

Looking from the Outside: A Queer Methodological Approach to Cinema
from Haptic Analysis and Phenomenology

*Miradas torcidas: una aproximación metodológica queer al cine desde el
análisis háptico y la fenomenología*

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Abstract:

The main goal of this article is to propose a methodological approach for queer film studies, stemming from the consideration that the concepts and tools generally applied to heteronormative cinema are inadequate due to their being based on binary categories established a priori that no longer fit within a queer theoretical framework (gay/straight, male/female, object/subject). Based on film phenomenology, on the precepts of Queer Theory and mainly on haptic analysis, we propose a methodological approach to cinema that resituates the focus on affects and bodies, and on the creation of pleasures and identification processes that are no longer only scopic, but —perhaps due to a certain dissatisfaction with the binomial, hierarchical and distancing model of the Male Gaze proposed by Laura Mulvey— also take into account the sensory and affective involvement of the spectator and the engagement of other senses beyond sight.

Keywords:

Queer methodologies; queer cinema; haptic analysis; film phenomenology; haptic films

Resumen:

Con este artículo queremos ofrecer una propuesta metodológica que sirva para apuntalar los estudios sobre cine queer, desde la consideración de que los conceptos y

herramientas aplicadas al cine heteronormativo ya no funcionan por basarse en categorías binarias establecidas a priori (homo/hetero, masculino/femenino, objeto/sujeto) que no tienen cabida en un paradigma queer. A partir de la fenomenología fílmica, de los preceptos de la Teoría Queer y principalmente del análisis háptico de la imagen audiovisual, proponemos una aproximación metodológica al cine que resitúa el foco en los afectos y cuerpos, y en la creación de placeres y procesos de identificación que ya no son únicamente escópicos, sino que —quizás como consecuencia de una cierta insatisfacción con el modelo binómico, jerárquico y distanciador de la Mirada Masculina que proponía Laura Mulvey— tienen en cuenta la implicación sensorial y afectiva del espectador y la involucración de otros sentidos además de la vista.

Palabras clave:

Metodologías queer; cine queer; análisis háptico; fenomenología fílmica; cine háptico

1. Introduction: debates around methodologies for Queer Film Studies

For queer film scholars —perhaps due to a certain distrust of the orthodox and measurable, and of the absolute categorisations of empirical sciences— the question of method has often been overlooked; as Brown and Nash (2010, p. 1) explain, methodological approaches in the field of Queer Theory often articulate their ontology and epistemology clearly, yet fail to specify the implications of the methods they draw upon. If publications focusing on queer research methodologies in the field of Social Sciences are already scarce (see for example Brown & Nash, 2010; Ghaziani & Brim, 2019; and Nash, 2016), those dealing with the construction and compilation of methodological proposals for the analysis of queer cinema are virtually non-existent.

In principle, a queer approach seems incompatible with the epistemology of the Social Sciences; the former celebrates the fluid, the transgressive, the interpretative, and local and embodied knowledges, while the latter places the emphasis on the systematic, the normative, the positivist and the generalisable. Therefore, the union between «queer» and «method» appears to us as an oxymoron: queerness is something that refuses to adhere to stable systems of classification, while the definition of a method presupposes precisely the opposite (Ward, 2016, pp. 71-72). Indeed, most texts dealing with this matter implicitly suggest that the queer is, *per se*, a method or, at the very least, a way of engaging with the object of study. However, we assert that the field of queer film studies requires a language, concepts and, above all, a theoretical-methodological framework in order to solidify the results and processes of our research, providing queer film scholars with a wide range of analytical tools specifically suited to our object of study.

