

This is a draft of a chapter/article that has been accepted for publication by Oxford University Press in the forthcoming book *Real Sex Films: The New Intimacy and Risk in Cinema* by/edited by John Tulloch, Belinda Middleweek due for publication in 2017.

## **Introduction**

The origins of this book can be traced back to three significant, professional moments across three countries and timeframes: the screening of a real sex film in London, a documentary interview in Cardiff about a terrorist attack and the reading in Sydney of a book about intimacy. In 2001, John Tulloch went to see Patrice Chéreau's controversial new film, *Intimacy* in London, and was immediately reminded of a major academic text in risk sociology, Anthony Giddens' *The Transformation of Intimacy*, which he had read a decade before. He revisited Giddens' book, recognized the systematic parallels he had begun to notice while watching the film for the first time, and began sketching out notes towards this present book. So it isn't by chance that our book begins with that particular 'real-sex' film, *Intimacy*. Nor is this account of its origins merely anecdotal, because it signposts via its own personal story that the reception of all films begins in a meeting of individual subjectivity, reflexivity, memory and social context.

What happened next was also both anecdotally subjective yet socially referential. In September 2011 Tulloch, a close-up survivor of the London terrorist attack, was interviewed in Cardiff for the Foxtel television series, *I Survived... Stories of Australians* by Belinda Middleweek, who was associate producer of the Australian version of this international franchise. He found her to be, in the course of a two-hour interview, one of the most insightful yet probing of the many interviewers who had asked him on camera about his own perceptions of the 7/7 event and aftermath of the attack. But he was less impressed with the final cut of the interview that went to air, which Middleweek had not edited. To salvage something from this, initially they

collaborated on writing a piece about this particular television production/audience interaction from the inside: from within the industry perspective of Middleweek, and inside the subjectivity of a 7/7 survivor. But, realizing that Middleweek had herself written a PhD on media and transgression, Tulloch asked whether she would be interested in collaborating further, co-authoring this book, *Real-Sex Film*. He had held back the book project initially sketched out in 2001, because he always felt it needed to be co-authored by a woman – and a feminist. Thus we begin our book quite deliberately with an account of the meeting point in audience subjectivity of two authors and two texts of ‘Intimacy’, cued by way of the re-kindled memory of one author. It will be a reflexive book, and so needs some reflexivity about the authors. Before agreeing to pursue this co-authorship, there was a necessary first stage for both of us. Middleweek would see Chéreau’s film and read Giddens’ book to see how she would respond to both. Many film and literary theorists have been saying for a long time that every audience ‘reading’ is in a powerful sense inter-textual, never free of memory of earlier, remembered texts. So how would Middleweek react personally, emotionally, intellectually, even viscerally, to this textual conjuncture? Her intellectual response is presented in the co-authored writing of this book; but her personal, subjective reaction was very considerable too. She told her co-author that *The Transformation of Intimacy* made sense of so much of her life experiences as a woman in Sydney Australia; and so this, too, is inevitably a subtext of the book and the third significant, professional moment from which it originated.

The reflexive positioning of two texts about intimacy thus became a dialogical engagement. It isn’t by chance, either, that the two authors are of entirely different age groups and of different genders. That coming together of ‘Intimacy’ in academic

book and film had to work via the subjectivities of both authors – and it was important here that Belinda Middleweek was an academic *and* TV/documentary film producer, and a much younger woman than her co-author with strong feminist principles (and experiences) of her own through which she could assess the texts on intimacy by a male sociologist, a male film maker, and a male main protagonist in the film *Intimacy*.

Our emphasis on the subjective but also social *construction* of film meanings means that we take a different approach to some other film scholars in relation to real-sex cinema. Some would want to start with a taxonomy: that is, a *classification* of the concepts, sub-generic features, aspects and parts that make up the ‘whole’ that we call ‘real-sex film’. That is not our way at all, because we believe that to reduce real-sex cinema to a taxonomy is to fetishize it, to fix it as an object of veneration rather than of interpretation; and, above all, to separate it from the struggle for meaning between production, transmission, reception and interpretation that makes it a dynamic subjective and social engagement. Our task here is always to challenge pre-given categorization by demonstrating both critically and empathetically (personally and professionally) that ‘real-sex film’ is *always* a discursive construction; and we extend that view, broadly accepted in the social sciences and many of the humanities, by choosing to write a book about real-sex cinema as always both a subjective and a critical wager, which needs to be acknowledged reflexively.

One of the book’s reviewers asked us ‘Is there evidence of women responding to the social critiques that resonated with their lives?’ Our response is that, yes, the book only took off into conjoint authorship *because* Giddens’ book resonated with

Middleweek's life and so (as she had not read Giddens before seeing the film), she was the book *Real-Sex Film*'s first audience member.

This coming together of two authors of different genders, generations and professional backgrounds was the first dialogical moment – moment of debate about meaning - of our book. It is an encounter which, as feminist geographer Jennifer Hyndman writes, is both 'epistemologically situated and embodied' (Hyndman 2004, 307). We choose this feminist geopolitical theorist to quote here because she (and other recent feminist critical geographers that will underpin a significant part of the book's methodological and theoretical thinking) provide an important 'bridging' model in interdisciplinary studies, not just in the coming together subjectively and critically of the two authors, but of intellectual disciplines as well (see Kong 2001).

