

# From *La Haine* to a Queer Reading of the Banlieue: Masculinity, Intimacy, and Social Exclusion in Mathieu Kassovitz's Film

Stéphane Narcis\*

Académie de La Réunion, France

**Abstract:** Mathieu Kassovitz's *La Haine* (1995) is often seen as a key film in banlieue cinema and as an important voice in debates about police violence, racial exclusion, and the shortcomings of French republican ideals. This article suggests that the film also deserves a queer cultural studies approach, since it often challenges traditional masculinity and highlights male intimacy, dependence, and vulnerability beyond what is expected in heteronormative stories. The point is not that *La Haine* shows explicit LGBTQ+ characters. Instead, the film presents masculinity as something that must be worked at and performed, shows how aggressive behavior is unstable, puts friendship at the heart of its emotional story instead of romance, and places non-traditional bonds in a world shaped by class struggles, racialization, stigma, and state violence. Using ideas from banlieue studies, queer theory, masculinity studies, and spatial analysis, the article explores how Vinz, Hubert, and Saïd each show different masculine styles but are closely connected by their reliance on each other. By looking closely at scenes like the rooftop, bathroom, mirror, police station, gallery, and the final confrontation, the article shows how *La Haine* queers the banlieue by revealing the uncertainty of gender and national identity. The film's black-and-white visuals, tight timeline, repeated thresholds, and open ending make this sense of uncertainty stronger. The article also notes the film's limits, especially its focus on men and the sidelining of women. *La Haine* stands out as a politically strong but also contradictory film: it questions dominant masculinity but does not fully break away from patriarchal views (Vincendeau, 2005; Body-Gendrot, 2016; Kramer and Remster, 2021).

**Keywords:** *La Haine*, banlieue, queer theory, masculinity, heteronormativity, French cinema, male friendship, cultural studies.

## INTRODUCTION

Few films in contemporary French cinema have generated as much critical, pedagogical, and political attention as Mathieu Kassovitz's *La Haine* (1995). Since its release, the film has become central to debates about police violence, racial inequality, suburban marginality, and the symbolic geography of the French Republic. Set over roughly twenty-four hours in the aftermath of unrest triggered by police brutality, the film follows three friends: Vinz, Hubert, and Saïd as they move between their housing estate and central Paris, inhabiting a world formed by boredom, humiliation, anger, fatigue, and imminent catastrophe. As scholarship on the film and on French urban disorder has shown, *La Haine* is necessary to understand the banlieue as a site of structural abandonment and public stigma (Body-Gendrot, 2016; Vincendeau, 2005).

However, interpreting the film solely as a sociological account of urban crisis neglects a significant aspect of its impact. The film's opening montage of riots, its persistent focus on daily degradation, and its powerful final scene have established it as a defining work of late twentieth-century French cinema.

The sequence is framed by the well-known refrain: "*Jusqu'ici tout va bien... mais l'important, c'est pas la chute, c'est l'atterrissage.*" ("So far so good... but the important thing isn't the fall, it's the landing") (Kassovitz, 1995). This line functions as more than narrative framing: it establishes the film's temporal logic as one of deferred catastrophe rather than progressive development. The emphasis on the "landing" displaces attention from origin or cause to inevitable outcome, suggesting that the protagonists are already caught within a trajectory structured by social exclusion. In this sense, the film does not depict crisis as sudden rupture, but as an ongoing condition whose consequences have merely not yet fully materialised.

Most readings emphasises on social crisis. The film is commonly treated as an archetypal work of banlieue cinema: a text that renders visible territorial stigma, racialised policing, unemployment, humiliation, and exclusion from the promises of the Republic. That reading is indispensable. Yet it is not exhaustive. To read *La Haine* only as a sociological film about urban marginality is to overlook another major dimension of its force: its concern with gendered performance, masculine vulnerability, bodily display, and emotional dependency among men. Its plot is not organised around heterosexual romance, domestic aspiration, reproductive futurity, or family resolution — forms of intimacy that are largely inaccessible or foreclosed within the world the film depicts. Instead, its emotional

\*Address correspondence to this author at the Académie de La Réunion, France; E-mail: Stephane.Narcis@ac-reunion.fr

centre lies in the shifting relationship among Vinz, Hubert, and Saïd. Their relationship is not incidental. It is the narrative's affective engine. They spend nearly the entire story in one another's company. They touch, argue, wait, boast, tease, protect, and rely on one another for orientation in a hostile world. Their friendship is therefore not secondary to the political story; it is the form through which that story is lived [Hanson, 2011; Kerrigan, 2021].

