villmark*:

En av de unge blir også funnet død, og det viser seg å være en gal morder i området. Fjernsynsprodusenten ofrer seg og dreper samtidig morderen. I en epilog forklares det at morderen var en tysk turist som ble sinnssyk da hans kjæreste druknet, men så sås det tvil om dette. (99)

Iversen has reproduced what he wrote in *NFH* but made it shorter. This time, the cross-dressing information is left out. Only the crazy murderer is present in this representation. Maybe Iversen became aware of his own unnecessary detail.

The title of the book itself holds a lot of power. If one wants to learn about Norwegian history, you generally search for Norwegian film history. When I searched the database Oria for “norsk filmhistorie” it was one of the first that came up. When you search “norsk filmhistorie” on Oria the main contributor is Gunnar Iversen. The author distribution of the results are as follows: Iversen, Gunnar (20), Norsk filminstitutt. (10), Helseth, Tore (8), Diesen, Jan Anders (6), Solum, Ove (5), Myrstad, Anne Marit (5), Larsen, Leif Ove (5), Tore Helseth (2). Gunnar Iversen produce the most results with twenty items. Norsk filminstitutt and Tore Helseth produce the second most results with ten items each. What these three have in common is the book *Bedre enn sitt rykte – En liten norsk filmhistorie* (Hanche et al.), first published in 1997 and again in 2004. Gunnar Iversen is a co-author of this book, Norsk filminstitutt is the publisher and Helseth wrote a review of it in *Norsk medietidsskrift* (1997). When I search the same keyword “norsk filmhistorie” in Oria for all academic libraries in Norway, the results are almost identical. Norsk filminstitutt and Helseth produce a few more item results: Iversen (20), Norsk filminstitutt (15) and Helseth (12). These results reveal that the Norwegian film history discourse is shaped by few people.

The media network actualizes *NFH* into a medium of cultural memory by providing it with a significant standing in the Norwegian film historical discourse. The book is marketed, framed, and used as a valid representation of Norwegian film history without any criticism of its limitation in terms of queer gender and sexuality. The lack of recognition of the heteronormative narrative in *NFH* furthers the hegemonic Norwegian film history discourse.





## 5 Queer reading

In the previous chapter, I presented the intra-, inter-, and pluri-medial strategies that turn *NFH* into a medium of cultural memory. I identified four rhetorical strategies that invite specific historical meanings and modes of remembering. These are contextualization, categorization, naturalization, and gendering. I identified earlier representations that *NFH* draws upon. They are Evensmo (1967), Dahl et al. (1996), Hanche et al. (2004) and Haddal (1992).

In this chapter, I offer a systematic presentation of the findings of a queer reading of the book. This study found that a heteronormative narrative is present in *Norsk filmhistorie* (2011). Queer gender and sexuality have been excluded. I argue that the four rhetorical strategies play a role in the selections that have led to a heteronormative narrative in *NFH*. Choices in contexts, categories, and interpretations show an exclusion of queer history, queer film theory and queer identities. These were not discussed in *NFH* and there was a lack of any acknowledgement of their existence. Through analysis of earlier representations, I was able to identify any misrepresentations present in *NFH*. I did this by looking at queer themes in the films Iversen discusses and compared them to other sources.

How are films with queer motives treated by Iversen? The films I discussed in the queer Norwegian cinema chapter have been straightwashed in *NFH*. There are two ways in which queer films are straightwashed in *NFH*. The first is by underemphasizing any possible queer visibility. The second is by categorizing a film in which no queer interpretation is needed to discuss the film. Iversen discusses the films *Cecilia*, *Fjols til fjells*, *Is-slottet*, *Tommys Inferno* and *Fjellet*. No other films are discussed, except the films of Wam and Vennerød which is presented later. First, I give example of the two ways the films have been straightwashed. Then, I present Iversen's representations of the films *Cecilia*, *Fjols til fjells*, and *Is-slottet* and compare them to the earlier representations *NFH* is based upon.

The closest Iversen gets to discussing queer sexuality is in relation to the film *Tommy's inferno* (2005). Iversen writes:

For det andre har de nye filmene nærmet seg amerikanske genreforbilder. Dette gjøres både i form og innhold. Formmessig sett er de heftigere i rytme, lyd og kamerakoreografi, som i *Tommys inferno* (Ove Raymond Gyldenås, 2005), der også

kjærlighet og seksualitet er det viktigste. Innholdsmessig sett er barn og ungdommers egne følelser, spesielt omkring forelskelse og seksualitet, stadig blitt viktigere, ofte med klare referanser til amerikanske genreforbilder i High School-filmer.

Iversen's description lacks detail, leaving the reader clueless into what he means by the references to American high school films. Iversen doesn't give an example of these films that he compares *Tommys inferno* to, he is referring to a genre which he believes everyone knows about. This naturalization strategy has contributed to Iversen underemphasizing the queer theme present in the film. The representation appears "straight" because he doesn't say it explicitly. Iversen has made queer themes invisible in this film. He gives no reference to this representation either, which is also seen in the representation of the film *Fjellet*.

The film *Fjellet* (2011) has two queer identified main characters but is discussed in relation to low budget regional films. It is only mentioned in a subchapter called "Regional lavbudsjettfilm" which is in the eighth chapter. Iversen only mentions the film by saying, "Våren 2011 hadde både *Fjellet* (Ole Giæver) og *Umeå4ever* (Geir Greni) premiere. Begge var privatfinansierte, og de håpet å komme inn under billettstøtteordningen" (300). After this sentence, Iversen continues to discuss the film *Umeå4ever* (2011). Iversen gives details of the director Geir Greni's financial struggles with the film. Also, Iversen attributes *Umeå4ever* with the comedy genre and a non-commercial film unlike the *Olsenbanden* films. Iversen selected to discuss one film over another which has unfortunately led to the exclusion of any possible discussion of queer representations. By categorizing the film as a regional budget film, there is no discussion of what the film is about and Iversen escapes discussing queer identities. This film has also been straightwashed in the eyes of a queer theorist.

## 5.1 *Cecilia* (1954)

The film *Cecilia* (1954) is mentioned in *NFH*, but there is no mention of it being the first widely known Norwegian film to have an identifiable queer character in Norwegian film history. Iversen also mentions the director of the film, Solvejg Eriksen, in the subchapter about women where he says she made a few films in the early 1950s. Iversen mentions the film *Cecilia* in the fifth chapter in a subchapter called "Staten støtter spillefilmen." The film is mentioned in a quote which is taken from the 1967 book *Det store tivoli*. Iversen (2011) quotes Sigurd Evensmo:

Foruten *Selkvinnen* studerte lagmannsretten de fire norske filmene *Den evige Eva* (1953), *Skøytekongen* (1953), *Flukt fra paradiset* (1953) og *Cecilia* (1954) for å ha et sammenligningsgrunnlag. Men i domspremissene kunne retten bare fastslå at det ikke ga *Selkvinnen* noe rettskrav på støtte [og] at kanskje en annen film burde vært nektet denne støtten. (Evensmo, 1967, s. 305). 160

Before this quote, the film *Selkvinnen* (1953) is discussed in detail. It was denied financial support from the state because of its subpar quality, artistically and technically (Iversen 2011, 159). Iversen has placed the film *Cecilia* in the same category as *Selkvinnen* by only mentioning it in relation to it. There is no further discussion of the film *Cecilia* in *NFH*. This brief mention of it makes it appear that it is not an importance to Norwegian film history, according to Iversen.

Although, the film *Cecilia* doesn't appear to be important in *NFH*, it does in other publications by Iversen. In the article "Hverdagens usle patos" from the film magazine *Z*, Iversen (1992) gave a detailed analysis of the film. In this previous publication, Iversen calls *Cecilia* a strange film because of its complexity and ambiguity (26). He acknowledges the themes of gender and sexuality present in the film. First, he describes a character with a male name Tore, who wears men's clothing. This character has often been interpreted as a lesbian, according to Iversen. However, Iversen stresses that the so-called lesbian character was just an androgynous "yrkeskvinne" and that there was very little evidence of any sexual attraction (Iversen 1992: 29). Iversen (1992) describes Cecilia's relationship to the character Tore:

Hennes forhold til Tore er som barnets til sin mor, og i den konteksten blir en av filmens scener som klarest skulle antyde et seksuelt farget forhold tvetydig. «Er du glad i meg?» spør Tore, etter at Cecilia har fortalt at hun drømte om sin mor, Cecilia svarer: «Siden mor døde har jeg ikke andre enn deg. Hadde du vært gutt ville jeg gifte meg med deg. Men det går vel ikke an?» Og Tore svarer: «Nei, samfunnet er ikke slik». (30)

This dialogue shows there is some discussion of queer sexuality in the film. However, Iversen believes this relationship is like a mother and child relationship which makes the interpretation of any lesbian undertone quite unlikely. Iversen admits there might exist a

superficial theme of an intimate female relationship between Cecilia and Tore (ibid). Iversen's interpretation is a fair one as sexuality and gender expression are two separate things. However, if this character was a man dressed in women's clothing with a woman's name, this interpretation would most likely been different. The character Tore is seen merely as a working woman by Iversen (1992).<sup>4</sup> Most often, a woman wearing pants is culturally appropriate, while a man wearing a dress is seen as a deviation of the norm.

Iversen has not reproduced what he wrote in the article "Hverdagens usle patos" in *NFH* as he has categorized *Cecilia* in *NFH* along with the film *Selkvinnen*. This is seen in earlier representations in similar books. The same narrative of the film *Cecilia* in *NFH* is seen in the book *Bedre enn sitt rykte* by Hanche et al. (2004). It briefly mentions the film *Cecilia* and the representation is almost identical to Iversen's representation in *NFH*. Much like Iversen, Hanche et al. (2004) discusses the film *Cecilia* in relation to the film *Selkvinnen*:

Statens filmråd var enig og nektet å innstille *Selkvinnen* til støtte. Krasse kommentarer ble også rettet mot *Cecilia* (1954). Opphavskvinnen til den psykologiske studien «vender tilbake til etslags steinalderstadium, fraber seg fagfolk og skuespillere, dikter og instruerer selv – og skryter uhemmet av dette faktum», skrev Dagbladet Axel Kielland hoderystende. (55)

This representation is in line with Iversen's, except it is more explicit regarding the film's qualities. It differs from Iversen's as Hanche et al. also cite a journalist in this and refrains from citing Evensmo.

