

**“It’s all in a day’s work for a 15-year-old gay virgin”: Coming Out
and Coming of Age in Teen Television**

Whitney Monaghan

My coming out story is disappointingly banal. From what I knew from film and television (where I learn all of my life lessons), I was supposed to sit down with my most trusted family member, cry and confess: “I think I’m in love, with a woman.” According to the script, we were then supposed to cry even more and talk about it. But that is not what happened. I came out to my mother in an email that ended something like this: “p.s. by the way, I’m a lesbian.” There were no tears involved. Lesson learned: real life is nothing like the movies.

No matter how horrible, awkward, or painfully banal it may be, the task of coming out to someone close is often represented in popular culture as a life-changing moment. As it is often represented as *the* most important moment in the lives of gay and lesbian characters, the coming out narrative is thus also depicted as the pivotal moment in the challenging, but ultimately empowering process known as coming of age. The distinctions between these narratives are often blurred as they are frequently entangled; however, I argue that they are discrete forms of narrative and must be treated accordingly.

Exclusive to queer characters, coming out is a narrative that revolves around questions of identity and involves the negotiation of social boundaries that define both sex and sexuality. Coming of age, on the other hand,

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is about facing maturity and involves the negotiation of the social boundary or demarcation between child and adult. Coming of age is thus traditionally restricted to representations of adolescence. With the lines blurred between these two consistently intertwined forms of narrative, the process of separation is complex but necessary.

Firstly, certain general differences between these two pervasive narratives must be noted. All characters that come out do not necessarily come of age within the same narrative. By this definition it must also be noted that not all characters that come of age need to come out; heterosexual characters in particular are represented as coming of age without divulging their sexuality; narratives do not often culminate with the protagonist declaring “I’m straight!” Further, as noted earlier, coming of age narratives are intrinsically about adolescence and the path from childhood to adulthood, but coming out narratives can (and do) focus on any stage of life.

In this article, I argue that disentangling these narratives is a crucial step in understanding the impact and implications of new Queer teen television series. The critically acclaimed UK teen television series, *Sugar Rush* (2005–2006) is of particular importance to this argument and I will contend that it breaks new ground in terms of both the coming of age and coming out narratives.

Coming of age and coming out in film

The modern coming of age narrative in film and television is derived from the literary genre known as the *Bildungsroman*. Greta LeSeur notes that the traditional *Bildungsroman* texts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries focused on the development of “a single male protagonist whose growth to maturity was the result of both formal and informal education.”¹ In the traditional *Bildungsroman*, this young protagonist must leave childhood behind and undertake an arduous journey in order to fulfil his destiny and discover his true (adult) identity. Tarshia Stanley emphasises that this process is “necessarily fraught with exodus and death as the child is divested of the things and people that connect him to his youth.”² To locate this narrative in a contemporary context, one need only to think, as Raffaele Caputo has suggested, of the closing scene of a coming of age film which depicts the following:

A budding young man sits atop a fence post or rock, or is standing on an incline in some lonely country setting. His point of view of the surrounding is from a vantage point. He has a clear view of everything on the horizon, and at times seems as though he can reach out

even further. He is at the end of an initiation journey in which, plunged through his first heart rending experience, he lost his greatest, most passionate love. The loss precipitates the gain, the experience draws him closer to manhood and now the world before him has opened up to take him in.³

Raffaele Caputo sees this ending as the prototypical image of a cinematic representation of coming of age.⁴ Drawn from a rich narrative tradition, this scene is strangely familiar; even if we have not seen this in film before we have imagined it in life. This description highlights the pervasive quality of this particular image of coming of age. If one were to substitute the young man in this description for a young woman, remove her from the lonely countryside and place her in an urban environment, one could still be describing any one of countless films.