This article advances a specific and bounded argument: the film, when read through the intersecting frameworks of queer cultural studies and Stuart Hall's politics of representation, reveals masculinity in the banlieue as an unstable performance. Male friendship displaces heterosexual romance as the film's primary emotional structure, while the spatial logic of the periphery organizes normative belonging along axes of race, class, and gender. The central claim is that the film is queer not due to hidden sexual content or stable LGBTQ+ identities, but because it consistently exposes the labor, fragility, and contingency of normative masculinity, placing male intimacy and dependency at the affective center of its political critique. This dimension remains undertheorized, and the article seeks to address this gap. In pursuing this argument, the article employs queerness as a method for analyzing normativity: identifying which bodies, attachments, gestures, and futures are privileged, which are marginalized, and where a cultural text reveals the instability of those norms.

In this sense, it is queer not because it "contains" a hidden homosexual plot, but because it makes masculinity appear theatrical and strained, grants unusual emotional density to male intimacy, and repeatedly reveals that urban and national space are organised by uneven norms of legitimacy.

Masculinity is never secure. It must be performed, repeated, defended, watched, and recognised. Aggression appears less as constant power than as compensatory theatre. Friendship carries emotional intensities usually reserved for romance or family. This approach also clarifies why friendship matters so profoundly in the film. Heteronormative culture often privileges coupledness, domestic settlement, and reproductive continuity as the primary social forms through which a meaningful life is recognised. The film offers none of these consolations. Its protagonists are not moving toward secure work, stable family life, or recognised adulthood. They inhabit suspended time: waiting, drifting, reacting, enduring. Under such

conditions, friendship becomes not a supplement to "real life" but the primary infrastructure that enables emotional survival.

The trio's bond is fragile, often abrasive, occasionally coercive, and never sentimental, yet it stays indispensable. The film's deeper political insight rests in showing that such bonds do not emerge outside power, but within and against structures of racialised state violence and territorial abandonment.

Simultaneously, a queer reading of *La Haine* must remain critical rather than celebratory. Male homosociality can reinforce patriarchy as readily as it unsettles it. The film's challenge to hegemonic masculinity is therefore partial. Women are present but underdeveloped, and the narrative consistently privileges male experience as the principal site of social significance. The film's queerness is thus contradictory rather than absolute; it destabilises certain norms while leaving others relatively intact. Recognising this contradiction does not weaken the argument but instead strengthens it by positioning the film as a politically rich yet incomplete cultural text.

Space itself is normatively structured: the banlieue, the police station, the streets, the gallery, the train, the apartment block, and the bathroom all organise who can appear, how bodies can move, and what kinds of legitimacy are available (Warner, 1991; Butler, 1990; Ingraham, 1994).

The article advances five connected arguments. First, it presents masculinity as performance rather than essence. Vinz, in particular, embodies a hypermasculinity so overworked that it exposes its own fragility. Second, the film privileges male friendship as a structure of survival and affect, thereby displacing the heterosexual couple from its usual narrative centrality. Third, the banlieue is not simply a setting but a gendered and racialised social space in which norms are enforced through surveillance, humiliation, and spatial exclusion. Fourth, the film's aesthetic choices, especially its black-and-white cinematography, anti-teleological temporality, and oscillation between bravado and exhaustion, reinforce the instability of identity. Fifth, the film's critical power remains limited by its marginalisation of women and its concentration on male suffering as the dominant lens via which the banlieue is seen (Rollet, 2018; Powrie, 1999; Tarr, 2005).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Cultural Studies, Stuart Hall, and the Politics of Representation

This article situates its analysis within the tradition of cultural studies as consolidated and theorised by Stuart Hall. Hall's foundational contribution was to insist that culture is a site of struggle over meaning, not a transparent reflection of social conditions. His model of encoding and decoding, first elaborated in 1980, demonstrated that cultural texts do not simply transmit a fixed message from producer to audience; they are produced at the intersection of historically specific conditions of representation and are received through interpretive frameworks which may confirm, negotiate, or resist dominant meanings (Hall, 1980). Applied to *La Haine*, this system immediately improves the analysis. Kassovitz does not simply document the banlieue: he encodes it through particular formal plus ideological choices, including the decision to render the world in black and white, to compress time, to adopt a circular narrative structure, and to place male friendship rather than individual heroism at the narrative centre. These are representational choices, and they are never politically innocent.