The narrative has been shaped by the schema constructed by Evensmo (1967). In *NFH*, Iversen provided a quote from Evensmo. What does the original representation say? In *Det store store tivoli*, a couple of pages before the cited quote, Evensmo (1967) writes:

I ett tilfelle ble en pretensiøs film om et så ømfintlig tema som driftslivet hos unge kvinner, satt i scene av en kvinnelig journalist. For sikkerhets skyld tok hun hånd om

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<sup>4</sup> In later publications, Iversen has been more flexible with the queer representation. See Iversen (2013) and Iversen (2018)

så vel manuskript som regi og produksjonsledelse, samt medvirket ved klippingen. Det var ikke stort flere enn hun og Chaplin som hadde dekket alle disse funksjonene på en gang, og selv ikke Chaplin hadde noensinne tatt det ekstra løft å arbeide med amatører i samtlige roller. Men også den oppgaven ble tatt på strak arm ved innspillingen av *Cecilia* (1954). Bare et menneske som ante lite om film, kunne begi seg inn i et slikt eksperiment. (302)

First, Evensmo never says Solvejg Eriksen's name. Evensmo does however go into detail about the film's production. What the film is about is translated into a vague description that says, "driftslivet hos unge kvinner." Evensmo doesn't explain what this mean, nor does he explain why she did everything on her own. A few years after the publication of *Det store tivoli* (1967), Sigrud Evensmo published the book *Den nakne sannheten: sex i filmene* (1971), a book about sex in the movies. He mostly discusses international films and has a chapter on homosexuality in cinema. In this book, Evensmo discusses queer history in Norway:

Den utbredte, foraktende eller hatefulle holdning overfor homoseksuelle har til alle tider rettet seg mot menn, et forhold som i 1971 fremdeles var avspeilet i den norske straffelovens groteske §213 – straff på inntil 1 år for mannlig homoseksualitet, mens kvinnene ikke er nevnt. Opp gjennom tidene var det en altfor ufyselig og opprørende tanke til å kunne tenkes, at kvinner elsker hverandre og har seksuelt samkvem. De hadde ingen seksualdrift i det hele tatt, fastslo mannssamfunnet, og mennene har ikke vært alene om dette aksiom, heller ikke i vår egen tid.

First of all, queer history is something Iversen (2011) does not incorporate in *NFH*. Second, here Evensmo describes that women were seen to have no "seksualdrift" reminiscing to the *Cecilia* narrative being about "driftslivet hos unge kvinner." Did Solvejg Eriksen want to do everything on her own or did she have to? Did the topic of the film play a role? The comparison to Charlie Chaplin is in a way a compliment as he was such an iconic filmmaker. Yet, Evensmo's description is condescending by calling her a female journalist that had no idea about film. It appears that Evensmo thinks Solvejg Eriksen was a naïve little girl taking on such a project all by herself. If she were a man, would Evensmo have said the same?

The representation by *Evensmo* is reproduced in both *NFH* and *Bedre enn sitt rykte* in their own ways. It becomes apparent that *Det store tivoli* has helped shaped the cultural memory of

the film *Cecilia* and any queer storyline has been excluded. A possible reason for this is that Evensmo's book *Den nakne sannheten: sex i filmene* (1971) is overlooked. Evensmo doesn't really discuss the films in *Det store tivoli*, he focuses on the economic aspects. The question is then, why reproduce what the films are about from this book?

Evensmo has constructed a representation of the film *Cecilia* with a scheme with two narratives. These narratives are the director's inexperience and the quality of the film. Both Iversen (2011) and Hanche et al. (2004) follow this scheme by Evensmo (1967). Dahl et al. (1996) differs as the representation of *Cecilia* is discussed in relation to NRK:

Forhandlinger i alle disse retningene ble ført gjennom hele 60-tallet. Bare én og annen norsk film – enten svært gamle, som *Trollelgen* (1927, vist 1964), eller filmer med antatt svak opphavsrettsbeskyttelse, for eksempel fordi de medvirkende var amatører som i *Cecilia* av Solvejg Eriksen (1954, vist 1968), fant veien til skjermen. (401)

Dahl et al. (1996) at least mentions the film but neglects to tell the reader anything about it. The “amatør” narrative is present in this representation. The quality of the film is not discussed. In all these representations of the film *Cecilia*, any possible queer theme has been excluded, creating a heteronormative narrative within the Norwegian film history discourse.

## **5.2 *Fjols til fjells* (1957)**

The film *Fjols til fjells* is mentioned six times in *NFH*. Although the film doesn't have any identified queer characters, one of the main protagonists is an identified female pretending to be a male piccolo. The character's gender expression doesn't align with the character's biological sex which makes it a queer representation.

Only two of the six mentions give any description of what the film is about. The other four are only mentions of the film, mostly focusing on its popularity:

*Operasjon Løvsprett* (Knut Andersen, 1962) var aller mest populær, og etter den kom *Støv på hjernen* (Øyvind Vennerød, 1959), Edith Carlmars *Fjols til fjells* og *Vi gifter oss* (Nils R. Müller, 1951). (170)

The most Iversen writes about *Fjols til fjells* is in the subchapter called “Komedietiden.”

Iversen summarizes the film:

Filmene i denne komedietiden varierte fra den revyaktige og karikerte farsen *Fjols til fjells*, der Leif Justers hysteri og både verbale og kroppslige akrobatikk var den fremste attraksjonen til den romantiske komedien *Vi gifter oss*. At komiske versjoner av kjærlighetstrøbbel eller ekteskapsproblemer var så populært i etterkrigstiden, er blitt knyttet til endringene i det norske samfunnet i denne komedietiden.

Filmhistorikeren Leif Ove Larsen har kalt disse filmene for «moderniseringsmoro» (Larsen, 1998). (172)

First and foremost, Leif Juster’s character is the only one mentioned. In all the times Iversen mentions the film in *NFH*, the female character is excluded. What Iversen sees as the main plot of the film is the hotel concierge and his antics. This is true; however, the piccolo bit is such a large element to the plot that its absence in *NFH* is quite strange.

Hanche et al.(2004) also discusses *Fjols til fjells* in a similar way to Iversen in *NFH*:

Etter Helge Krogs lystspill med nålestikk til sosieteten, *På solsiden*, trakk Edith Carlmar én million nordmenn til kinoene med *Fjols til fjells* (1957). Med portieren Poppe som ikke greier å holde styr på alle gjestene på høyfjellshotellet, gjorde revykongen Leif Juster en av sitt livs roller. (56).

Two narratives are the same here, the film’s popularity and Leif Juster’s role in the film. The same is true for the representation of *Fjols til fjells*. Both Iversen (2011) and Hanche et al. (2004) follow the scheme premediated by Evensmo (1967):

Den triumferende bestseller blant dem var Carlmar-filmen *Fjols til fjells* (1957) som på et par år spilte inn 2,4 millioner kroner og tidligere bare var overgått av *Kampen om tungtvannet* som nådde opp i 2,7 millioner. Med Leif Juster som den utslagsgivende kraft var denne crazykomedien det beste eksempel på behendig tilpasning til et mer kommersielt klima etter 1955. (320)

The main narratives of its popularity and Leif Juster's role is highlighted. This has helped shape the cultural memory of this film. The same is seen in *Kinoens mørke, fjernsynets lys: Levende bilder i Norge gjennom hundre år* but Dahl et al. expands a little on it. The film *Fjols til fjells* is mentioned in four places pages 204, 216, 240, and 271. The plot of the film is discussed on page 216 with a picture of Leif Juster and Unni Bernhoft. The main text says:

I *Fjols til fjells* spiller Leif Juster den hysteriske portieren Poppe på Hurumhei høyfjellshotell. To gjester som er helt like av utseende gir opphav til en rekke komiske forvekslinger og forviklinger. (216)

This representation also describes Juster as hysterical as in *NFH* but gives a little more information about the plot of the film than all the other representations. It doesn't mention the other main character, but the text accompanying the picture does. It says, "Av revyfilmatiseringene på 1950- og 1960-tallet var *Fjols til Fjells* blant de mest vellykkede. Leif Juster spilte portier Poppe og Unni Bernhoft var piccoloen Rudolf" (ibid). There is no mention of the character's gender, but the name "Rudolf" indicates a male name. Dahl et al. (1996) includes the popular narrative and Leif Juster's role narrative. It goes more in depth about the plot and mentions the cross-dressing Unni Bernhoft. There is no discussion of how the gender expression was received or if it was perceived as offensive.

In Iversen's *NFH*, there are a couple of mentions of men dressed as women in the plot of two films. The first in the film *Villmark*, as previously discussed. Another mention of a man dressed in women's clothing is in the summary description of the film *Ti gutter og en jente* (1944). I didn't think much of the title before, I thought it was Danish or just an alternate spelling. Now it appears to be a combination of "gutt" and "jente." Iversen writes that the main part of the film is that a gang of boys are preparing for a performance. The boys loose singers and actors right before their performance so they improvise the show with the help of a fireguard. Iversen writes, "Bortsett fra brannvakta, som utkledd som kvinne synger en sang for tilskuerne, tar hele guttegjengen opp jakten på gatas skurk og lykkes i å få tilbake trekkspillet" (127). Somehow the clothes the character is wearing is of importance here. Why does Iversen mention this? Is this character the "jente" in the film's title? Nowhere does Iversen describe any girl that joins the gang of boys. And nowhere does he relate this character to the title. At first, I thought it was weird he mentioned this detail of the film, but it makes sense. However, why doesn't he explicitly tell the reader this? Iversen avoids any



difficult discussions by not mentioning this connection. Why is the man wearing women's clothes? How does he know it is a man and that the clothes are for women? Iversen defines what he thinks a man is and what women's clothes look like. Does the film explain why the character appears this way? The reader doesn't know because this is a representation of the film and not the film itself. What has Iversen left out? This example shows that queer gender and sexuality is not an important theme for Iversen (2011). Who knows what else has been left out? This is why queer readings are important.

Not only has Iversen left out information, he has selected to focus on the category which he has placed the film in. Iversen has constructed his narrative of the film *Ti gutter og en jente* by placing it in the fourth chapter in a subchapter called "Vår første barnefilm." If there is a cross-dresser in Norway's first children's movie, isn't that something to discuss? Is the representation made to ridicule people wearing clothing of the opposite sex? Has Norwegian culture been shaped by this representation? Has it been repeated? These are important things to discuss, but it becomes apparent it was not important for the producers of *NFH*.

Going back to Iversen's representation of *Fjols til fjells* in *NFH*, he cites Larsen (1998):

Filmene i denne komedietiden varierte fra den revyaktige og karikerte farsen *Fjols til Fjells*, der Leif Justers hysteri og både verbale og kroppslige akrobatikk var den fremste attraksjonen til den romantiske komedien *Vi gifter oss*. At komiske versjoner av kjærlighetstrøbbel eller ekteskapsproblemer var så populært i etterkrigstiden, er blitt knyttet til endringene i det norske samfunnet i denne komedietiden.

Filmhistorikeren Leif Ove Larsen har kalt disse filmene for «moderniseringsmoro» (Larsen, 1998). (172)

Leif Juster's character is connected to hysteria, which has historically been labeled as relating to women. Larsen (1998) sees this hysteria as an implicit homosexual motif. In the end of the film, the main character Poppe (Leif Juster) falls in love with the revealed to really be a woman piccolo. Larsen (1998) writes:

Det homoseksuelle motivet ligger som en sub-tekst gjennom hele farsen i Poppes reaksjoner, handlinger og verbal allusjoner. Hans hysteri kan i dette perspektivet leses som symptomer på en seksuell splittelse, som ytre, kroppslige manifestasjoner på en

indre konflikt mellom fortrenge homoseksuelle og legitime heteroseksuelle drifter og tilbøyeligheter. (199)

Iversen has selectively chosen parts of Larsen's dissertation making it fit his heteronormative narrative. Only the hysteria part was reproduced in Iversen's representation of the film. I could not find any discussions of queer gender and sexuality in Iversen (2011), Evensmo (1967), Dahl et al. (1996) or Hanche et al. (2004). However, Evensmo (1971) does:

Når vil vi i en film oppleve at et homoseksuelt kjærlighetsforhold blir levet ut i harmoni og lykke? En nærmest utopisk tanke. La oss heller spørre hvor mange generasjoner det vil kreve før menn i vårt umåtelig frigjorte Norden kan kysse hverandre på kinnet i folks påsyn, slik det skjer i Sør- og Øst-Europa ved et hjertelig gjensyn, - uten å bli betraktet som perverse. (141)

In *Den nakne sannheten: sex i filmene*, Evensmo discusses many international films with homosexual topics such as *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931), *Persona* (1966), *The Boys in the Band* (1970), and *Rope* (1948). He doesn't discuss any Norwegian films but discusses the reception of the film *Tea and Sympathy* (1956):

I 1956 kom det første betydelige, amerikanske drama med homoseksualitet som hovedtema. Det var Vincente Minellis *Tea and Sympathy* (*Te og sympati*), bygd på et skuespill av Robert Anderson. Men her kunne mange kinogjengere også se frykten for et så farlig tema og studere virkningen av Hollywood-sensuren i detaljer. I Norge falt det seg slik at Nationalteatret hadde hatt en glimrende framføring av Robert Andersons stykke med Toralv Maurstad og Wenche Foss i hovedrollene, og en tid senere ble forestillingen sendt på turné rundt om i landet – og da i samløp med filmversjonen på kinoene! (134)

This is the most I have found about how queer a queer film has been received in Norway in any of these books. To think that this play was playing with this theme but films with the topic couldn't be made. Or have they been made, and are not discussed? Wenche Foss was in this play and as I discuss later, she was in several of Wam and Vennerød's films.