*Interdisciplinarity* – rather than either the disciplines of risk sociology or film studies – is the central theoretical wager of this book; and serious interdisciplinary engagement has to be a reflexive and dialogical bridging exercise. Terms like 'bridging scholarship', 'synthesis', 'traversing the gap', 'searching for mutual understanding' and 'rainbow struggle for meaning' appear regularly in Hyndman's writing. In her own research work she notes how that drawing on the different disciplinary frameworks of 'critical geopolitics, feminist IR [international relations theory], and transnational feminist studies, feminist geopolitics...traverses the gap between feminist and political geography' (Hyndman 2004, 319). Similarly in the current OUP book, *Risk and Hyperconnectivity*, one of the authors (John Tulloch) with Andrew Hoskins draw together the three quite distinct disciplines of new risk sociology, connectivity theory and neoliberalism critique in exploring risk events like

the global financial crisis, the 7/7 London terrorist attack, the London riots and the phone-hacking scandal (Hoskins and Tulloch 2016); and in doing this book, *Real-Sex Film*, we similarly combine ‘subjective’ and ‘academic’ accounts in an interdisciplinary way.

For Hyndman, this bridging ‘rainbow scholarship’ has two very specific conceptual features: of similarity and difference. Hence she comments on how ‘the synthesis of critical geopolitics’ (as in the work of Marxist geographer David Harvey) ‘with feminist geopolitics galvanizes this political engagement and strengthens the project of critically assessing dominant geopolitical discourses’ (308-9). By way of this synthesis of different disciplinary perspectives engaged together in common ‘resistance’ to ‘dominant’ received wisdom, feminist geopolitics, she argues, adds something new: it ‘aims to extend the work of arguably disembodied geopolitical analysis by (re) situating knowledge production as *a partial view from somewhere*’ [our italics] (309).

But it is not just overtly Left (male) academics like Harvey that Hyndman engages with in this way. Similarly she makes common cause with post-structuralist critiques of ‘the real’. As in the case of critical geopolitical analysis, so too with poststructuralism, in addition to the ‘mutual understanding’ of ‘bridging’ there must also be a moving beyond (or ‘galvanizing extension’). Hence the ‘unsatisfactory deconstructionist political impulses’ need to be extended by an ‘embodied vision’ (Hyndman 2004, 309). Here she draws on literary feminist Gayatri Spivak’s notion of ‘strategic essentialism’, where the author makes ‘normative political commitments at crucial junctures’ (314). These are commitments to value which are central to the

notion of analytical bridging between frames of ‘mutual understanding’ *and* ‘galvanizing extension’. Hyndman notes particularly that while methodologically Spivak invokes primarily textual strategies, as a *bricoleur* (the construction of a work from ‘found’ objects, as on a beach, that happen to be available) she draws strategically from varied, and sometimes contradictory, theoretical/political locations (including Marxism, feminism, and poststructuralism) ‘to address questions of material violence and epistemological violence’ (314).

This strategic *bricoleur* methodology we take to be what feminist Judith Butler also discusses in her chapter ‘Psychosocial Imaginaries: Perspectives on Temporality, Subjectivities and Activism’, where she talks about the ‘crossing over’ of interdisciplinary frames within her own professional field of university research and teaching.

If a department is transdisciplinary...how does the value of all that crossing over become communicated and persuasive? What if the intellectual problem that a group of people seeks to address can only be understood through several lenses? And what if the tensions among those various ways of seeing is actually crucial for the elaboration of the object itself? Indeed, what if matters are slightly worse: the object looks differently depending on how it is regarded, and so several different ways of considering the object will invariably disagree on what the object is? (Butler 2015, vi).

It is precisely this dual process of ‘seeking mutual understanding’ in an engaged, enabling *and* transformative way that both Hyndman and Butler call for as a central

methodological strategy to interdisciplinary studies which we are adopting in *Real-Sex Film*. For example, early in the book we juxtapose and bridge between Tania Krzywinska's feminist-psychoanalytical analysis of real-sex cinema and our own analysis via sociological risk theory. Krzywinska, we argue in chapter 3, is strong in the area of an embodied view 'from which to analyse visceral conceptions of violence, beauty, and mobility', as feminist geopolitical scholar Hyndman puts it. But where we seek to 'extend' and 'transform' Krzywinska's text is in providing a macro-sociological analysis in terms of risk modernity. This, we emphasize, is not to try to negate Krzywinska's psychoanalytical-poststructuralist position with our own historical risk sociology. It is to subsume – or in Judith Butler's term 'permeate' in an 'overlapping' relation – both positions in an interdisciplinary connection.

#### 'Rainbow' Scholarship

In this book the 'intersections and conversations' (Hyndman 2004, 307) between different academic disciplines that comprise a rainbow scholarship, in terms of content, take a primarily subjective rather than socially systemic approach. This is because *Real-Sex Films* deals with filmic intimacies between (usually) consenting adults, not with events of global magnitude like terrorism and both state and commercial surveillance, massive street riots, or global financial crisis. By contrast, in *Risk and Hyperconnectivity* (2016), Hoskins and Tulloch analyse the global financial crisis through its mediated representation in the commonsense reality of 'market' (namely neoliberal) economics thereby exposing, as Hyndman puts it, 'the tacit norms of dominant discourse' in the British press. In her own analysis Hyndman speaks of 'distinguishing between strategic and ethnographic perspectives of mapping cultures of war'; and likewise Hoskins and Tulloch distinguish between hegemonic media



narratives of risk and uncertainty and the everyday, situated, ethnographic experiences of some journalists (and some uses of emergent media) to challenge mainstream media accounts.