The coming out narrative is becoming equally familiar, as it is “embedded in the very structures of gay and lesbian culture.”⁵ It should be noted that this has not always been the case. As Michael Bronski writes, the notion of “coming out” as a narrative complication is a “relatively new trope ... only several decades old.”⁶ Prior to the late 1960s, films with gay or lesbian content typically “presented homosexuality as some form of social, personal, or psychological tragedy.”⁷ In these storylines, gay or lesbian characters, often removed of their narrative agency, were “outed” by other (heterosexual) characters. The characters’ lives were “predicated and protected by secrecy and being public meant, not coming out, but being outed.”⁸ However, the post-Stonewall success of the Gay Liberation Movement “suddenly shattered this paradigm.”⁹ Bronski notes that within a year of this event, films produced and directed by openly gay men and women “overwhelmingly focused upon and fore-grounded the coming out narrative as the most important theme in portraying the gay experience.”¹⁰ Since this first wave of independent queer cinema, the “coming out film” has emerged as an influential cultural and commercial product. In essence, this was a shift away from the representation of homosexuality itself as a problem for queer characters to overcome, towards coming out and self-acceptance as the crucial issue for queer characters.

However, as the coming out narrative has permeated and evolved throughout popular culture, the cultural meaning of coming out has changed with it. Bronski argues that by the mid 1980s, coming out had become “an alternative and increasingly acceptable middle-class rite of passage.”¹¹ This could be called the trope of “coming out as coming of age,” because as a rite of passage, the coming out narrative became intrinsically tied to adolescence and thus strongly connected to the process of coming of age.

Despite the normalisation of this “coming out as coming of age” trope, a permeation of a general de-politicisation of queerness that pervaded queer representations of the 1980s and 1990s, Bronski argues that “coming out films” have both personal and political significance.¹² The personal truly is, therefore, the political in this context. Such narratives are crucial on the personal level through their explorations of, and implications on, identity formation but they are equally important in the political context as they examine coming out on a social level. Although the coming out narrative carries such weight, Bronski argues that the narrative “is no longer fresh, says nothing new, and is often not emotionally, physically, or artistically challenging.”¹³ This is partially because they are made by gay and lesbian filmmakers with the explicit intention, according to Bronski, “of portraying coming out – and by extension, homosexuality – in a positive light,” and this in itself is a burden that limits gay characterisation.¹⁴ According to Bronski, the standard narrative of the coming out film has become tired and formulaic from overuse. However, it must be noted that the focus of Bronski’s argument is film, and it could be argued that things work differently in the medium of television.

Coming out and coming of age in teen TV

It would be problematic to solely focus on filmic representations of this “coming out as coming of age” trope as it must be noted that these narratives are equally pervasive in television. In an article on the 1990s drama *Melrose Place*, Dennis Allen argued that until the mid 1990s essentially only one homosexual storyline could occur in heterosexually dominated television series, and this was the “revelation of homosexuality.”¹⁵ According to Allen, the only narrative queer characters could be active within involved coming out. This is because the traditional issue with homosexuality is that it is “not assumed but is itself the secret that produces narrative complication,”¹⁶ an issue that emphasises the process of coming out as the critical problem or issue for homosexual characters. All too often in the popular culture industry (to the point where it has now become the norm), the disclosure of a characters’ homosexuality is “substituted for any [other] possible narrative, romantic or otherwise, predicated on such a sexuality.”¹⁷ From this perspective, even though the number of gay and lesbian characters in popular culture seems to be constantly increasing, the key concern for queer theory scholars is that most characters enter the narrative as heterosexual. It must be noted, however, that critically acclaimed queer television series *The L Word* and *Queer as Folk* (in both its UK and US forms) complicate this, as they take a queer community as their focus and thus re-

ject this typical coming out narrative.

The typical homosexual-themed narrative, predicated on the disclosure of a character's sexuality, is explicitly presented in the teen television series *Dawson's Creek* (1998–2003). Throughout season two of the series, rumours about Jack McPhee's (Kerr Smith) sexuality circulate in the halls of Capeside High School after he is forced to read a poem aloud to his classmates.