In this sense, if most methodological proposals within Social Sciences rely on clearly defined categories (feminine-masculine, hetero-homo, human-animal), the interest of the queer researcher focuses precisely on the deconstruction of these identities or *a priori* categories, which are no longer seen as immutable, impermeable, or binary. Thus, for Amin Ghaziani and Matt Brim (2019, pp. 15-16), one of the ways of queering research methodologies is the adoption of a completely anti-categorical stance, putting

the focus on «deconstructing, rather than reifying social constructions» (McDonald, 2017, pp. 134-35). Thus, in contrast to other models that attempt to frame and categorise the identities represented in cinema, we propose a more open and anti-essentialist position, no longer based on irreconcilable oppositions, but on processes of construction of subjectivity that are always dialogical and negotiable. Identity, and thus the representations of identity that appear in queer cinema, is always a process of negotiation, something fluid and opaque, not a quantifiable concept that can be established in advance. In short, in this article we propose to focus the analysis on the processes of image construction that more or less directly deconstruct pre-established binary identities; not only the familiar masculine-feminine, homo-hetero dichotomies, but also, and more crucially —especially in relation to spectatorial processes— the mechanisms through which the audiovisual language of queer cinema breaks with the subject-object dichotomy that Laura Mulvey (1975) pointed at in her theorisation of the Male Gaze.

In this way, any methodological proposal for queer cinema must be designed taking into account the peculiar nature of a cinematography that is no longer constructed in binary terms (subject/object or male/female), but that often suggests subjectivities, corporealities, spectatorial positions and processes of identification that are drastically removed from those offered by the Cinema of the Male Gaze. By Cinema of the Male Gaze, we refer to films in which a certain distance —perceived as commoditizing, dominant and based upon scopophilia— is presupposed between the (irrevocably masculinised) spectator and the image of the subjects represented on screen, in particular queer, racialised and, crucially, female bodies. For Queer Theory, to think of the cinematic experience from the paradigm developed by Mulvey (1975, 1981) —which has prevailed in Film Studies when it comes to analysing issues of gender or sexuality— based on the hierarchy of the phallus, castration scenarios, narcissism or voyeurism would be to duplicate the dominant symbolic structures of power (Lindner, 2012, 2017). Given that the subject of this cinematic gaze is presupposed, by default, to be male, white, cisheterosexual and physically capable (as opposed to disabled or crip bodies), implementing this model would implicitly deny the existence of pleasures and desires not aligned with the spectatorial position offered; among them, queer pleasures.

On the other hand, we cannot fail to point out that Queer Theory is essentially configured as a theoretical framework; thus, Queer Film Studies address questions that intersect with fields of knowledge such as Philosophy, Ethics and Aesthetics. Therefore, analysing a film from a queer perspective goes beyond «pure» textual analysis, the most widespread methodology within Film Studies in Spain. This is not to deny the importance of textual analysis; in fact, most of the research queer scholars have undertaken deals with the analysis of all kinds of cultural products (films, literature, musicals, television, etc.), to the extent that we can affirm that «almost everything that would be called queer theory is about ways in which texts —either literature or mass culture or language— shape sexuality» (Warner, 1992, p. 19). We find antecedents to this kind of analysis in works such as *Between Men* (Sedgwick, 1985), the documentary *The Celluloid Closet* (Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, 1995) or most of the scholarship produced by Richard Dyer. However, we believe that queer scholars cannot limit our research to utilising film, art, or literature as a mere reservoir of examples (Casetti, 2005, p. 20) by applying theoretical models that were constructed *a priori*, but that we

must consider instead how the questions raised by our object of study can illuminate other areas of knowledge.

This implies that any methodological proposal that seeks to heuristically approach the study of queer cinema has to be traversed by a wide variety of intellectual research fields and disciplines (Zurian & Herrero, 2014, p. 18), in order to build, from the inductive analysis of concrete elements —the films— a knowledge that transcends the field of Film Studies and seeks to encompass, among other issues, identity-formation processes, the functioning of desire or the construction of bodies that fit or do not fit within what biopolitical power considers the norm. Thus, in order to construct this methodological proposal, we will combine modes of analysis stemming from disciplines as disparate as Phenomenology, Aesthetics and Feminist Film Studies. Given that a large part of queer cinema places corporeality and affect at the centre of spectatorial pleasures and as an essential component of its own audiovisual language, Filmic Phenomenology offers a series of particularly productive concepts and tools of analysis.