But in terms of *theory*, real sex film is certainly systemic as well as personal. There are areas that we touch on here of ‘inherited’ and ‘dominant’ global imagination. Newspaper’s film reviewers, television critics and theatre reviewers frequently work within the political consensus of their particular media outlet. These then construct taxonomies of how to ‘read’ a film, mediating this, as Stuart Hall once argued, by way of their own ‘film-reviewer’ set of discourses. Our Chapter 1 presents briefly one example of how real-sex film taxonomies *are* constructed in the media. But this was not intended as any more than an example of what the construction of ‘common sense’ professional taxonomies of real-sex film can look like. It is not designed as exhaustive; because then it would have needed to look at ‘resistances’ (Hyndman’s term) *within* newspapers, as Hoskins and Tulloch do in *Risk and Hyperconnectivity*, where the book’s authors look across all the modalities of newspapers as assemblages of editorials, feature articles, front pages, letters pages, photographs, cartoons, etc, while also considering formal features like page lay-out and the sub-editor’s juxtaposition of articles.

In *Real-Sex Film* our focus was different. The central systemic focus is the issue of dialogical debate between different disciplines in forging what Hyndman calls a ‘bridging’ and ‘extending’ interdisciplinarity. That is why we focus in significant detail on different interpretive texts of ‘real-sex’, ‘extreme’ or ‘brutal intimacy’ cinema (as with Krzywinska in Chapter 3). Because, as Hyndman argues, a key part

of interdisciplinary work which is both ‘bridging’ and ‘extending’ is in ‘exposing the assumption of each [discipline] and challenging their “taken-for-granted” categories of analysis’, it is crucial to give reasonable textual presence to *both* the areas of potential synthesis of meaning *and* the areas of divergence (we do the same in our social audience analysis of Chapter 4). Otherwise one so easily categorizes and reduces that disciplinary position.

And that is also why, as well as a chapter on Krzywinska’s approach (Chapter 3), there is a chapter devoted to risk sociology (Chapter 2), exposing the critical assumptions of both these positions (risk sociology is, of course, only one of many ‘sociologies’). So, to summarise this difficult but important critical ‘wager’: our main point is that the focus of our book (as with feminist geopolitical theorists like Hyndman and many others) is on dialogical debate about real-sex film, working through a multiplicity of layers of analysis in ‘forging a bridge’. The intention, then, is not to begin with the categorization of ‘real-sex film’ by way of a taxonomy, but rather to explore the potential for ‘rainbow scholarship’ (Hyndman 2004, 310) within real-sex cinema’s critical corpus.

It is for this reason, too, that, rather than focus on different genders, ethnicities, generations, class positioning of audiences (as one of the authors has done in a number of previous publications), we focus in this book on the reflexive struggle about real-sex films within academia, criticism, journalism, and social audiences themselves. Together *these* are the audiences who have the positional power to make definitions stick. This is why in chapter 4 we focus on the internal debate in Horeck and Kendall’s edited book, *The New Extremism in Cinema*, between ‘textual analysis’

and ‘social audience analysis’ rather than doing the ‘active audience’ kind of analysis that we have done elsewhere. The emphasis of this book is on dialogical debate, the exposing of critical assumptions in the academic literature and media, and on the attempt at ‘mutual understanding’ (which Horeck and Kendall clearly attempt in their editorial chapter).

### Interdisciplinarity and Risk Sociology

In contrast to film scholars, sociologist Anthony Giddens does not talk of film at all in *The Transformation of Intimacy*. But he does begin his exposition of the new intimacy by discussing a contemporary novel, thus drawing attention to the importance of fiction in revealing that something societal has changed via the ‘Transformation of Intimacy’. As leading international social scientists, Giddens and his fellow new risk sociologist Ulrich Beck have been concerned to position sexual intimacy within a larger, and possibly more hopeful, history than any of the film scholars we will discuss in this book.

For Giddens the potential of the new intimacy goes well beyond oppressive ‘constant emotional closeness’. Rather – and this is key to Giddens’ theory of the new intimacy - ‘Seen...as a transactional negotiation of personal ties by equals, it appears in a completely different light. Intimacy implies a wholesale democratizing of the interpersonal domain, in a manner fully compatible with democracy in the public sphere’ (Giddens 1992, 3). Giddens, together with Beck in critiquing the globalized neoliberal socio-economic-political order, adds that the ‘transformation of intimacy might be a subversive influence upon modern institutions as well. For a social world in which emotional fulfilment replaced the maximizing of economic growth would be

very different from that which we know at present. The changes now affecting sexuality are indeed revolutionary, and in a very profound way' (Giddens 1992, 3).