Hall's later work on the spectacle of the "Other" and the racialised body deepens this account considerably. In his analysis of how race is constructed through representational regimes, Hall shows that bodies do not simply appear in images; they are produced as recognisable, meaningful, or threatening through historically sedimented codes of visibility (Hall, 1997). *La Haine* is saturated with this force. The film's protagonists are not simply depicted as banlieue youth; they are produced as socially legible types through a visual and narrative grammar that the film simultaneously employs and interrogates. Vinz's hypermasculine performance, Hubert's stoic discipline, and Saïd's relational wit are not simply separate personality traits; they are positions within an existing representational field that the film both draws upon and disturbs. Hall's insistence that representation is always about power, that it involves the power to define, exclude, and fix meaning, gives the queer reading developed here a firmer theoretical grounding within cultural studies proper (Hall, 1997; Hall and Jefferson, 1976).

Hall's work on articulation is equally productive here. For Hall, no cultural element has a fixed, necessary political meaning; meaning is instead

produced through historically contingent articulations, connections between elements that appear natural but are in fact constructed and therefore open to rearticulation (Hall, 1986). The queer reading proposed in this article is precisely an act of rearticulation: it detaches from its most familiar context of reception as a film of social crisis and reconnects it to questions of gendered performance, non-normative intimacy, and the instability of masculine subjectivity. This is not an imposition of alien categories upon the film. It is a recognition that the film's own representational logic, its unbroken attention to bodily display, male emotional dependency, and the labour of self-production under conditions of humiliation, invites exactly this kind of rearticulation. In this sense, the present analysis expands the cultural studies tradition that Hall helped establish, while bringing it into dialogue with queer theory and banlieue studies (Hall, 1980; Hall, 1997).

### Banlieue Cinema and the Politics of Marginal Space

Scholarship on the film has overwhelmingly situated the film within the tradition of banlieue cinema. In this literature, the banlieue is not a simple geographical descriptor but a political and cultural sign, a territory onto which national anxieties about immigration, delinquency, unemployment, failed integration, and public disorder are projected. To inhabit *the banlieue* is to be read through a discourse that precedes individual action (Tarr, 2005; Rollet, 2018). The resident of the periphery is frequently rendered visible as a problem before being recognised as a subject. This system is indispensable to any serious account, because the protagonists are never encountered as abstract citizens. Their bodies are already coded by place, and that coding shapes how they are seen by police, institutions, and Parisian publics.

A central insight of this scholarship is that peripheral spaces are both material and symbolic. They are real environments formed by housing policy, class stratification, racial segregation, and state neglect; but they are also overdetermined within public discourse as sites of danger and failure. *La Haine* makes this overdetermination visible from its first moments. The opening riot montage does not simply establish background. It places the viewer inside a social imaginary in which *the banlieue* is already mediated as crisis. Yet the film then shifts away from spectacle toward the banal rhythms of waiting, joking, wandering, and arguing. In doing so, it refuses to reduce peripheral life to eruption and insists on the lived texture of social abandonment (Body-Gendrot, 2016; Costelloe, 2014).

Another recurring point in the literature concerns the relation between realism and stylisation. It is widely noted for its documentary immediacy, especially in its riot footage, street-level dialogue, and use of recognisable metropolitan spaces. At the same time, scholars note that the film is highly constructed through black-and-white cinematography, choreographed tracking shots, musical punctuations, expressive framing, abrupt tonal shifts, and a circular narrative structure. As Johann Sadock (2004) argues, the film appears “ethnological” and “apparement réaliste,” yet it also works through formal reversal and *mise-en-scène* to shape how viewers understand banlieue life. This twofold aspect matters because it means the film does not simply record social reality; it actively organises it into a distinctive political and affective experience.

### Race, Postcoloniality, and the French Republic

A second major strand of scholarship reads *La Haine* through postcolonial France and the contradictions of republican universalism. The film’s protagonists are not interchangeable. Vinz is Jewish, Hubert is Black, and Saïd is of North African descent. The film neither erases these differences nor turns them into a simplistic multicultural allegory. Rather, it situates them within a social order in which access to recognition is unevenly distributed. The trio’s friendship suggests solidarity across difference, but that solidarity exists within a racially stratified field formed by surveillance, suspicion, and unequal belonging (Mbembe, 2001; Calnitsky and Martinez, 2023).