### 5.3 *Is-slottet* (1987)

The film *Is-slottet* (1987) is not discussed with any terms relating to queer gender and sexuality, but it hints at a possible presence of same sex attraction. Iversen writes:

Per Bloms filmatisering av Tarjei Vesaas roman *Is-slottet*, handler om det vare forholdet mellom ungjentene Siss og Unn. Deres vennskap vekker følelser som skaper uro og fortvilelse, og som fører til at Unn forsvinner i en frosset foss som ser ut som et slott av is, der hun dør. (288)

The film is discussed in the subchapter called “barnvoksenfilm” which is discussed by Iversen as if it was a genre. Here, Iversen represents a selection of films with the help of four motifs in modern Nordic “barnvoksenfilmen” described by Birgitta Steene (1992). These motifs are discovery of sexuality in oneself or others, confrontation of Christian morals, experience of death or evil, and a child being bullied or misunderstood. Iversen mentions that these motifs often overlap. Iversen attributes *Is-slottet* to the third motif as the film is about death. However, Iversen does not discuss any possibility of the film’s death motif overlapping with the discovery of sexuality motif. He has defined the main motif of the film and categorized it as such. Why does Iversen mention “Deres vennskap vekker følelser av uro og fortvilelse” at all? Another film Iversen attributes the death motif is the film *Ikke naken* (2004). As this film came out long after the original article Iversen cites, this interpretation is his own. He also attributes the discovery of a sexuality motif to this film. In discussion of the first motif, Iversen writes:

Nesheims *Søndagsengler* (1996) og Torun Lians *Ikke naken* (2004) handler også om oppvåkne seksualitet. I *Ikke naken* kikker Selma nysgjerrig på de voksne, og vil ikke at hun og hennes venninner skal interessere seg for gutter og klining, men til slutt må hun innse at det er kjærligheten som er det aller viktigste. (288)

Iversen is vaguely saying the character Selma curiously looks at the adults. He doesn’t say what the adults are doing, presumably something related to sexuality. Gender is attributed to the character and her friends and the opposite gender is what they are supposed to be interested in. He also stresses that love prevails as the most important thing even though the character seems to be interested in the sexual side. Iversen downplays this girl’s sexuality just as much as the girls in *Is-slottet*. Why doesn’t Iversen apply this motif also to the film *Is-*

*slottet*? It appears in the representation that there is nothing sexual about the friendship in the film.

The film *Is-slottet* is not discussed in Hanche et al. (2011) or Dahl et al. (1996). The 1992 addition to *Det store tivoli* by Haddal (1992) doesn't mention it either. Iversen's representation of the film *Is-slottet* is based upon his dissertation supervisor Birgitte Steene's article "Barnvoksenfilm – en ny genre" from *Z Filmtidsskrift* (1992):

I *Is-slottet* er hele fortellingen strukturert omkring flanering og voyeurisme. Filmen etablerer fra første stund det søkende barnets blikk. I lange tagninger fokuseres det på Unns spente ansikt når hun er på vei hjem til den nye skolevenninnen Siss. (37)

Steene attributes the film the motif of voyeurism, something Iversen does not in *NFH*. In the film, the two young girls get undressed and watch each other (Blom 1987). Something Iversen leaves out of his representation, and only writes that their friendship "vekker følelser av uro og fortvilelse." The queer element has been excluded. Iversen chose to attribute the film *Ikke naken* with voyeurism, but not *Is-slottet*. Even though his representation is based on Steene's article which specifically mentions it.

## 6 Wam and Vennerød: how queer Norwegian cinema has been marginalized

Continuing the findings from chapter five, here, I look at how the strategies identified above also play a role in the representation of Wam and Vennerød in *NFH*. How are the filmmakers and their films contextualized? How are they categorized? How are the texts on them naturalized? How does gendering affect the treatment of them? First, I describe the contexts and categories attributed to Wam and Vennerød and their films by Iversen, and how naturalization and gendering play a role. Secondly, I analyze how Iversen represents each of the Wam and Vennerød films he discusses in *NFH* with these devices. Also, how the filmmakers themselves are represented.

In part one, I found that contextualization is done by organizing the book in a certain way and by dividing it up into chapters and subchapters to label specific films and filmmakers. Placing Wam and Vennerød into a certain chapter contributes to its contextualization as they are placed in the eighth chapter called “Modernistiske provokasjoner og samfunnskritikk.” Iversen begins the chapter with the date July 28th, 1970. This places the filmmakers into the time period of the 1970s. Continually, Iversen describes how on this day, director Pål Løkkeberg delivered a complaint letter to the King of Norway. The chapter continues to discuss Løkkeberg’s financial rejections from the state on the span of two pages (202-203). Then the chapter is divided into subchapters with their own smaller headlines. These subchapters are about industry boycott, short film experiments, aesthetics, social modernism, Olsenbanden, Flåklypa Grand Prix, female directors, and social realism. Then there is the subchapter about Wam and Vennerød with a summary of the chapter right after. They are placed at the end of the eight chapter. This might imply that they are less important to Norwegian film history.

The subchapter that treats Wam and Vennerød and their films is called “Fenomenet Wam og Vennerød” which spans about four and a half pages (243-247). Iversen begins the subchapter by saying, “Ingen fikk så mye oppmerksomhet på 1970- og 1980-tallet som Sven Wam og Petter Vennerød” (243). The first three pages are dedicated to the 1970s, while the 1980s is discussed in less than one page, followed by a summary of all their films at the end. Iversen’s treatment of Wam and Vennerød’s films focuses mostly on the 1970s. The filmmakers are mentioned a couple of times in chapter nine, in relation to the year 1985 (261) and

modernism (276) in relation to the time period of the 1980s. The film *Adjø solidaritet* (1985) is the example Iversen uses in both these mentions which is discussed below.

Wam and Vennerød are labeled as a phenomenon in the title of the subchapter. The film *Flåklypa grand prix* (1975). is also labeled as a phenomenon in *NFH* because it was popular and was well received. The filmmakers Svend Wam and Petter Vennerød are labeled as a phenomenon because they were different. Iversen writes that the films of Wam and Vennerød were both loved and hated, and “vakte oppsikt” (243). They became their own genre; everyone knew what a “Wam and Vennerød film” was. Svend Wam and Petter Vennerød made many films together. Their film production company Mefistofilm AS made 15 films between 1976 and 1998 (Iversen 2011). Iversen’s *Norsk filmhistorie* (2011) mentions the following movies made by Wam and Vennerød: *Lasse & Geir* (1976), *Hvem har bestemt!?* (1978), *Svartere enn natten* (1979), *Åpen framtid* (1983), *Drømmeslottet* (1986), and *Adjø solidaritet* (1985). The last three make up a trilogy where the middle film *Drømmeslottet*, came out last. The Mefistofilm AS films not mentioned in *NFH*: *Det tause flertall* (1977), *Liv & død* (1980), *Julia Julia* (1981), *Leve sitt liv* (1982), *Hotel St. Pauli* (1988), *Bryllupsfesten* (1989), *Lakki/Gutten som kunne fly* (1992), *Sebastian* (1995), *Desperate bekjentskaper* (1998).

Iversen discusses Wam and Vennerød’s film *Lasse & Geir* in *NFH* the most, as it is the most known of theirs. Description of this film indicates that Iversen is not a fan: “Wam og Vennerøds film er eksplisitt samfunnskritikk, men mangler enhver form for samfunnsanalyse eller forsøk på løsning” (Iversen 245). This is a highly subjective interpretation and it depends on the views the audience hold. In my opinion, the film depicts a sharp critique of modern society through smart dialogue. However, the dramatic acting might throw some people off. In one scene a microphone is visible, indicating how low budget this film was. Svend Wam (2008) describes the film saying, “Jeg skrev det i en periode hvor jeg bodde i en av Oslos småtriste drabantbyer. Jeg så mennesker uten håp. Jeg så slitte klær. Jeg så alkoholisererte husmødre, og jeg så ikke minst sosialt rasende ungdom” (7). This sounds like an analysis of society to me.

The film *Hvem har bestemt!?* is discussed in a paragraph along with a long quote from the article “Angst og Karneval” by Paal-Helge Haugen (1980). The films *Åpen framtid*, *Drømmeslottet*, and *Adjø solidaritet* are discussed briefly as they make up a trilogy. The film

*Svartere enn natten* is only mentioned. All of the films Iversen discusses were released before 1987. The films mentioned are equally divided between the 1970s and 1980s with three of each decade. However, Iversen mentions Svend Wam's debut film *Fem døgn i august* (1972), making it four to three. Also, since *Lasse og Geir* is discussed in great detail, the 1970s are given more weight in Iversen's treatment of Wam and Vennerød. This has contributed to the exclusion of any discussions of some films, especially the films *Sebastian* (1995) and *Desperate bekjentskaper* (1998) as they both came out in the 1990s.

Although the filmmakers are contextualized into a certain time period, Iversen does not discuss any historical events in relation to Wam and Vennerød or their films. Iversen claims they were controversial and received mixed reviews but doesn't elaborate as to why that was. In comparison, previous subchapters about Pål Løkkeberg discusses the French new wave, while Female directors are discussed in relation to the women's movement. Where is the queer movement that was developing at the same time? Because no films or filmmakers are labeled as queer, the category doesn't exist in *NFH*.

In part one, I found that Iversen attributes categories to films and filmmakers. Here I discuss the categories Iversen attributes to Wam and Vennerød and their films. There are many categories attributed to the filmmakers and their films, therefore, I focus only on the ones that possibly relate to gender and sexuality. Iversen (2011) summarizes their films in the last paragraph of the subchapter on Wam and Vennerød:

Wam og Vennerøds filmer skildrer velferdsstatens underside og brystne fellekapsdrømmer. Filmene vakte oppsikt, ikke minst for sine burleske og overdrevne innslag. I en rekke filmer kretset de omkring de same motivene: outsidermytologi, den nervøse, men overskridende seksualiteten og et forhold mellom hat og kjærlighet til borgerskapets diskrete sjarm. Fra gjennombruddet med *Lasse & Geir* i 1976 var Wam og Vennerød et provoserende stormsenter i norsk film, og filmene deres ble både elsket og hatet. (246)

This is the only paragraph that explicitly uses the term sexuality in Iversen's treatment of Wam and Vennerød. Iversen does not use the word gender (kjønn) to describe any of their films. In the sample text above, Iversen describes their political views, their influence on society, the cinematic trends in their work and the reception of their films of the public.