Giddens' *Transformation of Intimacy* is primarily about the micro-negotiations of personal sexuality and intimacy. But this is not a purely psychological (or psychoanalytical) focus, as has been the preference of some of the film studies of real-sex cinema. Rather, Giddens' book achieves a robust *integration* of theories of the personal-emotional, the economic, the societal and the historical. It is Giddens', Beck's and fellow risk sociologists' awareness of *interdisciplinary* understanding of new modes of intimacy that we bring in this book to film studies and, in particular to real-sex, extreme and transgressive cinema.

For example, if we stay with the real-sex film *Intimacy* for the moment, the relationship between the two main characters in the film, Claire and Jay, is centrally involved in a transactional negotiation of emotional ties of the kind that Giddens and Beck discuss, in that they are equals in rejecting the romantic love model of monogamous family loyalty. Jay has walked out one night without a word to his wife and kids; Claire travels far across London from the family home of her husband and child to have nameless sex with Jay. They are, arguably, very much part of the historically new generation that negotiate identities through what Giddens calls 'plastic sexuality', which he sees as 'decentred sexuality, freed from the needs of reproduction' (Giddens 1992, 2).

It is the male, Jay, who weakens in their transactional relationship, precisely because he succumbs to the negative tendency which Giddens sees threatening the potential of plastic sexuality: 'as a demand for constant emotional closeness' (Giddens 1992, 3).

Dissatisfied with the mystery of Claire's repetitive appearance for sex every Wednesday afternoon, Jay becomes her stalker. He discovers her husband, taunts him with the thinly disguised story of a married woman who leaves her husband every Wednesday for sex with an unnamed man; and he discovers also Claire's preoccupation with amateur theatre. For Claire, who initially found a liberating energy in their completely equal, almost wordless sexual negotiation, Jay's stalking has become an addiction that has turned her new energy against herself, and so she ends the relationship [INSERT FIGURES In.1 and In.2 HERE].

Key here is another central aspect for Giddens of risk modernity: the notion of 'confluent love'. 'Confluent love presumes equality in emotional give and take...Confluent love for the first time introduces the *ars erotica* into the core of the conjugal relationship and makes the achievement of reciprocal sexual pleasure a key element in whether the relationship is sustained or dissolved' (Giddens 1992, 62).

So, for Giddens, plastic love plus a preoccupation with mutual sexual pleasure amounts to the negotiation possibilities of confluent love. The potential permutations and negotiations of confluent love, as both Beck and Giddens say, are endless – and the real-sex films explored in this book will begin to reveal some of that variation. But at the core of these films is that amalgam of negotiation and the *ars erotica*, ranging from the 'nameless fuck' every Wednesday of Claire and Jay in *Intimacy*, through the mainly bleak picaresque sexual journey of Marie in *Romance*, to Erika's genital mutilation, sexual voyeurism in a drive-in cinema, and her Music Conservatory sado-masochistic contract with her young student in *The Piano Teacher*.

For some film reviewers, the problem with Claire and Jay's relationship is that they hardly speak, and they share no names. The assumption here is that they do not negotiate at all. But in our view these professional critics haven't been looking closely enough at the film's images, embodied performances and sound. Claire and Jay negotiate with their bodies, and build up a sustaining sexual relationship which is reciprocal in its care to give mutual pleasure – until Jay's growing obsession destroys it.

Although strongly influenced as this particular reading of *Intimacy* is by new risk sociology, it is important to repeat that this is an interdisciplinary rather than a 'sociological' book. It will draw, as we have said, centrally on feminist critical geography. It will draw, also, on middle-level concepts from literary and film studies, like narrative, genre, stardom, audience, and mise-en-scène. And quite deliberately, to contrast and challenge the 'high theory' of risk sociology, film psychoanalysis and other 'grand narrative' approaches to cinema, it will invent a 'soft ethnography' (as in Chapter 10 on *The Piano Teacher*). Beck and Giddens have often been criticized within media/cultural studies (and from inside sociology itself) for being much too 'macro' in their histories, ignoring the important mediations of film and media forms; and one of the current authors has been part of this published critique. So, as chapter follows chapter in this book, those early 'macro' approaches (as in risk sociological and psychoanalytical analysis) get countered by chapters focussing in turn on 'social audiences', 'narrative', 'genre', 'authorship', 'soft ethnography', etc.

This is not to establish some grand interpretive conclusion, as a new reflexive taxonomy of 'real-sex film'. It offers, instead, a variety of points of view in how to

construct analyses of real-sex cinema, from which a reader can put together his/her own combinations of ‘mutual understanding’ and ‘galvanizing extension’ – and (to wind back to the beginning of this Introduction) these interpretations will never be free of the individual reader’s own mix of the anecdotally subjective and the socially systematic.

### Chapter 1: *Intimacy* the Film

The chapter discusses the film *Intimacy* as constructed discursively from two entirely different perspectives – so that, as we say, the film that reviewer Phillip French saw was not the film we saw. First we explore the use of intertextual reference and the professional organization of knowledge in French’s critique that construct for his readers a negative view of the film *Intimacy*. Next we embark on what we saw in watching *Intimacy* in a reading that is no less inter-textual, no less constructed. The chapter here (and in Chapter 2) draws on risk sociology, film studies and literary theory in an interdisciplinary ‘overlapping’ of frames, interpreting *Intimacy*, by way of a ‘mutual understanding’ between, and a ‘galvanizing extension’ of disciplinary assumptions. The chapter contains detailed discussion of the film in terms of three milieus: the sex scenes, developing the relationship of Jay and Claire; the social world of south London beyond Jay’s flat where this sex takes place; and Jay’s own personal memory space, his former life with his wife and children.