This scholarship is essential since it reveals how the film exposes the limits of French republican universalism. The Republic imagines itself in abstract civic terms, but the film repeatedly shows that embodiment matters. Young men from *the banlieue* are not received as neutral citizens. They are received as already suspect. Their movement into Paris does not confer national belonging; rather, it often intensifies the visibility of their difference. In this sense, *the banlieue* is not simply the edge of the city. It is the constitutive outside against which the centre imagines itself coherent. The apparent neutrality of republican space depends on exclusions that the film relentlessly reveals.

### Masculinity Studies and the Instability of Male Identity

A third body of scholarship concerns masculinity. Here, *La Haine* has often been read as a film about

different masculine responses to structural exclusion. Vinz is commonly interpreted as embodying hypermasculine overcompensation: volatile, theatrical, image-driven, and strongly invested in appearing dangerous. Hubert is frequently read as a counter-model grounded in physical strength, restraint, ethical hesitation, and care. Saïd is often seen as the group’s mediator, relying on wit, talk, social improvisation, and humour to navigate danger without escaping it. These readings are valuable because they resist reducing “banlieue masculinity” to a single type. The film offers not one masculinity but several competing styles of survival (Young, 2021; Hopkins and Giazitzoglu, 2024).

Masculinity studies more broadly reinforce this reading by emphasising that manhood is not an essence one simply possesses, but a social position one must perform, sustain, and have recognised by others. This is why the film is so attentive to gesture, posture, insult, ridicule, bravado, and emotional management. Men are constantly watching one another, testing one another, and calibrating themselves against imagined standards of hardness. What appears as spontaneous aggression is often better understood as socially compelled performance.

### Queer Theory and non-Normative Relation

Queer theory yields a further, and especially productive, route through these dynamics. A queer reading of the film does not need explicit LGBTQ+ identification to be analytically meaningful. Instead, it studies how social norms are produced, protected, and disrupted. This is useful for a film in which masculinity is repeatedly staged as unstable performance, in which male friendship carries unusual emotional intensity, and in which the usual narrative horizons of heterosexual life, romance, domesticity, settlement, and generational continuity are largely absent or inaccessible (Sedgwick, 1990; Warner, 1993).

This matters because queer theory shifts the question from “Is this a gay film?” to “How does this film expose the instability of normativity?” Friendship is not a subplot beneath a heterosexual social order. It is the primary social form. Male dependency, bodily proximity, teasing, irritation, protection, and care organise the narrative’s emotional life. The trio’s relationship is not a coded romance waiting to be decoded. It is an affectively dense structure that exceeds the thin language of “just friendship” without being reduced to sexual certainty. That excess is key to the film’s queer significance (Gamson, 2003; Francis, 2010).

## Intersectionality and Compounded Marginality

Intersectional thinking is essential because it cannot be adequately comprehended through any single axis of analysis. Race, class, masculinity, territory, and state violence are mutually constitutive. The protagonists are not only poor, not only racialised, not only male, and not only suburban. Their vulnerability emerges through the combination of these positions. This approach steers clear of two common reductions: reducing the film to urban poverty alone and reducing masculinity to a cultural trait detached from state and spatial power. The film's political force depends precisely on its ability to show that humiliation is lived at the intersection of social categories rather than along a single dimension (Crenshaw, 1989; Young, 2021).

## A Gap in the Literature

Taken together, these literatures provide rich means to understand *La Haine*. Yet the queer dimension of the film remains comparatively underdeveloped in much scholarship. Readings of race, policing, territorial exclusion, and postcolonial fracture are extensive, but less attention has been paid to the way the film queers masculinity by making it unstable, imitative, and emotionally dependent on male relationality. Existing work has shown how the film operates through banlieue space, racialised citizenship, and institutional violence, but the more intimate question of how male friendship structures the film's emotional life has often been noted only in passing rather than fully theorised (Vincendeau, 2005; Kerrigan, 2021).