Jack: I grew more afraid. Not of what I am, But what I could be. I loosen my collar to take a breath. My eyes fade and I see... I see him. An angel of perfection. His frame strong. His lips smooth. I keep thinking, what am I so scared of? And I wish I could escape the pain but these thoughts, they invade my head, like shackles of guilt.¹⁸

After denying his sexuality for the remainder of this episode, Jack finally comes out to his father and girlfriend, Joey (Katie Holmes), in the following episode. After coming out, Jack's sexuality is not a focus of the narrative until much later in the series. Jack is essentially desexualised at the crucial moment in the negotiation of his sexuality. His first romantic rendezvous with another man does not occur until towards the end of season three, almost an entire season after coming out.

Since the coming out moment is regularly equated with the coming of age moment, I argue that representations of gay or lesbian teenagers on film or in television are a rarity. Gay characters such as Jack are "adultified" as soon as they claim any form of distinctly homosexual identity. However, in 2005, a UK teen series shattered this norm. The series was called *Sugar Rush*; it was the first teen series to have a lesbian character as its protagonist. Based on a novel written by Julie Burchill, *Sugar Rush* is about the life of a 15-year-old lesbian named Kim (Olivia Hallinan) who openly lusts after her best friend Sugar (Lenora Chrichlow). What is remarkable about *Sugar Rush* is that unlike traditional queer representations such as *Dawson's Creek*, its protagonist is not introduced as a heterosexual. From the first image of the series, two girls kissing on a carnival ride, audiences are aware that they are in for something new, fresh and perhaps exciting.

Sugar Rush has been praised for foregrounding new forms of desire in a realistic representation of teenage lesbian life.¹⁹ However, at its heart, I argue that *Sugar Rush* is about coming out and coming of age. What differentiates *Sugar Rush* from the traditional coming out as coming of age narrative is that the protagonist, Kim, comes out on a number of different levels at different times throughout the series while never truly coming of age; that is, she never crosses the line that demarcates adolescence and

adulthood. She is thus an “out” lesbian teenager. This challenges traditional notions of coming out and coming of age whilst emphasising coming out as a complex process. This particular representation of coming out as a process is something that seems to be unique to television. The seriality of television is the key to its specificity. Where filmic representations are often limited in what they can portray by classic narrative patterning and time constraints, televisual representations are marked by their inherently ongoing nature, as they must always leave the audience wanting more. Television series also have a greater scope of exploration into characters or issues because, compared with film, they simply have far more time to do it in. This is why, in *Sugar Rush*, such strong emphasis can be placed on the often slow and always complex processes of coming out.

One possible way of understanding the coming out process in *Sugar Rush* involves an analysis of the forms of narration used to provide insight into the protagonist’s inner world. Kim controls the narrative of the series through an often witty first-person narration, which allows the audience to view and experience the narrative from her perspective. Attention should be paid to the way that the audience is positioned through this particular form of narration, and to do this it is important to consider whom the narrator is “speaking” to. At times, it is difficult to discern the direction of the narration, as it is quite complex, constantly shifting in form from inner voice, to diary entry, to direct address to the spectator. Each of these addresses offers different levels of intimacy and ultimately facilitates an affinity between the spectator and the character. Audiences are allowed, even encouraged, to feel as if they know Kim because they understand her desires, motivations, and fears throughout her development of an inner-narrative of self.

In the first episode, Kim introduces herself, her family, and her situation to the audience through an introductory voice-over. A key thing to note here is the way that Kim introduces herself, coming out to herself and the audience in the first few minutes through the unflattering description of her unrequited love, Sugar.

Kim: I haven’t been the same since I met Sugar. Maria Sweet. The girl I’m sexually obsessed with, she’ll do anything, say anything, have anything, anything with a dick and that’s the problem. She’s not gay, and I don’t want to be.²⁰

Interestingly, in these opening minutes, Kim admits that she does not want to be gay; she does not want to accept any form of “gay” identity. An inability or unwillingness to accept one’s identity is a standard feature of the coming out narrative. However, this seems to be a relatively insignificant admission, as it is not followed through as the series unfolds. The narrative

does not develop from Kim's unwillingness to accept the lesbian identity, instead, it evolves from her desire for Sugar, and her inability to articulate and act on that desire. The issue does not arise again until later in the season when Kim begins attending bible classes that purport to "cure" homosexuality.²¹ However, it should be noted that Kim does not think she needs to be cured; the only affliction from which she thinks she suffers is her unhealthy obsession with Sugar.