One of the advantages of a detailed discussion of the film, we argue, is that it gives the reader the chance to get into it, shot-by-shot, rather than have a pre-digested account which is heavily author-driven – while never trying to hide (in the structure of

the chapter itself between the two perspectives of media critic and academic) that this book is also ‘as interpreted by the authors’.

## Chapter 2: The Transformation of Intimacy – Sexuality and Risk Modernity

Following our discussion in Chapter 1 of the conceptual grids in film reviewing, in this chapter we elaborate on those of risk sociology. We explore the historical particularity they represent, what their strengths might be in explaining some of the configurations of love and intimacy that we outline in Chapter 1; and then in the remainder of the book we explore the weaknesses (and strengths) of risk sociology’s own conceptual grids from the perspective of *interdisciplinary debate* with film criticism, feminist film theory, social audience theory, and other concepts current within the humanities and cultural studies.

The chapter explores Ulrich Beck’s seminal notion of ‘reflexive modernization’, Piet Strydom’s extension of this thesis beyond Beck’s focus on science and technology to consider mass demonstrations, Giddens’ observation of the contradictions between experts, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s ‘normal chaos of love’ and Giddens’ understanding of the transformation of intimacy within risk modernity. This is followed by critiques of the ‘risk modernity’ thesis by Jane Lewis, Scott Lash, and John Tulloch and Deborah Lupton, drawing attention to the critical assumptions underlying this ‘new risk’ position, and how it can be strengthened and extended within sociology and media/cultural studies.

The interdisciplinary emphasis of the book then goes beyond both risk sociology and critiques from within it. Here we explore film reviewing and current film theory



through scholar Linda Williams' work on 'Cinema and the Sex Act' emphasizing bodily performance and aesthetic form; literary scholar Raymond Williams' understanding of naturalism, emotional realism and the secularization of intimacy, especially via his notion of 'structures of feeling', and television and film dramatist Trevor Griffiths' exploration of otherness in the figure of the 'stranger'. As we conclude, the 'point, for us, of interdisciplinary thinking is that it puts different voices (and theories) in dialogue, in a process of mutual interrogation'.

### Chapter 3: *Intimacy* and *Romance* in Film Theory

Spotlighting the films *Intimacy* and *Romance* this chapter explores the critical frames, such as Lacanian psychoanalysis, underpinning the tendency to categorise real sex films as 'art house cinema' in a mutual dialogue with pornography. Referencing the film *Intimacy*, Tania Krzywinska argues that through the fusion and tension between these genres 'the spectator is narratively cued and cajoled into making an emotional, empathic and speculative investment in the two characters'. Thus, she argues, real-sex films treat 'hard core' conventions 'in self-reflexive ways ... to raise questions about the status of fantasy, spectacle and the real...Sexual sensationalism is shifted into the melodramatic register of psychological conflict and tension, whereas hard-core emphasizes the physical mechanics and rhythms of sexual performance' (Krzywinska 2006, 225).

By way of her coupling of *Intimacy* and *Romance*, and then her unsatisfactory (because historically under-theorised) de-coupling of them as 'variants' of art house cinema, the chapter argues that Krzywinska's analysis does not acknowledge that the film *Romance* is about Marie's negotiation of her own sexuality by way of a

picaresque series of female/male encounters in a changed modernity – the self-same modernity which generated feminist critiques of the virgin/whore ideology of masculinity that is so clearly embodied in her partner Paul’s ‘toreador’ persona. In this chapter we draw on Anthony Giddens’ concepts of plastic sexuality and confluent love, Raymond Williams’ notion of emotional realism and Trevor Griffiths’ historical understanding of the wandering vagrant in an interdisciplinary ‘extension’ of Krzywinska’s valuable analysis of real-sex films like *Romance*, *The Idiots*, *The Piano Teacher* and *Intimacy*.

#### Chapter 4 (Part 1) ‘Intimacy is what hurts when it is gone’: a dialogue between social audience and textual analysis

This chapter considers the debate (and contestation) within film studies between the ‘spectator’ and the idea of the ‘social audience’ using the film *Blue is the Warmest Colour* as our focus. We begin by exploring Tanya Horeck and Tina Kendall’s edited collection of essays on real-sex *The New Extremism in Cinema* which, though predominately focused on textual analysis, includes a social audience study conducted by film academic Martin Barker. In his stand-alone chapter, Barker rejects (textually-based) ‘spectator’ analysis to be ‘purely speculative’ and ‘particularly disappointing and disturbing’ aspects of both film studies and film culture generally. We take the reflexive debate within the pages of Horeck and Kendall’s book on real-sex and extreme cinema as a strong case of Hyndman’s feminist call for a blending of ‘mutual understanding’ and ‘galvanizing extension’ interdisciplinarity (Hyndman 2004, 310). In Part 1 of this chapter we consider, by way of an exploratory social audience study, a key theoretical area as well as qualitative methodologies seldom deployed within cinema studies.