This matters because it is not simply a film about young men in crisis; it is a film in which masculinity itself is staged as effort, performance, and fragile repetition. Vinz's bravado, Hubert's restraint, and Saïd's mediation form a spectrum of masculine styles, but the film also insists that each style is relational rather than self-contained. Vinz's hardness stems from his lack of institutional legitimacy; Hubert's calm is an ethical stance under pressure; Saïd's humour sustains the group's internal balance. In this sense, masculinity is not a natural fact in the film but a social labour continually enacted before other men.

Similarly, while the centrality of friendship has often been acknowledged, it has not been fully theorized as an affective and political form. Friendship is not subordinate to the political narrative; rather, it constitutes the means through which the political narrative is experienced. The trio move, wait, joke,

argue, and rely on one another for orientation in a hostile environment. Their relationship is not a decorative subplot beneath a more serious social critique; it is the medium through which exclusion is experienced and survival becomes possible. This underscores the value of a queer reading. Queer cultural studies does not require explicit same-sex desire to be analytically relevant; instead, it interrogates how norms of intimacy, embodiment, belonging, and futurity are produced and disrupted. Viewed through this lens, the film does not merely depict friendship, but reveals how friendship itself can embody the emotional density, dependency, and vulnerability that heteronormative culture often reserves for romance or family (Hanson, 2011; Kerrigan, 2021).

A queer approach is also helpful because it reframes the banlieue not as a neutral setting but as a normatively regulated space. The estate, the rooftop, the police station, the streets of Paris, and the gallery are all spaces in which bodies are read, judged, and controlled. The protagonists are not simply "in" space; they are produced through space. As scholarship on banlieue geography and social marginality shows, the suburb in French cinema is determined by class inequality, racialisation, territorial stigma, and state power (Wacquant, 1999; Dikeç, 2006; Podmore and Bain, 2021), and it is repeatedly analysed in exactly these terms. What queer analysis adds is a more precise account of how spatial belonging is also tied to gendered legibility (Podmore and Bain, 2021), showing that space itself helps produce who appears respectable, legitimate, or out of place.

Certain bodies are expected to appear properly disciplined, respectable, and heterosexual; others are marked as excessive, suspect, or out of place. The protagonists are denied that kind of normativity from the outset. Their presence in Paris is interpreted as intrusion, while their presence in the banlieue is read through the stigma of place. The result is a social world in which public visibility is inseparable from vulnerability (Warner, 1999; Wacquant, 1999). This is consistent with queer readings of the film that treat space as normatively regulated and bodies as socially legible or illegible depending on where they appear.

The film's form intensifies this problem. Its black-and-white cinematography, compressed time frame, circular structure, and recurrent thresholds create a sense of suspension rather than progression. The characters are not moving toward stable adulthood,

secure work, domestic settlement, or reproductive futurity. They inhabit a present tense of waiting, improvising, and reacting. That temporal structure is especially important for queer criticism, since queer theory has long attended to lives that unfold outside normative timelines and socially approved futures (Warner, 1999; Halberstam, 2005; Freeman, 2010). In this sense, the film's emotional centre is not in development or resolution, but in precarious attachment and suspended time.

At the same time, the film's contradictions make this gap in the literature even more significant. The film clearly unsettles hegemonic masculinity, but it does so within an overwhelmingly male-centred frame. Women remain peripheral, and the film reproduces, even as it critiques, a world structured by masculine visibility and masculine crisis. A queer reading is therefore useful not because it discovers hidden sexuality, but because it highlights how masculinity is performed, how male friendship becomes the film's emotional core, and how normativity is destabilised without being fully overcome (Butler, 1990; Sedgwick, 1990; Warner, 1999). As the earlier discussion of the film's form notes, its black-and-white cinematography, compressed time frame, circular structure, and recurrent thresholds create a sense of suspension rather than progression, which further supports a queer reading of anti-teleological time and suspended futurity. In this sense, the film's importance lies precisely in its tension between critique and reproduction, and this has not yet been fully integrated into the existing critical conversation.

### Conceptual Framework

A queer cultural studies approach combines three lines of thought: performativity, homosociality, and intersectionality.

First, performativity helps explain the film's constant preoccupation with enacted masculinity. Gender does not appear here as a stable interior truth. It appears as repetition: voice, stance, gesture, threat, comic timing, bodily control, and the capacity to keep composed in the face of humiliation. Vinz especially illustrates this. He is not simply violent; he works to look violent. His relation to authority is mediated through image. He imitates cinematic codes of dangerous masculinity because performance seems to promise a power that social reality denies him. In that sense, the film does not simply portray masculinity; it stages the labour required to sustain it (Butler, 1990; Francis, 2010).