2. Theoretical background: the definition of a queer text, Phenomenology and the concept of haptic visuality

Although the word «queer» has been used in popular culture as a synonym for LGBT or as another identity marker within the wider acronym, for queer theorists, the term goes beyond the question of gender and sexuality, positioning itself as an alternative to the normative, the binary and the essentialist, also connoting an anti-capitalist, anti-racist and anti-capitalist position (Erol & Cucklanz, 2020). This means that, when approaching the analysis of a film from this perspective, we will not only look at those characters or actions framed in the watertight identity categories of homosexuality, bisexuality or transsexuality, but we will pay attention to any narrative or even aesthetic instance —hence the importance of the phenomenological and haptic approach— that subverts the norm. Thus, in line with Warner (1993), we define queerness as the rejection of normality in all its forms; we refer not only to the cisheteronormative, but also to racism, the primacy of upper-middle-class experiences, ableism (aspects related to the diegesis), and, ultimately, to the unwritten rules of the audiovisual language that rules the Cinema of the Male Gaze (formal aspects).

In this sense, we define a film as queer also in relation to the filmic form, referring to those audiovisual texts that «not only works against narrativity, the generic pressure of all narrative toward closure and the fulfillment of meaning, but also pointedly disrupts the referentiality of language and the referentiality of images» (De Lauretis, 2011, p. 244). In this sense, from a formal approach, the slow cinema exemplified by *auteurs* such as Lucrecia Martel or Julia Solomonoff could be qualified as queer. De Lauretis (2011, p. 244) also points to the rupture of the politics of identification as one of the most notable features of queer writing, the film's refusal to satisfy the spectator's demand to identify —and identify with— what is happening on screen, to give meaning to the diegesis. Haptic visuality proposes, in this sense, a distortion of the referentiality of images, breaking the panoptic dominance over them and negating the distance between the spectator and what is represented on screen that sustains the cinema of the Male Gaze (Mulvey, 1975). A good example of this representational politics can be

found precisely in the *Salta Trilogy* directed by the Argentinean filmmaker Lucrecia Martel, in which an extremely tactile visuality is invoked through the emphasis on the sensorial qualities of the image, the use of extreme close-ups and the absence of long shots that allow the spectator to locate the characters (and actions) onscreen.

Precisely because of this rupture of the presupposed distance between spectator and image, in the viewing of a haptic film it is more difficult for the audience to identify who is in the narrative. According to Schoonover and Galt (2016), this type of visuality is therefore queer in itself, since it directly subverts the dominant modes of (cishetero)normative vision; specifically, Mulvey's (1975) model of the Gaze, based on the distance and domination between an inevitably masculinised spectator and the image-object of the (generally feminised) bodies represented on screen. As Rosalind Galt (2013), seconded by Venkatesh (2016), argues, queer cinema —particularly, queer films produced outside Europe and North America— shifts the focus from the purely visual to the questioning of narrative and aesthetic normativity in order to build a «cinema of sensation».

But what does haptic visuality mean specifically? According to Marks (2000, p. 22), when we are confronted with the viewing of a film, our eyes may function like the sense of touch, capable of feeling and caressing the image rather than merely apprehending and dominating it from the distance that film-viewing is assumed to entail. This means that, as viewers, we establish a connection between the bodies represented on screen, our own bodies and the memories contained within them, constituting an embodied cinematic experience that brings the «body of the film» closer to the individual body of the viewer. Moreover, for Marks, the question of the haptic goes beyond a matter of mere aesthetics; her theory seeks to rethink the meaning of scopic pleasures while denying the binary oppositions of active/passive and subject/object elaborated by Mulvey (1975, 1981). Rather than constituting a radical alternative to panoptic control, haptic images then determine an oscillation between image surface and depth, between seeing and not seeing, between distance and proximity.