The paragraph above has a basic construction of recounting the history of certain films and filmmakers. It is a summary of what characterized the films of Wam and Vennerød according to Iversen. Highlighted are the verbs utilized to communicate the text's message to the text's readers. Only the first sentence is written in present tense. The first sentence summarizes the overall themes present in the films of Wam and Vennerød. The remaining sentences are in past tense, exhibiting their films as historical objects.

The first sentence utilizes the verb depict to describe the films of Wam and Vennerød. There are no categories that can be connected to gender and sexuality in this sentence. The categories of welfare state and community describe their political views. Svend Wam and Petter Vennerød were/are anarchists (Wam, 4). As they were anarchists, it is obvious that they were critics of modern society. This reflects the name of the chapter that includes the words societal critique and provocation.

The second sentence describes their films as provoking attention. This reflects the name of the chapter as well which includes the word provocations. In this sentence, Iversen claims how Wam and Vennerød fit into the chapter. The adjectives "burlesque-like" and "exaggerated" are used to support the claim. There is an assumption that the reader knows what makes these categories provoking. There is an assumption that these categories break with conformity and are viewed as not normal. The categories of burlesque and exaggeration can be connected to themes of gender and sexuality.

The third sentence describes the motifs present in the films identified by Iversen. It is expressed that the films of Wam and Vennerød used these certain cinematic elements repeatedly. Iversen presents these motifs: the outsider mythology, the nervous, but excessive sexuality, and the bourgeois discrete charm. Iversen does not expand upon these motifs, as he assumes the reader is aware of their meaning. The categories of the outsider, the nervous and excessive sexuality can be connected to themes of gender and sexuality.

The fourth sentence describes their reception of the public. The film duo was controversial receiving mixed reviews since Iversen says they were both loved and hated. Wam and Vennerød's films were hated by critics, but people still went to see the movies. The film critics have had influence on how they are remembered as Iversen's representation of them is



based primarily on film reviews. All contexts and categories attributed to the filmmakers and their films are involved in naturalization.

In analysis of *NFH*, I found that Iversen combines facts with interpretations and makes them look naturally related. Here I discuss the ways in which naturalization plays a role in the treatment of Wam and Vennerød. Iversen applies the category “dødsritt gjennom 1980-årene” to the film *Adjø solidaritet* (1985). All Iversen says about this category is that it was the film’s under title. Iversen (2011) writes:

Trilogiens avsluttende del *Adjø solidaritet* (1985) handlet om 1980-tallet og fikk undertittelen «et dødsritt gjennom 80-årene». Dette ble skildret som en tid da solidaritet og engasjement var ord som hadde mistet sin mening. (246)

The category comes from the filmmakers themselves and no interpretation is made by Iversen. There is an image from this film on page 247 in *NFH* at the end of the subchapter. It takes up most of the page and is of a man and a woman embracing. Under the image there is a text that says, “Svend Wam og Petter Vennerød kalte sin film *Adjø solidaritet*, et dødsritt gjennom 1980-årene” (247). After this, Iversen introduces the main characters of the film, the psychiatrist Atle and the theatre instructor Eigil. Iversen says, “De får representere en generasjon som ikke har lykkes verken med å forandre samfunnet eller seg selv” (ibid). Nowhere in the brief summary of the film does Iversen mention a female character as seen in the image provided. Iversen has defined the category with the use of the image of two people embracing without any explanation. Iversen believes everyone knows what he means by a death ride through the 1980s. Through naturalization, Iversen makes the image and the category naturally related. The image represents the category and it appears as though this is the only possible category. This plays a role in Iversen’s heteronormative narrative in *NFH* because any queer interpretations related to Wam and Vennerød’s films have been overlooked. I have analyzed the representations of each film discussed in *NFH* and investigated how the rhetorical strategies contextualization, categorization and naturalization play a role.

## 6.1 Categories

In analysis of the book *NFH*, I only found one term relating to queer gender and sexuality. This was the word homophobia and was discussed in relation to the category of male friendships. There are no explicit terms relating to queer gender and sexuality in the treatment of Wam and Vennerød. I have identified some categories that implicitly relate to queer gender and sexuality as seen in the description of their films above. These are burlesque, the outsider mythology, exaggerated performances, excessive sexuality and the nervous. These terms do not necessarily connote queer themes, but they do exist. There are certain connotations attached to these terms which I explain next. Then, I go through each film discussed in *NFH* to see how Iversen applies these categories to them.

Burlesque is a word that has many meanings. Relating to gender and sexuality, its origins in Victorian burlesque theatre. Edith Hall (1999) writes, “Indeed, by the 1850s, both female-to-male and male-to-female transvestism was routine in burlesque. Older female roles, such as Clytemnestra or Medea, began systematically to be taken by men” (348). Cross-dressing along with dancing contributed to the element of the spectacle which was the main element of Victorian entertainment. This correlates to a drag show in today’s terms. A performance or spectacle of exaggerated gender expressions, most typically someone “performing” the gender that is opposite of the person’s biological sex. Both burlesque and drag involve some type of parody through exaggeration, another category Iversen attributes to Wam and Vennerød.

Exaggerated performances connotes a “camp” style which is common in the queer community. Camp is an aesthetic style which often mixes elements of high and popular culture. Sullivan (2003) points out:

Camp is most often associated with parody, exaggeration, theatricality, humour, and insofar as it foregrounds the performative character of gender, sexuality, race, class, and so on, it functions – at least potentially to denaturalise, or queer, heteronormative notions of identity, as Esther Newton noted in her landmark study of female impersonators (193).

Examples of films with a camp style are John Water's *Pink Flamingoes* (1972), *Hairspray* (1988) and *Female Trouble* (1974). All of which are considered "bad taste" and over-the-top, but appealing. They also include the drag queen persona Divine.

The outsider mythology can be interpreted as relating to queer identities. Falling outside of the social "norm" is often a way that the word "queer" is defined. Some Norwegian terms of outsiders relating to queer gender and sexuality are "ungkarer" and "peppermøer." The Norwegian term "peppermø" is an outsider, an unwed and childless woman. This word is often being related to queer women today because there wasn't a name for female same sex sexuality. The fact that lesbianism has never been illegal in Norway, as opposed to male homosexuality, has completely erased queer women's existence from Norwegian history. The erasure of queer women is far too common in media.

Iversen attributes "den nervøse, men overskridende seksualiteten" to Wam and Vennerød. It is unsure if he means excessive or border crossing sexuality, both of which connote abnormality. Excessive sexuality also connotes a more abnormal amount of desire for sex. This is a stereotypical belief of homosexual men being promiscuous sex-addicts which stems from repeated representations in media. The nervous is an emotional reaction similar to anxiety. Women have often in history been labeled as hysteric and mentally unstable for exhibiting nervousness and anxiety. Nervousness in a man signifies "weakness" and it is used to ridicule individuals. In cinema, a "sissy" is a phenomenon where feminine characteristics have been applied to a character for comic relief. Sissy is a pejorative term of an effeminate man, often connotating being queer, timid, and weak.

As mentioned, the following films by Wam and Vennerød are mentioned in *NFH: Lasse & Geir* (1976), *Hvem har bestemt!?* (1978), *Svartere enn natten* (1979), *Åpen framtid* (1983), *Drømmeslottet* (1986), and *Adjø solidaritet* (1985). I discuss how the categories presented above are utilized in Iversen's representations of these films while also taking into account the strategies of contextualization, naturalization, and gendering. I also compare Iversen's representations with other representations. The representations of Wam and Vennerød's films in *NFH* are based upon the films and earlier representations. I identify Paal-Helge Haugen's article "Angst og Karneval" as a scheme for Iversen's representation. This is explicitly cited in the text. I identify Grenness (1994) as an implicit reference. In the thesis *Wam & Vennerød – et filmunivers*, Tone Minerva Grenness describes all the categories Iversen uses to describe

the films of Wam and Vennerød in his representation in *NFH*. Dahl et al. (1996) and Haddal (1992) are also earlier representations as previously discussed.

## 6.2 *Lasse & Geir* (1976)

As mentioned, the film *Lasse & Geir* is discussed the most in Iversen's *Norsk filmhistorie* (2011). A detailed summary of the film is presented in the subchapter on Wam and Vennerød. The film makes up most the text that only expands three and a half pages (243-246). It is described as their first co-production that was a major success. Iversen (2011) describes the film's impact by saying, "Dialogen i filmen representerte noe nytt i norsk film, og var et bilde av en ny kul, men retningsløs generasjons blinde opprør mot alt og alle" (244). The film is contextualized by Iversen discussing how the language of the film was a breakthrough in Norwegian film history. He has attributed the film with a type of "first" category, as in the first in having a new kind of dialogue. Iversen does not expand on what was new about it, however, he gives a couple examples of dialogue. Such as "Skarru se på kukken, kjærringfaen" (ibid). It appears as though this is what Iversen means by its unique language use.

In relation to the categories relating to queer gender and sexuality, there are possible connections to all of them in Iversen's description of *Lasse og Geir*. The outsider mythology can be linked to the character Kristi who is a "bohemian taxi chauffeur" whom the main characters Lasse and Geir meet. Iversen (2011) describes the character Kristi in *NFH*:

Lasse's lillebror og den bohémaktige taxisjåføren, er de eneste som er positivt skildret i filmen. Bohemen Kristi er representanten for et livsbejande karneval i Wam og Vennerøds univers. I senere filmer er det også denne typen figurer som er de eneste som kan stå imot den angsten og avmakten som ellers preger samfunnet og som bryter ned alle mennesker (244).

The bohemian-like character is an outsider because she is different, an opposition to cultural norms. Iversen also attributes this character as a representative of Wam and Vennerød's carnival. He does not explain what a bohemian is or what the carnival is. This naturalization makes it appear that Iversen believes the reader knows what he means by these categories. I have connected the word carnival to the category of burlesque and exaggeration as they all

involve some type of performance. The nervous category can also be connected to this film as “angsten” translates into anxiety. This term is not explained either.

Even though no explanation is given for the outsider category, there is exists an explanation to the category of excessive sexuality. Iversen (2011) writes, “Solidaritet og medfølelse finnes ikke hos Lasse og Geir” and then describes how the characters behave in inappropriate ways such as flashing of genitals on a public bus and expecting sex in exchange of a blowjob from young girls (245). Iversen describes the category and gives an interpretation to what he sees happening in the film. However, in another mention of the same category of excessive sexuality, Iversen writes:

Lasse og Geir er i opposisjon til alle, og det finnes bare en som ikke blir utsatt for deres aggressive provokasjoner. Det er Kristi (Kjersti Døvigen), en bohem og taxisjåfør, som de møter på T-banen. Hun inviterer dem hjem, og de tre ender opp i senga sammen. Hun er livsbejaende og positiv, og insisterer på at de skal lage pakker med sjokolade til alle hennes naboer. (244)

Out of nowhere, Iversen mentions that they end up in bed together and doesn't expand upon it and tell the reader what it means. This naturalization makes it appear that they have a threesome as Iversen neglects to give an interpretation of the scene which he describes. Seeing as Lasse and Geir are both male, them being in bed together would have a queer connotation. Iversen has avoided any queer related discussions in this example by downplaying the rhetorical strategy of gendering in the representation of the film *Lasse & Geir*. Iversen does not apply gender categories to other words, unlike of what he does in rest of the book. In Iversen's description of *Lasse & Geir*, gender categories are attributed briefly to all the characters. Both Lasse and Geir are called “guttene” and “unge mennene” while Kristi is only attributed female pronouns such as “hun” and “hennes.”