Second, the film can be considered through the lens of homosociality. Male friendship is emotionally charged, physically proximate, and indispensable to survival. Yet it is rarely spoken in a language of tenderness. Instead, care is displaced into insult, banter, mockery, and shared movement. This does not make the bond less intimate. On the contrary, it shows how male emotional life is culturally constrained and how friendship becomes a socially permissible container for dependency. The trio move as a unit; if one is endangered, all are implicated. Their relation structures the narrative's emotional tensions in ways that many films reserve for romance or family. This is one of the clearest reasons a queer reading is valuable [Sedgwick, 1990; Avila-Saavedra, 2009].

Third, the film's spatial logic is deeply important. Queer spatial theory has shown that normativity is organised not only through identity but through movement, placement, and legibility. Some bodies are expected to appear in some places; others appear as intrusion. The banlieue, the gallery, the police station, and the streets of Paris are all spaces in which bodies are read and governed. The protagonists are not simply "in" space; they are produced through space [Warner, 1991; Sayre, 2009].

### The Banlieue as Social Condition, Symbolic Geography, and Normative Order

One of the reasons remains so compelling is that it transforms the banlieue from a place into a condition. The housing estate is not simply where the characters live. It is a structure that organises mobility, visibility, aspiration, and threat. Stairwells, rooftops, courtyards, corridors, apartment interiors, and bleak open spaces together produce a world of exposure and repetition. The estate is communal but not secure; intimate but not private; familiar but not liberating. It is both a lived environment and a field of social inscription (Rollet, 2018; Tarr, 2005).

The film's opening imagery of riots, smoke, debris, and damaged surfaces suggests a world already in crisis, but the subsequent scenes complicate any purely catastrophic reading. Children play. Neighbours quarrel. Music circulates. Young men joke, drift, posture, and wait. *The banlieue* is neither romantic refuge nor pure ruin. It is heavily stigmatised, yet strongly lived. This doubleness matters. The film refuses both official demonisation and sentimental rescue. Instead, it presents the suburb as a space where everyday life endures under structural pressure (Body-Gendrot, 2016; Costelloe, 2014).

From a queer spatial perspective, what matters most is that this world is normatively organised. Space is not neutral. It distributes comfort, legitimacy, and risk unevenly. Certain forms of public presence are taken for granted; others appear suspect. The protagonists' movement through the city repeatedly reveals this. In the estate, they are overexposed to surveillance yet socially illegible as full political subjects. In Paris, they are not simply out of place economically. They are made to feel out of place bodily and affectively. Their discomfort reveals the hidden choreography of legitimacy that governs public space. The banlieue is therefore not only a marginal territory; it is a site where normativity becomes visible through its failures and violences (Warner, 1991; Sayre, 2009).

### THREE MASCULINE STYLES

#### Vinz: Hypermasculinity as Compensatory Theatre

Vinz is the film's clearest instance of masculinity as overperformance. His swagger, volatility, fixation on the gun, and self-conscious invocation of cinematic toughness all suggest a masculinity built through citation rather than certainty. He wants to appear dangerous because danger seems to promise the dignity denied to him elsewhere. Yet the more intensely he performs hardness, the more fragile that hardness appears. His aggression is not constant power; it is compensatory theatre. The film's great intelligence lies in refusing to romanticise this posture. Vinz is not treated as simply heroic or simply monstrous. He is a young man trying to inhabit a masculine script that social reality keeps exposing as unsustainable (Butler, 1990; Young, 2021).

#### Hubert: Care, Restraint, and Ethical Masculinity

Hubert is often positioned as Vinz's counterpoint. He is physically strong, but unlike Vinz, he does not derive identity from theatrical menace. He values discipline, caution, and restraint. His relation to violence is defined by refusal, but not by detachment. He remains fully inside the world of humiliation the film depicts; he simply seeks a different style of survival within it. That makes him especially important. Hubert shows that the film does not simply critique violent masculinity; it also imagines an alternative form grounded in care, reflection, and control. Yet the film never idealises him. His calm is under unremitting pressure, and the destruction of his gym symbolises the delicacy of any alternative futurity in a world structured by abandonment. Hubert's masculinity is

admirable, but not secure [Tarr, 2005; Hopkins and Giazitzoglu, 2024].