#### Chapter 4 (Part 2) ‘A Man Didn’t Make This Film Alone’ – Intertextual Dialogue

We contribute to the debate of Part 1 of this chapter by combining industry/textual analysis with the findings of our social audience study of *Blue is the Warmest Colour* to explore in dialogue the mutually constructed meanings of ‘risk’, ‘desire’ and ‘intimacy’ in this ‘real-sex’ film, and the contribution of the ‘macro’ discourses of film reviewing, risk sociology, and feminist-psychoanalytical film studies outlined in the first three chapters. In doing so we also introduce analytical themes which will be explored extensively in later chapters of the book: real sex versus simulated sex; authorship as multiple and performative; the pleasure of the scopophilic gaze and of voluntary risk-taking; and addiction in *Blue is the Warmest Colour*.

#### Chapter 5: Brutal Intimacy: French Corporeal Cinema

This chapter begins with risk sociology’s understanding of intimacy as ‘a dogmatism for two’, to explore an interdisciplinary mix of theory, including Tim Palmer’s analysis of the cinema of ‘brutal intimacy’; Tanya Modleski’s recognition of a current inflection of the horror genre in terms of new desires for unleashing sexuality, violence and control; Kelley Conway’s recognition of an authorship of considerable diversity in the context of films made by women ‘about the status of women and female sexuality in French culture’ (2015, 464); Raymond Williams’ concept of historical ‘structures of feeling’; Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim’s ‘Normal Chaos of Love’; and Anthony Giddens’ ‘Transformation of Intimacy’.

Within these contexts, the films *Twentynine Palms*, *Trouble Every Day* and *Irréversible* will be analyzed textually to explore the importance of genre, narrative, visual shot-style, diegetic and non-diegetic sound, spatial mapping (and the disruption of all these categories) with a particular reference to the road film (*Twentynine Palms*)

and the horror/slasher film (*Trouble Every Day*). Historically risk sociology's understanding of risk modernity as a phenomenon of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as a stage beyond industrial modernity, and Williams' notion of 'structures of feeling' as a societal sense of 'latency' in terms of public recognition of widespread anxiety that often appears aesthetically in cultural productions of fiction, are drawn on to explain why these generic, narrative and visual/aural inflections generate what Palmer and Conway call a new movement in French cinema at this time.

This chapter also marks the beginning of a 'media studies' approach to the production, circulation and reception of real-sex cinema in terms of the mediated meaning of these films in specific social-cultural and economic contexts which are often missed or not elaborated by meta-level theory like Giddens and Beck's sociology and Krzywinska's Lacan-inspired, post-modernist film studies.

#### Chapter 6: 'Desperate for Intimacy'. Loneliness and Fun in *9 Songs* and *Shortbus*

This chapter shifts our focus from French to North American real-sex films. It begins with film reviewers' mainly positive response to the film *Shortbus* as containing an optimistic humor absent from European-made real-sex cinema. To address these industry critiques we ask: does this represent a different world view from what one critic calls European 'doomed, furtive or violent' sex, as in *Intimacy*? In particular, the chapter draws on Kelley Conway's interest in seeking out different authorship/generic configurations within an historical 'malaise', by exploring the layers of narrative history conveyed by comedy and political subtext in John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus*.

Our response begins with the comparison of two real-sex films, the English director Michael Winterbottom's *9 Songs* and U.S. director John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus*, since both have a similar combination of sex and music defining the narrative. But we find that the music in these films is used in very different narrative ways; and that, unlike the British film, *Shortbus* has a strong political sub-text which is both a critique of the current (capitalist) commoditization of communication technologies and of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

By way of comparison of *Shortbus* with Dušan Makavejev's *WR – Mysteries of the Organism* (1971), the similarities and differences between two benchmark films in different eras about sexual liberation are compared, and we suggest that *Shortbus*' optimistic structure of feeling is much closer to the therapeutic utopianism of negotiation in Anthony Giddens' risk-society concept of confluent love, than to Makavejev's anti-fascist, anti-Stalinist libertarianism. *Shortbus*' self-promoting sexual therapy narrative of 'love' is explored by way of the face-to-face interactions and couplings of characters in the light of Giddens' observation that "Sexuality" today has been discovered, opened up and made accessible to the development of varying life-styles... Somehow sexuality functions as a malleable feature of self, a prime connecting point between body, self-identity and social norms' (Giddens 1992, 15). *Shortbus*, we argue, embodies a narrative of interacting, intertwined sexuality, mapping the optimistic side of risk society's utopic/dystopic potential for democratic negotiation between equals in the interpersonal domain.

#### Chapter 7: Intimate Pleasures and the Madness of Love. Narrative in *Ken Park* and *Irréversible*

This chapter analyses the real-sex films *Ken Park* and *Irréversible* in the context of

the different sexual/social aesthetics of sexually explicit films by drawing on ‘old’ and ‘new’ forms of narrative theory in a ‘bridging synthesis’ of disciplinary approaches (Hyndman 2004, 307). The different generations of narrative theory alluded to in this chapter concern Will Wright’s ‘old’ critical realist analysis of the Western genre and Tanya Krzywinska’s ‘new’ postmodernist ‘narrative formula’ approach. As in Chapter 6, the chapter opens with comparison narratively of one European and one U.S.– made real-sex film, *Irréversible* and *Ken Park* to point to similar narrative reversals and contradictions in the films in the context of the ‘normal chaos of love’.