Kim: I didn't have a gay problem, I had a Sugar problem.²²

Aside from this slight deviation, Kim is usually represented as being in a state of carefree acceptance of her sexuality. Unconcerned with the implications of her sexuality, she ultimately focuses on achieving her goal of "shagging" the woman of her dreams.

In the second episode, Kim appears to take on a distinctly queer or lesbian identity. Again, this occurs in the introductory voiceover as Kim introduces herself as a "15-year-old queer virgin" for the first time.²³ In each following episode, Kim places this or a similar label on herself, constantly reminding us of the status of her sexual orientation and her sexual desires. The introductory narration thus serves a double function; it complies with the generic function of a serial introduction in that it reminds the audience of happenings in the previous episode; and it also serves as a means for Kim to continually re-affirm her sexual identity. It is interesting to note here that this initial assertion of her sexual identity is very often tied to an admission that she is "sexually obsessed" with her best friend, Sugar, essentially enacting her burgeoning lesbian sexuality through this explicit statement of sexual desire. Here, the distinction between love, sexual desire, and sexuality is interestingly blurred in a way that challenges other representations of gay and lesbian sexuality in teen television. Kim is a self-identified "gay" or "queer" not because she has romantic feelings towards members of the same sex but because she wants to have sex with them. In addition, Kim always describes herself as either a "gay virgin" or a "queer virgin," which in this case emphasises the centrality of sex in the coming out and coming of age processes. This further accentuates the difference between *Sugar Rush* and past representations of queer youth, simply because *Sugar Rush* is so very much unlike the queer narratives of the past, where a character's "problem" was either homosexuality itself or the issues resulting from coming out. The problem that Kim most intensely needs or wants to resolve in her journey towards maturity is not that she is a lesbian; it is that she is a virgin.

It is not until episode six of the first season that Kim finally comes out to Sugar. However, on the surface it initially seems almost anticlimactic be-

cause Kim barely says anything at all.

Sugar: So why have you been weird all day? Maybe it's because you were jealous.

Kim: I so do not like him

Sugar: Ha-ha... Well maybe you like me then. Ha-ha... what?

Kim: ...

Sugar: Oh my god... my god... You fancy me.

Kim: I've got to go.²⁴

The beauty of this scene is that a closer inspection reveals that it is not simply about Kim becoming inarticulate in the face of Sugar, but rather that she is caught between an unwillingness to continue with her lies, and a lack of confidence to tell the truth. Here, saying nothing means more than words ever could. One could argue that from this perspective, rather than illustrating Kim's cowardice, this scene truly emphasises her blossoming self-confidence. Kim gains confidence and power as she essentially "comes out" with every affirmation of her sexuality. As the act of coming out is emphasised as a process, each coming out also brings Kim a step closer to coming of age. Another key coming out scene occurs in episode nine with Tom, the son of Kim's gay neighbours. It is significant in that it highlights another step in the process of coming out, and it is the only time in the series that Kim says the phrase "I'm gay" aloud.

Kim: Tom, I'm gay.

Tom: Hmm? You're gay?

Kim: I'm sorry [inner voice over] which was a lie, because for the first time I wasn't sorry. For the first time I was out, and proud.²⁵

In the typical coming out narrative, the public announcement of a character's sexuality to friends or family is both the climactic and critical step in the process. Gilad Padva argues that coming out films in the 1990s presented two important messages. Firstly, that "it is not homosexuality that is the problem, but rather homophobia." Secondly, "coming out is difficult and painful, but staying in the closet is much worse."²⁶ In these films, coming out was presented as "the only way for a queer teenager to achieve his/her personal, social, cultural *and* sexual liberation."²⁷ In other words, coming out was presented as the only way for a queer teenager to come of age. However, *Sugar Rush* differs from this in that the series emphasises

the notion that coming out publicly is only a minor aspect of the process as a whole. This is the reason why audiences never see Kim come out to her parents, and why she does not actually say the words when faced with Sugar's realisation. Kim's coming out narrative suggests that coming out to oneself is far more important and significant than declaring one's sexual identity in a public arena. For young teens, the message is that it is important to be proud of who they are, regardless of sexual identity, and that this pride only comes from within. This realisation is perhaps the most important part of the coming out and coming of age processes.