#### Saïd: Humour, Mediation, and Relational Masculinity

Saïd is the most agile member of the trio's emotional economy. He uses humour, chatter, and social performance to soften conflict, mediate tension, and keep the group in motion. His masculinity is less invested in physical dominance than in relational survival. Yet this should not be mistaken for lightness. Saïd's wit is labour. He often has to turn humiliation into banter because there is no safer language available. He illustrates a masculinity built on improvisation, social timing, and emotional flexibility, but one that is still determined by the same conditions of racialised exclusion and masculine scrutiny as the others. The film's refusal to flatten him into comic relief is one of its strengths. He is funny, but never superficial (Avila-Saavedra, 2009; Francis, 2010).

Together, these three figures produce not a coherent image of "banlieue masculinity" but a fractured spectrum of responses to the same structural world. Vinz performs menace, Hubert performs control, and Saïd performs mediation. None is sufficient. None provides escape. What the film reveals is that masculinity under these conditions is plural, unstable, and exhausting (Young, 2021).

### Scene Analysis

#### *The Opening Montage: Riots, Repetition, and Deferred Impact*

The opening montage is one of the most famous sequences in French cinema for good reason. News footage and riot imagery establish a world already in crisis: police lines, flames, unrest, confrontation, damaged space. The sequence is accompanied by the parable of the man falling from a building: "So far so good... but the important thing isn't the fall. It's the landing." This framing is critical. It tells us that the film is not about sudden collapse, but about a long, cumulative descent. Violence is not an aberration that interrupts social order; it is the form social order has already taken for these subjects (Body-Gendrot, 2016; Kramer and Remster, 2021).

This opening also sets up the film's temporal politics. The future is not imagined as progress but as impact deferred. The protagonists are not moving toward successful integration. They are falling through a social world that has already narrowed their horizon.

That anti-teleological structure is one of the strongest grounds for a queer reading. The film does not inhabit the optimistic timeline of liberal adulthood. It inhabits suspended catastrophe.

### ***The Estate in Daylight: Boredom as Political Atmosphere***

After the opening montage, the film settles into the rhythms of estate life. Young men talk, smoke, tease, gather, drift, and wait. Nothing dramatic happens, and yet everything happens at the level of atmosphere. These scenes are fundamental because they refuse sensationalism. The banlieue is not shown only at the moment of riot. It is shown as a social world structured by suspended time.

Boredom here is not emptiness. It is a political atmosphere. It arises where futures are blocked, mobility is constrained, and recognition is scarce. The characters' banter and movement are ways of filling time in a world that offers little sanctioned direction. This is one reason friendship becomes so central: in the absence of meaningful institutional inclusion, lateral bonds acquire existential weight (Hanson, 2011; Kerrigan, 2021).

These scenes also illustrate the limited privacy within the estate. Public and private spheres merge, rendering presence synonymous with visibility. As a result, masculinity is continually performed for others, which accounts for the persistent exchange of insults, boasting, and performative behaviors. In this context, presence itself becomes a form of labor.

### ***The Rooftop Sequence: Threshold Space and Collective Intimacy***

The rooftop is one of the film's most important spaces. It is neither fully private nor fully public, neither domestic interior nor official urban zone. It functions as a threshold, and thresholds often loosen masculinity, however briefly. On the rooftop, the trio and others gather, joke, observe, posture, and remain together. Little "plot" unfolds, but a great deal of social meaning is produced.

This sequence matters because it shows male intimacy in ordinary form. The men are physically and affectively close to one another, yet that closeness is coded through banter rather than sentimental speech. Their dependency is obvious, but not named as such. This is precisely where a queer reading is useful: not to impose a hidden romance, but to show how the film grants unusual narrative and affective weight to forms

of attachment that exceed thin heteronormative expectations of male friendship. (Sedgwick, 1990; Gamson, 2003).

The rooftop also visualises the protagonists' structural in-betweenness. Elevated but enclosed, exposed yet detached from the official city, it becomes a spatial emblem of their social position. They are not entirely outside the nation, but they are not fully inside its promises either.

### ***The Mirror Scene: Masculinity Watching Itself***

The mirror scene is perhaps the film's clearest statement that masculinity is performance. Vinz stares into his reflection and acts out a fantasy of menace drawn from screen culture, repeating the line "*You talkin' to me?*" (Kassovitz, 1995), a direct citation of *Taxi Driver*. This moment is famous because it renders explicit what the rest of the film implies: hardness is not natural here. It is rehearsed. The mirror does not reveal authentic identity; it stages self-manufacture.