Marks (2002, p. 13) also explains how the optical images of Hollywood's classic cinema (or the cinema of the Gaze) address a spectator who is distant, distinct and incorporeal, whereas haptic images «invite the spectator to dissolve his or her subjectivity in close, corporeal contact with the image», thus blurring the boundaries between what is Self (spectator) and what is Other (images and characters). This process involves the construction of a form of visuality that is no longer organised around identification, but is «labile, capable of alternating between identification and immersion» (Marks, 2002, p. 17). Based on these ideas, we propose that haptic analysis constitutes a methodological tool with unlimited potential for approaching queer cinema, since it allows us to escape the binaristic traps of the Male Gaze, and to conceptualise the relationship between spectator and characters in terms of affection and bodily empathy that transcend the psychic identifications derived from the narrative.

This is a key aspect, since we are interested in claiming, the particular affinities (not solely methodological) that exist between queer cinema and the concept of the haptic. In order to justify the suitability of this method of analysis, it is worth noting that a large part of queer cinematography proposes, thanks to its haptic and sensory-based imagery,

a much closer relationship with the spectator's body, although this idea does not pretend to be totalising or to encompass the infinite number of aesthetics and perspectives existing in the (very diverse) queer cinemas. From the very birth of the concept of New Queer Cinema (Rich, 1992), the use of a formal language based on the sensuality, texture and materiality of the image was associated —although not directly or using the term haptic— with the ethics and aesthetics of queer cinema: Derek Jarman, a director characterised by the use of a deeply tactile audiovisual language (particularly in the film *Blue*) was among the first filmmakers to be included in lists of New Queer Cinema. Barbara Zecchi (2015) notes as a key feature of this type of cinema a certain tactile visual dimension «that permeates an aesthetic that evokes proximity [and] contact», respect for otherness and the concomitant loss of the self in the presence of the Other: that is, the integration of formal and visual strategies of the haptic. Moreover, while Marks does not explicitly refer to queerness or sexuality in her initial conceptualisation of haptic imagery —she does, however, acknowledge its potential for feminist visual criticism— many of the examples she draws on come from lesbian artists, such as Sadie Benning and Azadian Nurudin. Furthermore, later works by researchers such as Vinodh Venkatesh (2018), Missy Molloy (2017) or Davina Quinlivan (2015) have explored the interconnections between haptic aesthetics and queer cinema, although they have not necessarily done so from a methodological perspective.

Haptic visuality is a particularly rich theoretical-methodological framework for approaching transnational queer cinema; according to Pérez Eyzell, these films are characterised precisely by their being empathetic to the protagonist's queer gaze and desire (2017, p. 234). This means that images tend to be constructed around their tactile and sensorial characteristics, capable of constructing dialogues based on bodies and affects, as opposed to queer cinema in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, which has tended to draw a gaze associated with voyeuristic pleasures, largely based on the sexualisation of queer bodies. On the contrary, in this type of cinematography, which Vinodh Venkatesh (2016) calls *New Maricón Cinema*, spectators are brought closer to the sensorial perception of the protagonists through this underlining of the materiality of the image. Examples of *New Maricón Cinema* include films such as *La ciénaga* (Lucrecia Martel, 2001), *El último verano de la Boyita* (Julia Solomonoff, 2009), *Plan B* (Marco Berger, 2009) or *Contracorriente* (Javier Fuentes-León, 2009). Schoonover and Galt (2016) explain this emphasis on affect and the sensory in peripheral (often transnational) queer cinema in opposition to other queer cinematographies that evoke the language of the Cinema of the Gaze (Mulvey, 1975) because they consider that, in less progressive societies than Europe or North America, it is difficult to make queer affect so clearly visible, and therefore their cinema tends to be more conservative with the politics of total visibility that derive from these voyeuristic structures. For the authors, less privileged queer experiences often rely on particularly sensual cinematic forms.