Unlike traditional representations of coming out, in the final episode of season one, after Kim's only public "outing" (to Tom), the story continues. Kim and Sugar steal a car and flee to London. As they walk into an expensive hotel room, paid for with a stolen credit card, they are mesmerised by a view of the city. They have a bath together and Sugar playfully comes on to Kim. Kim tells Sugar to stop unless she means it, Sugar tells Kim that she is grumpy, and they have a champagne fight in the bath. Following this, the camera cuts to Kim and Sugar sitting on a couch and looking out over the city and they talk about who they would rather be in the hotel with. Sugar says "Brad Pitt... But, you'll do." Kim responds questioning "why?"

Sugar: Because I knew you'd come...

Kim: Yeah, that makes sense. It's always going to be like this isn't it? You call, I come running. You say jump, I say how high. Translating for French guys, buying stuff off my mum's credit card, snogging you so you can pull someone else... Name one thing you've done for me. One thing, one sodding thing... [Kim gets up and moves to the window].

Sugar: I'm sorry [tries to kiss Kim].

Kim: Don't.

Sugar: Don't worry Kim. I mean it this time [They kiss].²⁸

Cut to the next morning, Kim and Sugar are in bed, naked. A close-up reveals Kim looking at Sugar's face whilst she sleeps; Sugar wakes and smiles. As they cuddle, the camera cuts to a police car as it pulls up at the hotel and Kim's parents walk with the police through a corridor. Then the camera cuts back to Kim and Sugar cuddling as the voiceover muses "don't you just love happy Hollywood endings?"²⁹ Whilst the dialogue during these final minutes suggests a closure to the narrative, the imagery actually works against this and prevents the closure from occurring, thus leaving the

door open for the second season.

“To be continued”: Deferring coming of age in *Sugar Rush*.

If the first season of *Sugar Rush* foregrounds the coming out narrative, emphasising it as a complex process, the second season primarily focuses on the coming of age narrative and thus distances the two processes. Again the narration is a crucial aspect; however, what differentiates between seasons one and two is the focus of this narration. In the first season, the majority of the narration was focused on Kim’s thoughts and desires towards Sugar, emphasising the complex nature of the coming out process. However, it must be noted that there is a significant time lapse between the two seasons and in the second season Sugar is less central to Kim’s world. The Kim of season two is less determinedly focused on her sexual obsessions, and whilst the narration is still focused on developing a narrative of self, it does not revolve around Sugar. Rather, the narration of the second season revolves around Kim’s intensely introspective questions about self, love, sex, and ultimately coming of age.

In the time missing between the two seasons, the audience misses part of Kim’s transition from adolescent to adult; she has “grown up,” but only a little. One of the things that is explicitly not shown in the 18 months between the two seasons is Kim coming out to her parents, a move that rejects the traditional coming out and coming of age narrative; a narrative that culminates with the adolescent finally coming out to their parents.

Sarah Hentges argues that coming of age in the contemporary context is “about making sense of ourselves as individuals and as members of local and global societies.”³⁰ In season one, Kim begins to make sense of herself as an individual but has yet to gain entry into these societies; she is firmly situated in adolescence and there she remains for the duration of the season. In the final episode of season one, Kim achieves her goal of “shagging” Sugar but she is not “matured” by this achievement and this is significant. When audiences see Kim for the first time in season two, she has moved a step closer to the adult world and gained entry into “lesbian society.” Sugar describes her as “a proper grown up lezzie, with your lezzie friends and your dodgy lezzie bar.”³¹ Here, it could be argued that the portrayal of Kim in her “lezzie world” is connected, and indeed similar, to the powerful characterisation of community in *The L Word*, a series that has largely been “hailed as groundbreaking in its representation of queer women on television.”³² But the thing to note is that Kim is not fully “matured” through entering this society, nor through the achievement of her

goal, as she remains on the cusp of adulthood.