In *NFH*, the words “livbejaende karneval” were used to describe the bohemian Kristi in the film *Lasse & Geir* which I connected to the category of the outsider. The outsider mythology is present in the thesis *Wam & Vennerød – et filmunivers* (1994) by Tone Minerva Grenness:

Outsideren som en mytologisk størrelse finnes en svært viktig figur i alle Wam & Vennerød-filmene. Pønkerne, taterfølget, de transseksuelle, rusmisbrukerne, bohemen og kunstnerne, står alle som representanter på en motkultur. De står for det “kaotiske”, “desintegrerte” og “provoserende”, men samtidig en eggende og befriende annerledeshet, et alternativt til den etablerte orden. Fremfor alt er outsideren en sterk individualist i opprør mot det etablerte. (80)

Here, Grenness gives a definition of the outsider mythology and relates it to the idea of otherness or being different. Grenness connects the outsider mythology with transsexual which is a queer identity. Expanding upon it gives one possible meaning to Iversen’s representation of Wam and Vennerød.

Unfortunately, Iversen does not provide a reference to Grenness (1994), leaving the reader without any literature to research this further. In the description of the film *Lasse & Geir*, Iversen describes the bohemian character Krisiti as a representative of the “livsbejaende” carnival in Wam and Vennerød’s universe. Iversen stresses this is a positive thing as this character is the only thing that can fight the anxiety and powerlessness present in society. Grenness (1994) does not discuss the film *Lasse & Geir* but discusses why Wam and Vennerød always had a few outsiders in their films. There are three things Grenness considers as to what they represent. First, they represent an exclusive form of identity that stretches the limits for what is allowed in society. Second, they can be viewed as a therapeutic purpose where the carnival is a form of therapy through “maskefall” where one lets go of the mask. Third, the outsider character is a symbolic inversion. They are defined as the opposite of normal and in that way indirectly defines what is normal (Grenness, 100). The bohemian character in *Lasse & Geir* is therefore an outsider.

The main characters are also outsiders. In the beginning of the film, they steal beer, harass women, and terrorize people on a bus. Each of them go home to their parents place. Geir comes home to his alcoholic mother who wants him to get her some beer. Lasse to his younger brother, worrisome mother, and condescending father. The father is angry at everything during a dinner scene. The way Lasse eats, his ungroomed appearance, and his lack of employment. As the father yells at the mother, Lasse slaps him, and his father throws him out. Rest of the movie is Lasse and Geir trying to figure out how to make it on their own. They don’t fit into society and they don’t want to. They don’t want to conform to societal

norms and become sheep. In one scene, Geir thinks about giving up, playing along with the norms:

Lasse: Åssen da mener du?

Geir: Ta en streit jobb. Lukke øya, late som du ikke har skjønt noe av noen ting.

Lasse: Er du gæren? Det er altfor seint ikke sant? Du kan ikke hviske ut noe du allerede har fått på hjernen. Skal du klippe håret da og bli bankbud og sånn?" (Wam 1976: 00:46:44).

Geir laughs and jokes about getting a briefcase to go with the suit. In the beginning of the film, the two of them terrorize a man dressed in a suit and tie with a briefcase. Geir starts singing "hey ho, hey ho," and Lasse asks Geir, "Er du helt skeiv eller? Tenk nå ska dem hjem [...] skru på dagsrevyen, vasse ned kjøttkaker [...]" (Wam 1976: 00:04:45). He doesn't use "skeiv" in terms of gender and sexuality, but it still means a deviation of the norm, the definition of queer. This film is queer in the sense that Lasse and Geir are outsiders themselves. They don't follow traditional gender "rules" as they both have long hair, but they don't really follow any rules.

The "bohemian" Kristi doesn't appear in the film until 1 hour and 8 minutes into the film, or 16 minutes before the end credits (Wam 1976). Iversen makes her look like a central character in *NFH*. Lasse and Geir see Kristi in what appears to be a suit and tie on the bus. They give her some candy that they just stole from a kiosk. She gobbles it down by stuffing it her mouth instantly. The young men are intrigued and give flirtatious looks at the woman. The bus stops and she gets up and looks back at Lasse and Geir. They follow her off the bus. They come to her place. We see her suit and tie has a bottom skirt. She says she is going to change while also telling them that she is a taxi chauffeur, indicating that the clothes are her uniform. When she comes back, she is wearing jeans and a red flannel shirt. She is an outsider because she appears to live alone and without children, much like a "peppermø." The tie, even though it's a uniform, has often in cinema history been a way to represent queer identities on film without actually saying it. As sexuality is not something you can see, clothes have been used as visual cues to represent queerness (Dyer 2002). The flannel is also a stereotype of queer women. There is what appears to be mannequin in the background, perhaps for making costumes. This and that she sings is the only indication that she may be an artist and why Iversen describes her as a bohemian. Iversen also describes her as a representative of Wam

and Vennerød's carnival. The overfocus on her in *NFH* is misrepresentative of the film. She dances with them which may be the therapeutic "maskefall" of the carnival described by Grenness (1994).

Iversen described in *NFH* that the three of them end up in bed together. This is true, however, they had nowhere else to sleep. There is no dialogue indicating that they did anything other than talk or sleep in the bed together. Iversen has misrepresented the film by mentioning that they end up in bed together. The mention of them ending up in bed together was an unnecessary detail to include in the representation of the film *Lasse & Geir*. In the film, Lasse asks where they are going to sleep, and she says they can sleep in bed with her. In the next scene, Geir is naked on one side of Kristi, who appears topless covering herself with only a blanket. On her other side is Lasse fully clothed and looks nervous. It appears he's afraid of being naked in bed with them. Kristi talks about all the people she would want to meet in the world and all the positive things in the world, while Lasse and Geir think everything is just "faenskap." In the next scene, Lasse is making breakfast in his underwear, the nervousness seems to have left him. He brings food to Geir and Kristi and they all eat in bed. Lasse is happier than the night before. In *NFH*, Iversen described the Kristi character as the only type of character that could stand against the anxiety and powerlessness of society. She is different just like them, but also conforms to society with a "streit" job. She gives them hope in that one can be happy while also being an outsider. She is anxious about not getting to meet all the people she wants to meet, while they are anxious about the whole system being broken.

Compared with earlier representations that *NFH* is based on, Haddal (1992), Dahl et al. (1996), and Hanche et al. (2004) only mention the film *Lasse & Geir* without going into detail of what it is about. However, Dahl et al. (1996) provides an image of Lasse and Geir in bed with the Kristi character. It seems as though Iversen might have reproduced this image with words in his representation of the film in *NFH*. The overfocus on this particular scene in both Iversen (2011) and Dahl et al. (1996) is quite misrepresentative of the film itself.

### **6.3 *Hvem har bestemt?! (1978)***

The film *Hvem har bestemt!?* is discussed after the summary of *Lasse & Geir*. Iversen sets up the representation of this film by discussing the film reviews of Wam and Vennerød's films at that time. He contextualizes the film *Hvem har bestemt!?* by giving an example of such a



review by Paal Helge-Haugen (1980). Iversen quotes the article “Angst og karneval” published in the film magazine *Filmavisa* in 1980. There is no discussion of gender or sexuality in relation to this film in *NFH*. However, the categories of the nervous, burlesque, and exaggerated performances can be connected to it as Haugen’s article is named “Angst og karneval.” Iversen does not give an explanation of what he means by both of these terms during discussion of this film as well.

Iversen provides a long quote by Haugen which tells about the main character’s fight to decide when to get off a bus, between two bus stops. According to Haugen, this is the main theme of the film, the freedom to decide one’s way of life (Iversen 2011, 245). It is apparent that Iversen’s representation of this film is based on Haugen’s representation of the film. In the article, Haugen (1980) continues to say:

Den mest typiske form for fridomsritual i Wam og Vennerøds filmar er likevel av eit litt anna slag. Det er eit spel med «masker», med ulike former for utkledning, med gliding i seksuell identitet – utforma i HVEM HAR BESTEM? som eit privat lite drag-show mellom leilighetens fire veggar, for å muntre seg opp ein tom og traurig dag, i dei andre filmane, med unntak av LASSE OG GEIR, som nattklubb-besøk i ulike variantar. (12)

Haugen (1980) uses the word “fridomsritual” instead of “karneval” and explains it further: “Desse innlagde maske-aktige spela er kommentarar til våre ulike sjølvoppfattingar, til våre roller og våre konvensjonar, til oppleving av kjønns-identitet” (11). Here, Haugen mentions themes of both gender and sexuality present in Wam and Vennerød’s films which is not reproduced by Iversen in *NFH*. The article by Haugen also has a picture from the film *Hvem har bestemt!?* which features the actor Stein Rosenlund dressed in drag. Haugen’s representation aligns with the filmmakers’ view. Svend Wam (2008) describes the main character of *Hvem har bestemt!?* as:

Han oppsummerer hva Petter og jeg til nå forstår ved en anarkistisk livsførsel og filosofi. Sentrert rundt frihetsbegrepet. Hvor mye avvik fra normen tåler det kristne patriarkalske samfunnssystem? Hvor mye frihet kan man leve ut før makten kommer med håndjern og bedøvende sprøyter? Hvor stort mangfold tåler vi? Ikke så veldig mye og ikke så veldig stort, i følge filmen. (Wam 30)

Wam's description of the film comments on how little diversity society can handle. Svend Wam also writes that Petter Vennerød had to play the lead role because the actor Karl Hoff dropped out. Hoff felt he could not be a part of the film because of a "dragscene" (29). A direct correlation of the theme of the film as described by the filmmaker.

The two narratives of anarchy and diversity are present in both Haugen (1980) and Wam (2008), but Iversen has only reproduced the anarchy narrative. Iversen has misrepresented the Haugen's article "Angst og Karneval" by excluding the discussions on gender and sexuality. According to Haugen, Wam and Vennerød depict sexual fluidity and gender expressions in their films, which is the whole meaning behind the carnival.

Not only have the queer elements of the film *Hvem har bestemt?!?* been excluded, but Iversen also connects the carnival category to the film *Lasse & Geir*. This connection makes the carnival appear to be related to anarchy and not queerness. The queer elements have completely been underemphasized, making all of Wam and Vennerød's films appear "straight." Iversen's selective choice of quotes to highlight and which film to focus on has contributed to a heteronormative narrative in *NFH*.

#### **6.4 Åpen framtid (1983)**

After the brief description of the film *Hvem har bestemt!?* in *NFH*, Iversen argues that Wam and Vennerød were very different from social realism and social modernism by saying, "De to var desillusjonsromantikere, som i film etter film skildret hvordan mennesker gikk under, og utopier ble knust" (246). Iversen uses the first part of the term to describe the film *Åpen framtid*:

Wam og Vennerøds hovedverk var en trilogi om 68-generasjonens knuste drømmer og stigende desillusjon. *Åpen framtid* (1983) var et generasjonsbilde fra slutten av 1960-tallet, den gangen da framtiden var ubegrenset og bekymringsløs. Hovedpersonen Pål (Thomas Robsahm) er en 17-åring som slutter på skolen i protest mot at han ikke lærer noe og kaster seg ut i livet. (ibid)

Iversen's term "desillusjonsromantikere" connotes that Wam and Vennerød romanticized disappointments. There is no explicit discussion of gender and sexuality in relation to the film

*Åpen framtid* and this is all Iversen writes about it. The description is highly vague and doesn't tell much about the film.