It is also worth mentioning that these haptic approaches to cinema are heir to a wide range of long-standing methodologies and theories, such as filmic phenomenology. This discipline emerged as a critical response to the understanding of the cinematic experience as an abstract, distanced and disembodied process, shifting the focus to the embodied, tactile and bodily component of spectatorial processes. The so-called «affective turn» in film theory thus marks a transition from discussions of the nature of the medium, elements of narrative or ideology to questions of emotional involvement

(particularly empathy and audience identification beyond psychic engagements with the characters). This turn derives from recent changes in cinematic practices and forms (the rise of digital cinema, the boom of queer cinemas, immersive technologies or films produced from the intercultural diaspora), as well as from a certain dissatisfaction—from feminism, Queer Theory or Postcolonial Studies—with the dominant ways of conceiving and theorising film that focus solely on vision. After all, as Donna Haraway critiques, when we talk about cinema, the Gaze inevitably signifies the position of the white man (1997, p. 283), something that comes to conquer the observable from a place of privilege and domination.

In order to deconstruct this paradigm, the best-known representative of feminist film phenomenology, Vivian Sobchack, contests in her books *The Address of the Eye* (1991) and *Carnal Thoughts* (2004) the idea of vision as a purely distance-based sense, which has led to the association of the Gaze with issues of domination and control. Even in film, our sight and hearing could not give meaning to what is perceived if they did not draw on other modes of sensory access to the world: our ability to not only see and hear, but also to sense our proprioceptive weight, our dimension, gravity and the movement of the world. In short, cinematic experience acquires meaning not apart from our bodies but because of our bodies (Sobchack, 2004, pp. 59-60).

Sobchack also noted that certain films engage the sensory capacities of our bodies—other than sight and hearing—more explicitly than others (2004, p. 62); our bodies' ability to make sense(s) of a film will be most clearly activated when said film does not offer us traditional scopic pleasures or clear points of identification with the characters or the action. In this sense, as numerous queer readings of seemingly heteronormative texts (e.g. William Wyler's *Ben-Hur*) prove, queer audiences may derive pleasure from films that do not offer clear opportunities for identification or desire from specific (queer) characters or plots, but instead offer affective situations cinematically constructed from particular movements, gestures, textures and rhythms (Lindner, 2012).

Although within Feminist Film Studies, phenomenological methodological approaches to film are already quite well established, for queer film studies this is still a relatively new perspective, although we have recently come across an increasing body of work, such as texts by Sarah Ahmed (2006) and Katharina Lindner (2012). Lindner analyses, among other questions, which types of viewers—among them queer audiences—are more likely to engage with films on a sensorial level. According to the author, audiences bring to cinemas their own sensory experiences, lived and situated in a specific socio-cultural context, which makes them empathise emotionally and bodily with the experiences of the characters in a kind of «affective contagion» that transcends mere psychic or narrative identification. When Buñuel sticks a scalpel into the eye of his protagonist in *An Andalusian Dog* (1929), I may or may not identify with the character at the level of the plot, but my body will react with a shiver of terror, imagining in its flesh the sensation of a blade stabbing into a naked eye.

Thus, if phenomenology views the processes of identification available to the spectator as something that stems from their affective and bodily relationship with the materiality of the film (primary identification), as well as derived from their secondary identification with the actions of the characters within the plot, then the cinematic

experience becomes an activity in which the identities of the spectators are exposed, open to all kinds of transformations (Ince, 2011, p. 7). From queer phenomenology, we can think our encounters with cinema from a non-essentialist perspective without ever leaving aside the embodied, specific and historical body that makes these encounters possible. This is a statement that will have all kinds of implications for queer film scholars, since it opens up the possibility to consider the relations established between spectators (whether queer or not) and film as a process capable of provoking profound ethical and political transformations in the audience, notwithstanding the existence of narrative identification with the characters.

On the other hand, Ahmed has worked on queer phenomenology from the concept of the (dis)orientation of bodies, developed in her book *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006). With the playful concept «orientation of bodies», Ahmed alludes to two main ideas: the question of sexual orientation (hetero, homo, bi) and the phenomenological concept of the directionality of desire or attention. In this sense, the objects and bodies towards which we orient ourselves reveal the general direction we have chosen in the world, telling us about the socio-cultural background of the subject: queer people orient themselves towards the world and towards Others in different ways. In other words, sexuality implies, even at the spatial level, «different ways of inhabiting and being inhabited by space» (2006, p. 67). This orientation towards Other objects will always be marked by heterosexual thinking, which implies that the objects of queer desire, those that society considers deviant, always appear on the margins of our sensory horizon, out of our reach: to use a terminology in line with Film Studies, these objects appear out of field, out of focus. If the queer object slips away, if it appears to us as strange, absurd and out of place, then a Queer Phenomenology, as Ahmed argues, would involve directing attention to those whose lives and loves make them appear obliquely, out of place (2006, p. 570).