The first part of this chapter explores Will Wright’s realist approach to narrative theory, drawing on Levi-Strauss and Kenneth Burke to situate the changing syntagmatic and paradigmatic narrative conventions of the Western in relation to the shift in the United States from ‘free market’ unfettered individualism to organized capitalism in the Galbraith/Roosevelt response to the depression of the 1930s. Similarities and differences are traced between Raymond Williams’ concept of ‘structures of feeling’ and Will Wright’s narrative theory as critical realists; and Wright’s analytical frame is positioned also within the changing history of capitalism, thus marking the similarities and differences between Wright’s theory and risk sociology.

The second and major part of this chapter turns to narrative theory from a generation later than Wright’s in Krzywinska’s post-modernist exploration of four narrative patterns in films concerned with sex and sexual desire: proper/improper couples; circuits of desire; sexual initiation/self-discovery; and the return of the repressed. These four narrative types are explored textually in relation to *Ken Park*, revealing rewarding parallels in the multiple narrative structure of this real-sex film, but also

elisions and differences in *Ken Park* which, we argue, follow from Krzywinska's lack of grounded historical analysis. Wright's and Krzywinska's theoretically and generationally different versions of narrative theory are thus both drawn together in terms of current risk sociology and distinguished from each other epistemologically for further consideration in the chapters which follow.

#### Chapter 8: Actors and Sexual Intimacies. Trust, Mistrust and the Double Standards of Love

This chapter considers critical debate about the 'double standards' between sex and violence in real sex films (see also Chapter 4). By exploring the publicized discussion between *Intimacy* lead actor Kerry Fox and her partner Alex Linklater, the chapter argues that in an important sense these were two of the first social audiences for the film after their initial reading of the script; and it suggests that, rather than a double standard, the agreement they reached (for Fox to perform oral but not penetrative sex) was, in fact, a 'controlled experiment' in jealousy as a blend of personal emotional affect and public performance, and as such was a powerful demonstration in confluent love negotiation which they shared with the public. Trust in, and openness with, each other in private, and between Fox and director Chéreau in public were central to this negotiation; and the chapter proceeds by pointing to the central place of notions of trust and mistrust in 'the pure relationship' throughout new risk sociology, though with some strong critiques from within its ranks as to Beck's and Giddens' tendency to a meta-history devoid of differences as between age, gender, class, ethnicity and other key social indicators.

The latter part of the chapter turns to another controversial real-sex film, Lars von Trier's *Nymph()*maniac, which explores the actors' different (but often also similar)

responses to taking part in a real-sex film. Though of differing age, gender and professional experience, in interviews the actors reveal their respect for director Lars von Trier and the non-hierarchical, intra-creative and professionally innovative actor/director/film crew relationship on set. Also of significance was the emphasis of the actors in both *Intimacy* and *Nymph()maniac* on how this set of personal/professional face-to-face relationships was key to their understanding of this real-sex film as *not* pornography (in contrast to Krzywinska's notion of a generic slippage *between* pornography and art house cinema, and some critics' rejection of the film as *just* pornography). Consequently, what the actors and director of *Nymph()maniac* 'actually show of the human body' and 'what the sexually charged scenes mean in the context of the narratives' (Conway 2015) is discussed as a highly eroticized, picaresque, female embodiment lodged in the over-arching dialogical relationship of two people talking from entirely different life experiences and competences: the lead male's pedagogical and eclectically bookish, and the lead female's street-wise and eclectically sexualized journeys. The chapter concludes with some emphasis on the interdisciplinary blend of feminist geopolitical, feminist film, risk sociological and literary theory in approaching these films in terms of key principles of feminist mapping theory.

#### Chapter 9: Secret Intimacies and Addictions in *Le Secret*

This chapter draws centrally on Anthony Giddens' theory of addiction as a major part of the utopia/hell duality within risk modernity in analysing the apparently simulated sex French film, *Le Secret*. By way of a close reading of three middle-class social spaces of the main protagonist, Marie, her husband François, and her lover, the African American dancer Bill – her work space, her domestic space and the space of



Bill's artistically elegant flat in Paris – the analysis explores textually the multiple, 'torn apart' identity narrative of Marie as she struggles between what Giddens describes as the emancipatory as well as constraining reflexive project of self that is central to risk modernity. It explores Marie's narrative pathway through routine pattern, habit and compulsive behaviour towards a kind of addiction which is different from François. Yet both Marie and François are equally part of the addictive experience of risk modernity.

Likewise, the chapter explores the similarities and differences between the addictive behaviour of Erika in *The Piano Teacher* (which will be examined from a very different perspective in Chapter 10) and Marie in *Le Secret*. The argument in this chapter is that the differences are those determined by geographical space and historical time, rather than the (often imperceptible) differences between real-sex and simulated sex films. *Le Secret* is offered a chapter in this book because we are talking about an historically-placed structure of feeling which is global as well as intimate in scope, and is therefore likely to be found in creative works much beyond the relatively small movement of real-sex cinema. The chapter sets out to indicate this by way of a similar textual analysis used for real-sex films in this book, where the addictions described by Giddens are also readily visible.