Iversen (1991) divides the Norwegian films of the 1980s into three categories: spenningsfilmen, sosialmodernismen and desillusjonsromantikken. Where Wam and Vennerød fall into the latter category. According to Grenness (1994), Iversen borrows the word “desillusjonsromantikken” from the literature critic Øystein Rottem. This literature characteristic is defined as:

Når utopiene er døde, framtrer virkeligheten som atomisert, amorf og uten mening. Motsetningen mellom jeg'et og verden radikaliseres, men jeg'et fastholdes likevel som orienteringspunkt selv om det er dømt til nederlag, ja, nettopp i nederlaget framtrer dets tragiske storhet. (Rottem in Grenness 25)

The representation of the film *Åpen framtid* stems from Iversen's earlier publication. He has the definition power of all of these categories. Placing *Orions Belte* (1985) and *Etter Rubicon* (1987) in the action category, *Fabel* (1979) and *X* (1986) in the social modernism category, and Wam and Vennerød in this “desillusjonsromantikkk” category. Iversen has grouped different films into these categories, which has led him to construct the representation of *Åpen framtid* in line with this narrative. The focus on this genre category has diverted any discussions of gender or sexuality in the film. The film *Åpen framtid* could have been categorized along with other films categorized with teen or adolescence films. Most of which Iversen describes having some relation to sexuality.

In the film, the main character Pål cuts school, has sex, gets drunk and does drugs. With his friends Ruth and Erik, they swim naked in the ocean and lay naked close to each other on the beach. Pål and Erik get bullied for their long hair and appearance. In one scene they go in a restaurant and they get thrown out, they tell them they don't want girls there. In a scene in the woods, Pål kisses Ruth and then he kisses Erik. Later, Pål has a dream that a doctor cuts off his penis (Wam 1983). All this gets translated by Iversen (2011) as: “Hovedpersonen Pål (Thomas Robsahm) er en 17-åring som slutter på skolen i protest mot at han ikke lærer noe og kaster seg ut i livet” (246). Another example of the queer elements being overlooked.

Iversen has chosen to place the film in a genre category, even though there are clear elements of teen sexuality present in the film. The film has been straightwashed by being “miscategorized.” It begs to question, has Iversen seen this film? Even so, Grenness (1994) discusses this film in detail. Iversen uses the same categories as Grenness but doesn’t apply them to any of the films that Grenness analyzed (the trilogy). Why does Iversen use these categories?

## **6.5 *Drømmeslottet* (1986)**

As mentioned, the middle film of the trilogy came out last. Iversen writes about the film *Drømmeslottet* (1986):

På grunn av finansieringsproblemer kom trilogiens midterste del *Drømmeslottet* (1986) sist. Her er handlingen lagt til midten av 1970-tallet. Eksperimenter med nye samlivsformer står i sentrum, og filmen tegner et dramatisk og skarpt bilde av tre par som bor sammen i et kollektiv som slår sprekker. (246)

Iversen contextualizes this film mentioning that there were financial problems for this film coming out last. However, he does not elaborate on this. According to Iversen, the main plot of this film is experiments with new “samlivsformer.” Iversen gives a definition of this by saying that three couples move in together. In other words, the film is about experiments with new living arrangements. Iversen does not attribute gender categories to anyone or anything therefore there is no gendering. It appears that there is nothing sexual about this film. However, there is a slight hint at that there may be something relating to sexuality in the film. It depends on how you interpret the word “samlivsformer.” Does Iversen mean a same-sex partnership or a opposite-sex marriage? Or simply cohabitation?

The description of *Drømmeslottet* by Iversen in *NFH* is rather vague and doesn’t go much into detail. As mentioned earlier, there is a picture from this film on the inside cover of the book. The image depicts three women sitting in front of a window. In the film, one of the women expresses interest in one of the other women. The choice of this image on the inside cover of the book and the vague description of the film in the text, makes it appear that there is something relating to queer gender and sexuality in this film. However, Iversen doesn’t use any explicit words that connote queer gender and sexuality. He doesn’t connect the film with any category relating to queer gender and sexuality so the film appears hetero.

The film is related to being about three couples having problems. The category of “den nervøse, men overskridende seksualiteten” could refer to the film *Drømmeslottet* (1986).

Iversen’s description of *Drømmeslottet* (1986) is rather vague and doesn’t go much into detail. In her thesis about Wam and Vennerød, Grenness (1994) begins to describe *Drømmeslottet* as:

I *Drømmeslottet* er det ikke individet eller outsideren som står i fokus, men heller kollektivet, eller tanken om kollektivet, representert ved de seks voksne rollefigurene. Personene i dramaet er «normale» mennesker med hensyn til yrke, utseende, verdier og familieliv. (69)

Grenness expands upon this by saying: “Seksualiteten har en svært fremtredende plass i skildringen av de tre parene og deres barn. Ingen av dem har et «normalt», lykkelig sexliv med sine partnere.” (70). One character is not attracted to his wife because she is pregnant, and “buys whores” instead. Another couple uses masturbation and exercise as a substitute for their sex-life. One of the female characters is sexually attracted to much younger men. Another character sleeps with their ex. And the characters sleep with each other’s spouses. This is what Iversen might refer to the events that “slår sprekker” in the drama. The attraction between two female characters is described by Grenness (1994) as:

Mona er aktiv feminist, forsker og horekunde-aksjonist, og «prøver» å være lesbisk. Hun legger an på Trine-Lise, som får lettere panikk. (70)

Compared with the other characters, this tidbit of information gets drowned in its excess:

Istedenfor å la noen av rollekarakterene ha problemer med sin seksualitet og identitet, lar de alle personene bale med de samme problemene det blir en opphopning av problemkomplekset (i dette tilfellet seksualitet), en overdrivelse av tematikken, som direkte kan knyttes til begrepet eksess. (70)

Going back to Iversen's phrase "den nervøse, men overskridende seksualiteten", a possible parallel is seen here with Grenness description of the film *Drømmeslottet*. There is a clear focus on sexuality in this film and Svend Wam explained why in an interview with Grenness (1994):

Grunnen til dette er jo for det første at de (rollekarakterene) er i en veldig seksuell alder, og de lever tett innpå hverandre og mottar seksuelle impulser hele tiden. (...) Så representerer seksualiteten også det indre og ytre kaos alle er i mellom ung og voksen, mellom opprør og etablerhet, og forbudt interesse for andre enn «Den Rette». (Svend Wam in Grenness 71)

Here, Svend Wam gives a possible connection to Iversen's phrase "den nervøse, men overskridende seksualiteten." The excessive sexuality is described in terms of the characters being in a very sexual age and having sexual impulses all the time. While the nervousness is described as an inner and outer chaos that arises from conforming to marital relations at the same time having other interests. Grenness explains that Wam and Vennerød's films demonstrate that marriage and sexuality go bad together. The laws of marriage threaten the characters' sexual freedom causing neurosis to grow (Grenness, 96). Grenness (1994) finds traits among Wam and Vennerød's films:

De homofile karakterene i filmene er ikke (alltid) ulykkelige nevrotikere, men har et uproblematisk forhold til sin egen seksualitet. At samfunnet bedriver sine disiplinerings- og normaliseringsmekanismer ovenfor dem er en annen sak. (104)

Here, the category of the nervous, but excessive sexuality gets its meaning. The characters' unproblematic relationship to their sexuality stands in contrast to Iversen's blunt description of Wam and Vennerød's films. In conclusion, Iversen representation of the film *Drømmeslottet* in *NFH* is vague and follows the trend of the rest of the book, avoiding discussions of possible queer themes.

## **6.6 Adjø solidaritet (1985)**

The film *Adjø solidaritet* (1985) is the last film of the trilogy that Iversen discusses. It receives a longer summary than the first two films and is also mentioned twice after the subchapter on Wam and Vennerød. Iversen describes the film as a "death ride" through the

1980s. The main characters represented a generation that didn't succeed in changing society or their own lives.

As discussed above, there is an image from this film. The image of the man and woman embracing might give an interpretation after analyzing the representation of the film. Iversen writes, "Filmen avsluttes med et dekadent fyllekalas når Atle fyller år, samtidig som hans sønn Fridtjof blir drept av en nynazist i en demonstrasjon" (246). It appears as though a traditional family is "keeping itself together" after their son's death in the image provided. Iversen has chosen to represent the film with the latter part of the description of the film. The "dekadent fyllekalas" has been overlooked and can be connected to the category of burlesque, exaggerated performances, and the carnival. Another example of how Iversen has diverted discussions of gender and sexuality by focusing on a different aspect of the film.

The film *Adjø solidaritet* is the only one of Wam and Vennerød that is mentioned outside the subchapter. Iversen mentions the film a couple of times outside of the subchapter in *Norsk filmhistorie* (2011):

Dessuten kom Svend Wam og Petter Vennerød med *Adjø soldaritet*, deres fyrverkeri av et oppgjør med det norske samfunnet. (Iversen 261)

I *Adjø solidaritet* skapte Wam og Vennerød et bredt bilde av samfunnets økende kulde, i heftige bilder og et stort persongalleri. (ibid 276)

The first sentence is referring to films that came out in 1985. The second sentence is used in comparison to the film *X* (1986) which is discussed in relation to modernism. The film *Adjø solidaritet* is not discussed in relation to gender or sexuality.

Iversen avoids discussions of gender and sexuality by underemphasizing the "fyllekalas." Grenness (1994) describes this "fyllekallas":

Førtiårs-festen for Eigil har også klare henvisninger til at det mannlige subjekts identitet er sterkt knyttet til tradisjonelle føringer med hensyn til hva den mannlige seksualiteten er, eller bør være. Her går det i «jentepreik», grove vitser, håndbaktevlinger, styrkeoppvisninger, «et party uten damer æ'kke no' party» og

selvsagt; gaven til Eigil som består av to lettkledde, dansende syngedamer. Eigils macho-identitet blir derfor svært flytende når han mot slutten av herreselskapet danser tango med den mannlige Mefisto-figuren. (77)

Eigil's identity becomes more fluid when he dances with the flamboyant Mefisto character. The Mefisto figure is shown at the beginning of each film. In the dance sequence in *Adjø solidaritet*, the Mefisto figure has black hair, excess make-up, and is dressed in a black corset very much reminiscent of "sweet transvestite" Tim Curry in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975). This can be connected to the burlesque and exaggeration categories. These have queer connotations that are reminiscent of "camp."

Not only has Iversen overlooked the queer elements in relation to the "fyllekalas," he hasn't connected the outsider category to the film *Adjø solidaritet*. Iversen connected the outsider mythology to the bohemian Kristi in the film *Lasse & Geir* even though Grenness (1994) does not discuss that film. In her dissertation, Grenness refers the outsider mostly to the film *Adjø solidaritet* and says:

I *Drømmeslottet* slo tanken om felleskapet, storfamilien og det kollektive helt sentralt. I *Adjø solidaritet* har denne tanken spilt falllitt, mennesket står alene. I filmen har så å si alle rollekarakterene falt utenfor felleskapet og «det normale». (80)

Grenness also compares the theme of sexuality in those two films:

I motsetning til *Drømmeslottet*, der seksualiteten er et helt eksplisitt og tydeliggjort tema, representerer seksualiteten i *Adjø solidaritet* heller et fravær, et tap og et savn. De sterkt seksuelle tredve-åringene i forrige film, har ti år senere mistet den ekteskapelige tilgangen til erotikk. Alt de sitter i igjen med er minnene fra den gang. (76)

According to Grenness, the whole trilogy portrays the relation between family and sexuality, indicating that, "Det er likevel den ødelagte familie som klarest trer fram" (77). Eigil's daughter is the only "streit" one with a traditional family and love life with two children living in the suburbs. She tries to make up with her father, but Eigil is disappointed that she's



become politically bluer and ideologically too different. The daughter is seen as the norm, while her parents are deviations from the norm, the definition of queer.