3. Instruments for the analysis

Following these ideas, we propose a double dimension for the analysis of queer cinema: from content and from form. With regard to the first aspect, the focus is on: a.) the instances in which forbidden desires emerge among the protagonists of the films, whether they are explicitly LGBTIQ+ drives, or simply non-normative desires (incest, BDSM, children's sexual drives, reversal of gender roles in sexual practices, etc.), regardless of whether they take the form of specific sexual acts (kissing, caressing, penetration) or are expressed in more subtle ways; b.) moments and characters that question the binarisms that underpin the cisheteronormative system; and c.) those scenes in which the protagonists perform their gender identity in ways that subvert the canons of masculinity and femininity imposed by the cisheteropatriarchal norm. This methodology has been put into practice in various research projects (see for example Vázquez-Rodríguez, García-Ramos and Zurian, 2020).

At a methodological level, a queer phenomenological analysis focuses on these objects of desire that are «in flight», often appearing in the background of the shot or offscreen; unfocused, underexposed, like phantasmagorical figures that slip into the margins of family, society and what is considered morally acceptable. Given that sexuality implies different ways of inhabiting space and coexisting in the world, orienting our desire

towards these queer or «perverse» objects means inhabiting a different world, a marginal space, which is also translated at the level of the filmic form. Scholars therefore must look at what escapes the attention of conventional Film Studies, at the objects, subjects and actions that appear offscreen, hidden in the margins of the shot; at the queer desires and orientations that are not detected at the denotative level, but can be read between the lines. After all, it is not in vain that most studies on lesbianism in film refer to its supposed invisibility (see for example Wilton, 1995). Then, the analysis must focus on apparently normal and familiar instances that nevertheless appear to the viewer as ominous moments, pregnant with a desire that is difficult to define, which may not be evident from a narrative perspective, but somehow resonates, more carnally, in our sensorium. From a visual point of view, we can analyse this disorienting and elusive component of queer filmmaking from the following variables: a.) the proliferation of partial and confusing images of the characters and settings featured in the films; b.) the use of extreme close-ups that do not allow the viewer to take a step back in order to observe the scene in its full breadth, thus negating the panoptic domination over cinematic images; c.) the proliferation of images of water; and d.) the strategic use of both the out-of-field and the furthest layer of the shot to portray queer instances.

Water imagery is of particular interest for Queer Phenomenology, because it articulates a certain sense of disorientation, an unfamiliar way of being in the world, and a non-normative orientation towards the Other (Ahmed, 2006). In water, the familiar rules of gravity and bodily movement no longer apply, we do not know where is up and where is down, nor what is left or right, but are limited to floating or moving in that infinite and limitless universe that is the ocean, the river, or the lagoon. In aquatic mediums, the limits between the I and the not-I, between a body and Others are blurred, because through direct contact with this material, the false sense of distance implied by the Gaze is subverted, offering instead closeness, proximity and a malleable materiality that adapts to the objects that inhabit it. Analysing the images of water that populate queer cinema —think for example of the works of Lucrecia Martel or Lucía Puenzo, or films such as *Praia do Futuro* (Karim Ainouz, 2014) or *El último verano de la Boyita* (Julia Solomonoff, 2009) — is interesting because it is in the representation of bodily movement in and through water that this distinctively queer, strange way of «being in the world», these «affective flows» that perhaps resonate in a special way with queer spectators (Lindner, 2012), is best articulated on a cinematic level. This is a key element within New Queer Cinema that has already been studied by authors such as Maguire (2020) and Venkatesh (2016).