Sugar Rush further engages with the coming of age narrative in the final episode of season two, as Kim is posed with a difficult question; “to move in, or not to move in?”³³ with her new girlfriend, Saint, “the girl who works in the sex shop.”³⁴ This prompts an entire episode that is underscored with Kim’s self-reflection. At one point, she sits at a café and flips a coin, contemplating:

Kim: (inner voice over) Decisions, decisions. We make them every day. Left or right? Up or down? Heads or tails? Some take a while to make but don’t really matter, like where Sugar should put her pictures in her new bedsit. Some we don’t even have to think about. Then there are those that steal up and ambush us when we least expect it.³⁵

Later in the episode, a scene unfolds in which Kim is looking to buy some shoes from Sugar, now working at a market. Kim questions “Do you ever get the nagging sensation that you’ve made the wrong decision? That your whole life may have been determined by a series of wrong decisions?”

Kim: (looking at two pairs of shoes) I dunno, I like both of them.

Sugar: You either want them or you don’t, taking longer to decide is not going to make a difference.³⁶

In this scene, the reason behind Kim’s indecision is revealed to us for the first time as it could be argued that the pairs of shoes represent Sugar and Saint, thus also the past and the future. The inability to choose between the two emphasises the fact that Kim is at the precipice of coming of age, on the edge but not yet ready to take the leap into maturity. Because of this conversation with Sugar, Kim decides to tell Saint that she does not feel ready to move in, therefore rejecting the pressure to grow up, and come of age. However, towards the end of the episode, Kim does eventually decide to embrace adulthood and move in with Saint, although this happens only after a particularly touching scene involving Kim and Sugar in which Sugar asserts that they could never work as a couple.

Sugar: Well, I think you’re mad. You’ve got the chance to live in a seafront apartment with a girl who’s crazy about you. And you’re gonna just turn that down?

Kim: It’s a big step

Sugar: So what are you gonna do? Stick it out with the Adams family because you’re scared of commitment?

- Kim: Its more than that though... (Wistful music plays as Kim & Sugar look at each other) Do you ever wonder what would've happened between us if you hadn't gone away?
- Sugar: ... Sometimes ...
- Kim: And?
- Sugar: Kim, we have our moments but most of the time we annoy the fuck out of each other... Saint's great, she's great for you. You two, you make sense and you know it. Besides, we'd never top the night we did have. I'll still be thinking about that one when I'm shuffling about in my incontinence pads. That's if I don't have Alzheimers [they hug and we see a close up of Sugar's clearly distressed face]. Now, go and get your girl.³⁷

Here it could be noted that Sugar proves to be the catalyst for yet another climactic moment in the narrative. In this scene, Kim continues on the path towards coming of age but only after being pushed by Sugar. Although Kim is the central figure in the narrative, and thus has the power to control it, a power frequently exercised through the first person narration and fantasy sequences, it is Sugar who continually pops up at crucial moments. The intensity of the friendship between Kim and Sugar raises questions regarding where the line is drawn between girlfriends and "girlfriends," between friendship and romance, or between love that is purely platonic and love that is romantic. Part of the appeal of *Sugar Rush* is that it illuminates a situation in which these lines between friendship and romance are incongruous. However, in the end, Sugar remains a close friend to Kim and this is why she consistently pops up at critical moments. This is further emphasised in the final moments of season two when Kim visits Saint to tell her that she *is* actually ready to move in and the characters kiss and make up in the way that only television characters can. This kiss could easily provide the resolution to the storyline and to the season; however, the season does not end with this moment. A knock on the door disturbs the kiss and the camera cuts to a mid shot of Sugar in the apartment as she tells the story of how her apartment has burned down. She then asks if she can move in for a while. This is followed by Kim's final voice-over narration, as she ponders "When you glimpse the future and it looks fantastic do you jump in feet first? Or do you keep one foot in the past, just in case?"³⁸ With this open-ended question, season two ends, and a twist of fate, involving television stations and scheduling slots, would later make this *the* final moment of *Sugar Rush*. The lack of closure in this finale means that the character of