## 6.7 *Svartere enn natten* (1979)

The film *Svartere enn natten* (1979) is the first film Iversen mentions in the subchapter about Wam and Vennerød in *NFH*. Iversen (2011) describes it is a dark film:

Filmene deres fikk mye medieomtale, og på bakgrunn av den mørke *Svartere enn natten* (1979) skrev Ole Paus nidvisen «I en sofa fra Ikea» som ironiserer over det nattsvarte bildet av Norge i denne filmen. (243).

Iversen does not discuss further but has contextualized it with a cultural reference. There is no apparent discussion of gender or sexuality in relation to this film. The cultural reference by Ole Paus<sup>5</sup> might shed some light on what it means:

I en sofa fra IKEA ligger mor og mor er død  
Så kommer barna på barnehjem og far på vann og brød  
Det var dagens lille solstreif hilsen Wam og Vennerød

Haugen (1980) discusses this film:

Den tilsynelatende mest realistiske av Wam og Vennerøds filmer den femte og hittil siste, *SVARTERE ENN NATTEN* – det er kanskje også den mest problematiske. Den fortel historien om Rolf og Ellen, ektepar midt i tretti-åra, som er i ferd med å miste taket i seg sjølv og i kvarandre. (13)

They struggle in their marriage with their two children. It is seen as problematic as the depiction of “ekteskapshelvetet” gets to the husband Rolf: “Redsla for å bli gamal og utrangert et han opp, fram til han spring etter henne og skrik: Du synes pikken min er ekkel! – før det heile endar med konedrap på vegg-til-vegg-teppet” (Haugen, 13-14).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://genius.com/Ole-paus-i-en-sofa-fra-ikea-lyrics>

Iversen describes the film as dark but doesn't elaborate on it. Only people who are familiar with the poem or the film would know what the film is about. Even though there is no apparent theme about gender and sexuality in this film in Iversen's representation, it is apparent in Haugen's article. There is no clear themes of queer gender and sexuality in relation to the film *Svartere enn natten*. Next, I discuss how the filmmakers are represented in the earlier representations that *NFH* is based upon.

## 6.8 Wam og Vennerød

As described above, Iversen attributes the filmmakers Wam and Vennerød with certain categories. How do the earlier representations that *NFH* is based on compare? The representation of the film *Hvem har bestemt!?* in *NFH* is based on the article "Angst og karneval" by Paal Helge-Haugen (1980). This article has provided a scheme for later representations on the filmmakers as discussed above. However, none, except for Iversen, discuss the film *Hvem har bestemt!?* Still, they utilize the words anxiety and carnival in their representations of Wam and Vennerød. Since Iversen has based *NFH* on the earlier representations of Haddal (1992), Dahl et al. (1996) and Hanche et al. (2004), I compare Iversen's narrative with the narratives in those representations.

In 1992, Evensmo's *Det store tivoli* (1967) was re-released with a new addition written by Per Haddal. The afterword called "Norsk film 1967-1992" (Haddal 1992) begins where Evensmo left off and does not discuss any films released before 1967. The only films that indicate any queer themes in this text are of the films by Svend Wam and Petter Vennerød.

Haddal (1992) gives some insight into the vocabulary Iversen uses to discuss Wam and Vennerød:

Nokså unorsk og med nesten dionysisk dekadanse har Wam og Vennerød dessuten feiret karneval, skjurfene har flagret og seksualiteten har vært alternativ. Ikke underlig at duoen tok et oppgjør med den selvhøytidelige 1968-arven i trilogien "Sangen om den knuste drømmen." Og filmskaperne monterer gjerne narrespeil som gir forvridde karikaturer av tradisjonelle livsformer og ritualer. Estetikken er ikke bare karnevalets, her finnes sans for pastellkomedien ("Julia Julia") og for den burleske farsen, som den

Billy Wilder-inspirerte braksuksess “Bryllupsfesten”. Men duoen har mest søkt kontroversene og det alternative. (394)

Haddal acknowledges queer themes present in Wam and Vennerød’s films by connecting the word alternative to sexuality. Haddal also compares Wam and Vennerød to Rainer Werner Fassbinder, a German filmmaker with films with known queer themes. It is apparent that queer themes are present in the films of Wam and Vennerød in Haddal’s representation of them.

In “Norsk film 1967-1992,” Haddal relates the words carnival and burlesque to Wam and Vennerød. Both burlesque and carnival involve a type of mockery which is the meaning of the word “narrespeil” Haddal utilizes. This carnival narrative is also seen in *Kinoens mørke, fjernsynets lys: levende bilder i Norge gjennom hundre år* (Dahl et al., 1996). In this book’s description of Wam and Vennerød, Dahl et al. (1996) describes where the carnival term comes from:

I 1980 leverte Paal-Helge Haugen en analyse av Wam og Vennerøds filmer under tittelen *Angst og Karneval*. Han finner en dobbelthet i filmene. De gir både en krass beskrivelse av undertrykking, fremmedgjøring og meningsløshet i det samtidige samfunnet, og de bryter med realismen i karnevalsliknende, sensuelle sekvenser, som henvender seg til kroppen og følelsene hos tilskueren. (Dahl et al. 388)

Along with this text there are pictures of the film *Det tause flertall* (1977) which depicts what appears to be men in flamboyant attire. One of the pictures has text next to it that says: “Karnevalsaktig Wam og Vennerød-sekvens.” The costumes and makeup make it difficult to tell what gender they are. Dahl et al. (1996) does not write explicitly about gender or sexuality but shows it through images. The queer themes narrative is somewhat present through this technique. However, not explicitly saying it has silenced its meaning. Dahl et al. connects the carnival as a representation of the filmmakers’ political views and not its depiction of diversity by saying the films break with reality of society through carnivalesque scenes.

The same has happened to the representation of Wam and Vennerød in Hanche et al. (2004) as the representation of them is in a subchapter called “Anarkistisk karneval.” The queer themes have disappeared completely in this representation. As the book is quite short, there

might have been a more selective approach in constructing this representation. Hanche et al. also utilizes the words anxiety and burlesque. The film *Bryllupsfesten* is called a “burlesk komedie,” and the theme of the film *Det tause flertall* is “angsten for det borgelige tyranniet” (Hanche et al. 2004: 74). The word burlesque is used in the traditional “grov komikk” Norwegian definition.

It becomes apparent that Haugen (1980) premediates the representation of Wam and Vennerød in Iversen (2011), Haddal (1992), Dahl et al. (1996) and all three editions of Hanche et al. (1997, 2004, 2014). Only Haddal (1992) is explicit about queer themes by using the word alternative in relation to sexuality and comparing the filmmakers to Fassbinder. Dahl et al. (1996) implicitly show queer themes through images. Both Hanche et al. (2004) and Iversen (2011) have excluded the queer themes narrative completely. This might have happened because they overfocused on the anarchy narrative, connecting it with the carnival and neglecting the actual meaning behind the carnival. Iversen has straightwashed the representation of Wam and Vennerød in *NFH* by selectively chosen which parts of Haugen (1980) and Haddal (1992) to include. The precedence of the anarchy narrative has contributed to a heteronormative narrative in *NFH* by overlooking the obvious queer elements such as the camp style and plot details.

As Paal-Helge Haugen’s article was published in 1980, it is quite strange that later representations still follow this scheme. Haugen doesn’t discuss any of the trilogy films or any other films that came after 1980. However, he wanted Svend Wam and Petter Vennerød to make the film *Adjø solidaritet*. According to Svend Wam, Paal-Helge Haugen was a member of “statens filmproduksjonsutvalg” and really liked their script for the film:

Vi tok Paal Helge Haugen på alvor. Vi hadde stor respekt for ham. Han hadde vist oss den ære noen år tidligere og gjøre våre fem første filmer til gjenstand for en seriøs analyse i filmtidsskriftet «Film & Kino». Det var modig gjort. Han hjalp oss. Han lot oss komme inn i varmen. Han vil oss ikke vondt. Tvert i mot. (Wam 84)

Svend Wam is thanking Haugen for analyzing their films which has led to them being visible in the Norwegian film history discourse. However, I argue that Iversen has misrepresented Haugen’s article. As seen in the *Hvem har bestemt!?* representation, Iversen left out the part

dealing with gender identity which was Haugen's main point of the carnival term. Iversen has done this by focusing his representation of Wam and Vennerød on the film *Lasse og Geir* when Haugen mostly discusses *Hvem har bestemt!?* and *Det tause flertall*.

Not only has Iversen overlooked parts of Haugen's article, but Iversen has overlooked parts of Grenness' thesis and neglected to reference it. Iversen does not discuss Wam and Vennerød in relation to the queer rights movement of the 70s and 80s. The most important thing that Grenness (1994) points out about their films is that they were typical of the films of that time period, saying:

Tematiseringen av det mannlige subjektets identitetskriser må definitivt sees i sammenheng med kvinnekampen på søttitallet, og feministenes problematisering den den patriarkalske dominans. (93)

This is not seen in *NFH* as Iversen has carefully selected which parts of Grenness' representations to include. Iversen does not relate the Wam and Vennerød films with the women's movement which would have brought up queer issues. The exclusion of gender and sexuality discussions has led him to avoid incorporating queer history. Unfortunately, this has marginalized queer readers.

Further, Iversen has overlooked any queer motives present in Wam and Vennerød's films. All the categories mentioned by Iversen have queer connotations, but Iversen uses them differently. Grenness (1994) summarizes the queer elements present in the films of Wam and Vennerød:

Den homofile kulturen har alltid hatt stort spillerom for «acting out», for den dramatiske og affekterte stilen, for en forvrenging av det maskuline og det feminine – ofte i det groteske. Det finnes som regel også en «diva» i filmene; tanten i *Drømmeslottet*, moren i *Liv & Død*, Wenche Foss i alle sine Wam & Vennerød roller (fordi hun er sin egen diva-fiksjon og homsekulturens dronning), onkelen (ja, divaer kan godt være menn) i *Bryllupsfesten*. (97)

There is even the presence of the diva, a typical characteristic of the camp style. Wenche Foss played the lead in the Wam and Vennerød film *Leve sitt liv* (1982) where Arne Bang-Hansen

played her homosexual neighbor (Amundsen 2009). Bang-Hansen was known as the first openly gay Norwegian actor and played many odd characters most notably in Øyvind Vennerød's "lamberseterkomedier." I find it quite odd that Iversen (2011) doesn't mention that Petter Vennerød was Øyvind Vennerød's son and that they made completely different films. One with traditional values and one criticizing those values. Next, I look at the films Iversen has excluded in *NFH* and how that has further marginalized the queer community.

## 6.9 Excluded films

Not only are the films of Wam and Vennerød straightwashed, some films aren't even discussed. Iversen (2011) has created a heteronormative narrative by avoiding discussing films such as *Sebastian* and *Liv & død*. All films excluded are: *Det tause flertall* (1977), *Liv & død* (1980), *Julia Julia* (1981), *Leve sitt liv* (1982), *Hotel St. Pauli* (1988), *Bryllupsfesten* (1989), *Lakki/Gutten som kunne fly* (1992), *Sebastian* (1995), *Desperate bekjenskaper* (1998).