Although this chapter is more singularly sociological than most others in the book, the conclusion also points to other important disciplinary perspectives which underpin its analysis, like feminist mapping theory, feminist film study of authorship in real-sex cinema, and Raymond Williams' understanding of 'structures of feeling'. In particular, by comparing one simulated and one real-sex film in the context of

addiction and in terms of the staging, performance and narrative structuring of sex, we can see a common core of values where the romanticised celebration of sexual coupling is replaced by its violent and painful depictions (Conway 2015, 464). As Kelley Conway argues, these provocative films ‘typically use explicit sex as a vehicle to chronicle, with profound cynicism, the power struggles between men and women’ (Conway 2015, 463). So *Le Secret* and *The Piano Teacher* differ in terms of film shooting, staging and ‘tightening up’ and ‘letting go’ of the narrative and *mise-en-scène*, but share core values from the historical moment of risk modernity.

#### Chapter 10: Beyond High Theories of Intimacy. Authorship, direction, performance and ‘obscenity’ in *The Piano Teacher*

To this point the book has been exploring different filmic mediations between academic ‘high’ theorists and the social audiences (or spectators) for whom they are produced. So we have discussed, via different films and sometimes different methodologies, debates about social audiences, narrative, genre, authorship, film history, and the differences (or not) between real-sex and simulated-sex cinema.

This chapter, ‘Beyond High Theories’ – reflecting the cultural anthropological shift in the social sciences and media/cultural studies known as the ‘ethnographic turn’ – points explicitly to the problems of macro-theory by way of what we call a ‘soft ethnographic’ analysis of *The Piano Teacher*. It is not possible to do an ethnographic study of films that have been already made. Thus, in the absence of that possibility we devised our ‘soft ethnography’ approach to *The Piano Teacher*, which focussed on some key players in this model (namely, the prize-winning author, director and lead actor) to suggest the flow and feedback between these different ‘signatures’ on the

text. This is an attempt to bring strong media/cultural studies approaches *to* a macro-sociological approach (such as that in the previous Chapter 9 which discusses the same film, *The Piano Teacher*). This, again, is part of the process of authorial reflexivity pointing to other disciplines and sub-disciplines which are also part of our academic identities (as discussed at the beginning of our Introduction about our negotiation with the texts of *Intimacy* and *The Transformation of Intimacy*) before agreeing to write together; and discussed again via the reflexive interaction of Kerry Fox and Alex Linklater before they decided together that Fox would perform in the real-sex film, *Intimacy*. These personal/public negotiations are just the more personal layer of the overall, reflexive ‘synthesize and extend’ interdisciplinary approach of the book – an approach reflected also in the social audience analysis of Chapter 4.

In this chapter we explore the ways in which inter-textuality within and between the stages of writing, directing and performing the film *The Piano Teacher* create a multi-authored text. This is but part of the ‘semiotic density’ of a film text, but is intended as symptomatic of what a fuller, properly ethnographic account could achieve. Thus it is a textual reading but – like the social audience approach discussed in Chapter 4 – one based on a grounding in knowledge of the writer’s discursive history and politics, the director’s television/film tension and sense of liberation via ‘obscene’ cinema, and an actor’s ‘directing’ (via her construction of character) of her performance. Again we interrogate the production, performance and meaning constructed in real sex cinema since ‘If the films do not constitute pornography, questions remain: How do the recent sexually explicit... films imagine sex? How is sex staged and shot? What roles does sex play in the films’ narratives?’ (Conway 2015, 464); but we are now asking those questions inter-textually of different key ‘authors’ of this film, as to how each of them

imagines, stages and ‘shoots’ her/his own narrative in the context of the other authors’ stories.

Chapter 11: Desire, Intimacy and the Transgressive Gaze in the work of Andrea Arnold and Lynne Ramsay.

By way of the simulated, but strongly sexualized and realistic films by women filmmakers Andrea Arnold and Lynne Ramsay, this chapter revisits feminist screen studies’ notions of the gaze. Focussing particularly on Andrea Arnold’s *Red Road*, but also her *Fish Tank* and Lynn Ramsay’s *Morvern Callar* and *Ratcatcher*, the chapter explores the theories of Laura Mulvey, Lynn Williams, E. Anne Kaplan, Elizabeth Grosz, Slavoj Žižek and Elena Del Rio in the light of Horeck and Kendall’s ‘unsayable’ and Grønstad’s ‘unwatchable’ concepts to shift emphasis from the ‘gaze’ to the role of the sensory and the affective in real-sex and extreme cinema.

This also shifts theories of spectatorship from the audience’s desire-experienced-as-transgression to transgression-experienced-as loss via aesthetic provocation, enabling us to re-think how we define intimacy and its traditional embedding in oppressive structures. Allowing space in the viewer/viewed relationship for ‘observation without domination’ in a re-reading of Giddens’ *Transformation of Intimacy*, this allows us also to ‘re-think cinema as that which is played out on our bodies, and which constructs an appeal to affect, emotion and, indeed, the intellect’ (Horeck and Kendall 2011, 8), a process which is very evident in the detailed discussion of real-sex cinema by our social audience groups (as discussed in Chapter 4). This further puts in dialogue the concepts of desire, intimacy and risk in feminist film studies as part of a larger conversation (undertaken throughout this book) about sociological theories of

risk, the mapping of embodiment in feminist geography, and interdisciplinary debates more generally.