Kim is forever destined to be locked in this liminal state of indecision; torn between her adult maturity (embodied in her relationship with Saint) and her youthful unrequited lust (embodied by Sugar), Kim is frozen for eternity on the edge of adulthood and is thus a character that will never truly grow up, never “come of age” in the traditional sense, an eternal lesbian teenage girl.

Monash University
wjmon2@student.monash.edu

NOTES

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- ² Tarshia L. Stanley, “The Boy’s Price in Martinique: Visions of the Bildungsroman in Sugar Cane Alley” in *Where the Boys Are: Cinemas of Masculinity and Youth*, ed Murray Pomerance and Fances Gateward (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004) 203.
- ³ Raffaella Caputo, “Coming of Age: Notes Toward a Re-Appraisal”, *Cinema Papers* 94 (1993) 13.
- ⁴ Caputo, “Coming of Age” 13.
- ⁵ Michael Bronski, “Positive Images and the Coming Out Film: The Art and Politics of Gay and Lesbian Cinema”, *Cineaste* 26 (2000) 205.
- ⁶ Bronski, “Positive Images” 21.
- ⁷ Bronski, “Positive Images” 21.
- ⁸ Bronski, “Positive Images” 21. For examples, see films such as *The Children’s Hour* (1961) and *Advise and Consent* (1962).
- ⁹ Bronski, “Positive Images” 21.
- ¹⁰ Bronski, “Positive Images” 21. For examples see films such as *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (1971), *Gay USA* (1978), *Before Stonewall* (1985).
- ¹¹ Bronski, “Positive Images” 21.
- ¹² Bronski, “Positive Images” 20-1.
- ¹³ Bronski, “Positive Images” 20.
- ¹⁴ Bronski, “Positive Images” 20.
- ¹⁵ Dennis Allen, “Homosexuality and Narrative”, *Modern Fiction Studies* 41 (1995) 610.
- ¹⁶ Allen, “Homosexuality and Narrative” 611.

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- ¹⁸ *Dawson's Creek. The complete second season.* Prod. Kevin Williamson, Paul Stupin, Charles Rosin. (California: Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, 2003) DVD. Season 2, episode 14.
- ¹⁹ Rebecca Beirne, "Introduction", in *Lesbian in Television and Text after the Millennium* (London: Macmillan, 2008).
- ²⁰ *Sugar Rush.* Dir. Sean Grundy and Harry Bradbeer (London: Channel 4, 2005) DVD. Season 1, episode 1.
- ²¹ *Sugar Rush*, season 1, episode 8.
- ²² *Sugar Rush*, season 1, episode 8.
- ²³ *Sugar Rush*, season 1, episode 2.
- ²⁴ *Sugar Rush*, season 1, episode 6.
- ²⁵ *Sugar Rush*, season 1, episode 9.
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- ²⁷ Gilad Padva, "Edge of Seventeen" 368.
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- ²⁹ *Sugar Rush*, season 1, episode 10.
- ³⁰ Sarah Henges, *Pictures of Girlhood: Modern Female Adolescence on Film* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2006) 59.
- ³¹ *Sugar Rush*, season 2, episode 4.
- ³² Rebecca Beirne, "Introduction: A Critical Introduction to Queer Women on Television", *Televising Queer Women*, ed. Rebecca Beirne (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 11.
- ³³ *Sugar Rush*, season 2, episode 10.
- ³⁴ *Sugar Rush*, season 2, episode 3.
- ³⁵ *Sugar Rush*, season 2, episode 10.
- ³⁶ *Sugar Rush*, season 2, episode 10.
- ³⁷ *Sugar Rush*, season 2, episode 10.
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