The films *Liv og Død* (1980) and *Sebastian* (1995) are two examples of queer films by Wam and Vennerød. Iversen does not discuss these in *NFH* but has discussed them in other publications. Iversen wrote a film review of *Sebastian* (1995) in the magazine *Film & Kino* nr. 7/8 in 1995. In this text, Iversen attributes *Sebastian* with the explicit theme of homosexuality. The film is discussed in detail in terms of queer sexuality. Iversen (1995) begins by describing the positive and negative of the films of Wam and Vennerød:

Positivt er at Wam og Vennerød hører til de få filmregissørene som har bygget opp et eget filmunivers, preget av angst og karneval, paranoia og dekadanse, overskridelse og livsbekreftelse. Negativt er deres dyrkning av overdrivelser for overdrivelsens skyld, og et filmspråk med få nyanser og gråtoner.

Iversen uses the words schemed by both Haugen (1980) and Haddal (1992) and claims that the film *Sebastian* is a more careful film that has toned down the exaggerations. There are more of the categories Iversen uses in the representation of Wam and Vennerød in *NFH*. He also applies the categories of "overskridende seksualitet" and the outsider mythology as I have discussed. Iversen (1995) writes that the main character Sebastian wonders how he can be true to himself by coming out to his family and friends:

Dette er hovedspørsmålet i *Sebastian*, og temaet med en overskridende seksualitet som en livsbejaende motpol til et menneskefiendtlig og sneversynt samfunn går som en rød tråd gjennom hele Wam og Vennerøds filmproduksjon.

In this publication, Iversen sees a running theme in all of Wam and Vennerød's films. He acknowledges the queer themes present in their films explicitly, something he does not reproduce in *NFH* (2011). Iversen has been selective of his own work as he explicitly says in the introduction that the book is based on his previous work. His selection of not including this previous work has contributed to the heteronormative narrative present in *NFH*. Iversen (1995) also applies the outsider category to this film:

*Sebastian* arbeider videre med en gammel billedtradisjon, men outsidermytologiens tragedie får hos Wam og Vennerød denne gang en livsbejaende og oppløftende avslutning.

Iversen doesn't explain what the outsider mythology is in this publication either.

Although Iversen discussed *Sebastian* and its queer themes in a previous publication, he also didn't think it was a good film and other critics agreed. Haddal (1995) also wrote a review for *Sebastian* in *Aftenposten* when the film came out calling it a "kunstnerisk tragedie."

How was the film received by the queer community? LLH (Landsforeningen for lesbisk og homofil frigjøring) praised the film and the education minister wanted to incorporate it in school curricula. However, in a review for the queer journal *Løvetann*, Brita Møystad Engseth (1995) criticized the quality of the representation:

Jeg er mest opprørt over LLHs omfavelse av filmen – skal vi godta hva som helst bare fordi det liksom skal handle om homofili? Skal vi ikke stille kunstneriske krav – som en sammenhengende historie, godt manus og troverdige karakterer? Skal vi kaste oss nesegrus i støvet og være takknemlige bare fordi to halvgamle kikkere har laget en film med enorme mengder med spenstige mavemuskler, tung pusting, lengselsfulle blikk, lekeslåssing og et pinlig kyss? (16)

Is a poor representation better than no representation? Another explicitly queer film by Wam and Vennerød is *Liv og Død*. Iversen does not mention this film in *NFH* but the category of excessive sexuality can be applied to this film. In *Liv og død*, Jakob falls for a male medicine student and has a threesome with his wife (Eldøen 2007, 19). The excessive sexuality can refer to the threesome. Svend Wam (2008) writes of his regrets with incorporating the threesome:

Ingen nåde; det ble stort sett bare eder og sure miner fra den kanten. Dessverre for filmen, for oss og bevegelsen. Det var virkelig ikke vårt ønske at det skulle bli slik. Denne kunne vært adskillig bedre brukt i frigjøringskampen som pågikk og for ikke å snakke om i den usedvanlige vanskelige perioden vi da var bed å gå inn i, med AIDS-tragedien i full blomstring. (49)

However, it was still noticed:

Så kom det invitasjon fra NY Gay Film Festival. Tenk at det finnes. Det gjorde det altså. Noen ganske få den gang. Deriblant NY. (52)

Despite his fear of flying, Svend Wam got to experience a full house of 800 people seeing the film:

Jubel og applaus underveis, trampeklapp og bravorop. Det er som å komme til en annen planet! De «stod» på setene! ... Petter fyr og flamme. Jada, det var nok moro. Neste forestilling skulle være til benefit for AIDS-forskning – og det var vi både stolte og glade for. Utsolgt igjen og penger i kassa. (ibid)

As mentioned, the film *Liv & Død* is not discussed in *NFH*. Considering the historical context, it is quite astonishing that this is overlooked in a historical presentation of Norwegian film. This was in 1980 and the first queer film festival held in Norway was in 1986 (“Turid Eikvam”).

After the publication of *NFH* (2011), Iversen has written an encyclopedic entry on Svend Wam. Iversen (2017) mentions three films with queer themes:



I *Liv & Død* hadde Wam tematisert brutaliseringen av samfunnet og de homofiles situasjon, og dette sto sentralt i hans spillefilmer *Sebastian* (1995) og *Desperate bekjenskaper* (1998). Den første var en følsom oppvekstskildring, mens den andre var en studie i mannsroller. *Desperate bekjenskaper* følger tre unge menn, og det er det homoseksuelle temaet som er mest vellykket.

Not only does he include the queer themes, he also uses the same categories as in *NFH* (2011). Iversen (2017) describes the film *Lakki / Gutten som kunne fly* (1992): “Denne oppvekstskildringen foretok et oppgjør med frigjorte og overliberale foreldre og ble omdiskutert for sin overdrevne stil og karnevaleske outsidermytologi.” Iversen describes the film with the exaggeration and outsider categories. Fortunately, Iversen has included Grenness (1994) in the reference list in this publication.



## 7 Conclusion

In this study, I researched how queer gender and sexuality have been discussed in the most prominent work of the Norwegian film history discourse. Through a queer perspective, I critically analyzed the book *Norsk filmhistorie: spillefilmen 1911-2011* from 2011 by Gunnar Iversen. I did this by asking:

How are issues of queer gender and sexuality represented in *Norsk filmhistorie* (2011)?

In answering my main research question, I found that queer gender and sexuality are not represented in *NFH* and have been marginalized. In my analysis, I utilized Astrid Erll's (2010) three levels of analysis. Through analysis of the book's intra-, inter-, and pluri-medial strategies I could answer my research questions.

I identified four strategies that has made *NFH* a contributor into specific historical discourses. In *NFH*, Iversen uses the rhetorical strategies contextualization, categorization, naturalization, and gendering to invite particular understandings in *NFH* and therefore asserts its role as a device of cultural memory. Choices in how to apply these strategies have contributed to a heteronormative narrative in *NFH*.

I found that Iversen has been selective in his choices of which contexts and categories to highlight in *NFH*. Queer history, queer interpretations queer themes and queer identities are not discussed in *NFH*. This heteronormative narrative was also seen in earlier representations of Norwegian film history. Iversen has furthered the hegemonic discourse by not acknowledging the existence of queer gender and sexuality, and by not acknowledging that the films have mostly been hetero.

### 7.1 Research questions

In this study, I constructed research questions to help me collect and analyze data. These questions corresponded to the levels of analysis described by Erll (2010). In the first level of analysis I asked:

Which films are discussed with terms relating to queer gender and sexuality?

How are films with queer motives treated by Iversen?

In what ways are the queer films represented? How do the rhetorical strategies play a role?

I only found one term relating to queer gender and sexuality and that was the word homophobia. It was used to describe films about friendships between men and was not used in relation to any film with identifiable queer representations.

I found that films with queer motives were straightwashed in *NFH* by either underemphasizing any possible queer elements in the films or by “miscategorizing” the films. The rhetorical strategies played a role in this as they allowed Iversen to define representations with his chosen contexts and categories. Iversen made the films seem related through naturalization. This also made it look like that the connected category or interpretation to a film was the only possible one, resulting in a heteronormative narrative. Further, Iversen has avoided any queer related discussions of films with queer motives by downplaying the rhetorical strategy of gendering.

In the second level of analysis I asked:

How are films with or without themes of queer gender and/or sexuality represented?

How does Iversen and others write about queer gender and sexuality in earlier publications? How do they compare with *NFH*?

I found that Iversen has misrepresented earlier representations and some of the films. I found that Iversen has misrepresented earlier studies by Haddal (1992), Steene (1992) and Haugen (1980). I uncovered that the film *Åpen framtid* (1983) has clear themes of queer gender and sexuality but it is not included in *NFH*. I also found that Iversen has not referenced one of his master student’s work even though it is directly relevant to his book and adopts a clear queer perspective.

I found that earlier representations played a role in how Iversen has represented the queer films. For example, the films of Wam and Vennerød are repeatedly represented in the same

way with the same vocabulary based upon an article from 1980 (Haugen). Representations of them after the publication of *NFH* continue to categorize them with the notion of a carnival. Wam and Vennerød are repeatedly labeled as such even though most of the films were released after 1980. The carnival is also connected with anarchism and not with gender and sexuality as originally described by Haugen. This misrepresentation is seen in *NFH* as Iversen constructed his representation on Wam and Vennerød around the film *Lasse & Geir*.

In the third level of analysis I asked:

How is *NFH* used, promoted, and framed after publication? How are queer gender and sexuality affected by these uses?

How are queer gender and sexuality represented after the publication?

I found that the book *NFH* is promoted and framed as a primary source about Norwegian film history. I discovered that the book is a source for many articles, studies, and books after its publication. I also found that there is no acknowledgement of its heteronormative narrative in its media network. Fortunately, I found that Iversen has written more about queer gender and sexuality after the publication of *NFH*. However, the acknowledgement of marginalization of the queer community in *NFH* is still missing.

## 7.2 Significance

This thesis has made visible how queer gender and sexuality are represented in the Norwegian film history discourse with particular focus on the key publication *NFH* authored by an important voice in the field. My findings show an injustice, an unfair representation of queer gender and sexuality in a film historic presentation. Therefore, my study can become important for marginalized communities and individuals. I hope my findings have shed a light on a need for a more inclusive narrative in the Norwegian film history discourse. Since queer representations do exist in Norwegian films, there should be explicit discussions of this theme. There should also be a discussion of the degree of heteronormativity many films exhibit and why this might be the case. I also hope my study will encourage more queer research in Norway.

A weakness of this study is that what is considered a queer representation is different for everyone. However, those issues should be addressed in constructing a historical representation of Norwegian cinema. The power to define the Norwegian film history discourse comes with a responsibility, and unfortunately, the queer community has, so far, been marginalized in the process.

### **7.3 Limitations and further research**

Limitations of this study were limited time and limited access to sources such as films. The study overcame this by limiting the study to a corpus and utilizing the sources available as much as possible.

In general, more research on queer topics in Norway is needed. I would like to see research on how these films were received by the public and queer community. Also, more films of Norwegian film history should be analyzed with a queer perspective to fulfill the knowledge gap in relation to queer Norwegian cinema. Another possible topic for further research could be to look at how other oppressed groups are represented in the Norwegian film history discourse.

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