Although all these elements on which we can focus the analysis of a queer film from the point of view of film phenomenology are closely linked to the concept of haptic analysis, the methodological possibilities offered by the model developed by Marks (2002) go one step further. In addition to the aforementioned aspects for the analysis, our proposed methodology must also look at: a.) the abundance of images in which the characters deploy their senses of touch, smell and taste that, due to the visual codes, awaken the viewer's own sensory memories; b.) images of textures, veils and surfaces that recall the idea of the screen as a membrane of contact between two universes, and that deny full scopic access to the diegetic world; and c) grainy, grated and over- or underexposed images that underline the materiality of the audiovisual medium itself. Haptic images are often not discernible or identifiable at first glance, and thus

encourage the eye to «caress» the surface of the visual field, to «graze rather than look» (Marks, 2000, p. 162). As Davina Quinlivan (2015, p. 67) argues when speculating on how queer cinema would feel, Marks' work not only encourages a radically different approach to the notion of the queer, but also shares with Queer Phenomenology an interest in disorientation, in the powerlessness of the spectator (who can no longer name what they see), and in the lack of clear identifications or categorisations, a particularly attractive feature within Queer Theory, which no longer relies on stagnant, immutable identities.

4. Conclusions

Before concluding, we must not overlook Elsaesser and Hagerner's (2010, p. 115) warning against taking haptic theoretical models too simply and substituting an oppressive gaze —a «watchful, controlling, punishing eye»— for a «caressing hand», claiming that the skin also holds contradictions that should not be ignored if we do not want to overburden a new paradigm with the demand to solve all the problems accumulated by previous theories. As Missy Molloy argues, if the turn to the haptic is motivated solely by the perceived failures of the scopic-centric regime, this implies that scholars of the haptic will tend to exaggerate the theoretical potential of thinking cinema in relation to skin, touch and embodiment, and ignore the new ambiguities constructed by these theories (2017, p. 101); our senses also respond to cultural and even physical hierarchies of all kinds. Even within queer cinema, the representation of sensory experiences of certain types of bodies and subjects is enhanced over others; crip studies have, in this sense, much to contribute to the field.

On the other (more positive) hand, this rupture of the «hegemony of the visual» brought about by haptic theoretical-methodological approaches and by Queer Phenomenology opens up spaces to consider other sensorial elements and other types of relations that can be established between the spectator and the bodies we see on screen, relations that no longer have to be based on subject-object domination or on the emphasis on difference, be it sexual, racial or of any other kind. Thus, a methodological approach to queer cinema based on phenomenology and haptic analysis offers interesting insights into how the (queer) bodies of the characters, their smells, tastes and textures relate on an affective, empathic and embodied level to the (queer or non-queer) bodies of the spectators. Also, as we have seen, the filmic pleasures that queer audiences can derive from viewing these films can more easily be situated in the realm of sensuality and affect than in the realm of conventional (psychic) identifications in relation to the characters and the plot, which does not always clearly showcase LGTBIQ+ relationships or desires (Lindner, 2012). Finally, it is important to highlight the suitability of this model of analysis to apply to queer films produced from the periphery: according to Schoonover and Galt (2016), such films tend to appeal to other senses, since making non-normative affects obviously visible is, in certain contexts, not an option. Proof of this statement is the book *New Maricón Cinema*, in which Vinodh Venkatesh (2016) applies Marks' ideas to the study of a series of films produced over the last two decades in Latin America.

In conclusion, if we apply the methodological proposal outlined in this paper, queer audiovisual texts should be analysed as places where the encounter with otherness is

inevitable. This is due to the fact that they stimulate a sensory and affective closeness that highly contrasts to the sensation of (visual) distancing from the characters and images we see on screen that is typical of scopical representational regimes, a distance that in turn would allow us to make moral judgements about their actions. There is thus a clash between the idea of «seeing to control», expressed in Mulvey's (1975, 1981) notions of scopophilia (the pleasure in seeing) —inevitably linked to epistemophilia (the pleasure in knowing) — and voyeurism, and the idea of «seeing to touch», to feel and come into contact with these different, queer bodies.

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