The scene thus enacts what Butler (1990) calls the citational logic of gender: it is not simply that Vinz imitates Travis Bickle, but that masculinity itself is structured as imitation, requiring an external model to give it form and authority.

The scene is revealing not simply because Vinz imitates cinematic violence, but because he needs an audience even when alone. The mirror doubles him; he performs for himself as if he were already someone else watching. Masculinity in the film is inseparable from spectatorship. Men are made by being seen, and by anticipating how they will be seen. The result is a masculinity always on the verge of collapse because it depends on repeated verification.

In queer terms, the mirror scene denaturalises gender. It shows manhood as citation, role play, and anxious repetition. Vinz's performance of invulnerability reveals vulnerability all the more sharply (Butler, 1990; Francis, 2010).

### ***Hubert's Gym: the Delicacy of Alternative Futurity***

Hubert's gym is one of the film's most poignant spaces. It represents discipline, collective investment, and the possibility of another life trajectory. It is a place where physical strength might be reorganised away from aimless violence and toward care, skill, and self-respect. Yet the gym is destroyed, and that destruction matters symbolically. It marks the delicacy of any alternative futurity in a world structured by neglect and cyclical violence (Tarr, 2005; Powrie, 1999).

Hubert's relation to the gym deepens his character. He is not simply "the calm one." He is someone who has tried to build a different structure of masculine life. The film's bleakness is found in its portrayal of how difficult it is to sustain such a project. Ethical masculinity is imaginable, but not institutionally supported.

### ***The Journey into Paris: Mobility without Belonging***

When the trio travel into Paris, the film stages one of its most important reversals. The city centre, symbolically coded as the heart of the Republic, should in principle represent access to national space. But the protagonists do not enter Paris as equal citizens. They enter it as marked bodies. Their movement reveals that mobility is not the same as belonging (Body-Gendrot, 2016; Costelloe, 2014).

That shift is central to the queer spatial argument. Normativity is embodied and spatially distributed. Some bodies pass through central space without friction; others register as noise, disruption, or threat. The protagonists' discomfort is not just classed. It is performative and affective. Their speech, dress, confidence, and manner of occupying space all clash with the tacit codes of bourgeois public culture (Sayre, 2009).

### ***The Gallery Sequence: Class, Legitimacy, and Social Choreography***

The gallery scene is among the film's sharpest studies of classed and racialised legitimacy. The protagonists enter a space coded as refined, controlled, and middle-class. They are not formally excluded, but their presence is treated as incongruous. The problem is not only that they do not fit culturally. The scene exposes the hidden social choreography of high culture: who is expected to belong, who may speak loudly, who is read as sophisticated, and who is read as disruption.

The power of the scene resides in its refusal of easy moral binaries. The trio are disruptive, but their disruption is itself determined by exclusion. Their discomfort reveals the fiction that public culture is impartial. The gallery is open, but not equally open. Legitimacy there is already distributed in advance.

### ***The Public Toilet Sequence: Humiliation, Storytelling, and Generational Fracture***

The public toilet scene, in which an old man tells a disturbing story, is one of the film's strangest and most

unsettling moments. It breaks the trio's rhythm and inserts an anecdote of humiliation, shame, and fatal delay. The scene has often been read as digressive, but that is precisely its importance. It introduces another temporal register: one of warning, memory, and absurd masculinity.

The old man's story is structured around bodily embarrassment and masculine pride, turning shame into tragedy. In the context of the film, the scene is consistent with the film's larger logic: men are trapped by scripts of pride, face-saving, and performance, even when those scripts become self-destructive. The toilet itself functions as an ambiguous, adject space where social hierarchy and bodily vulnerability become impossible to ignore (Vincendeau, 2005).

### ***The Police Station Sequence: State Power and Masculine Discipline***

The police station sequence is one of the film's most brutal revelations of institutional violence. Here the protagonists are not simply socially marginal; they are actively managed, degraded, and disciplined by the state.

The police station sequence offers one of the film's most explicit articulations of racialised humiliation through language. During the interrogation, an officer orders Hubert: "*Ramasse ! Avec tes pieds ! Toi, dans ton pays, on ramasse tout avec les pieds, hein ? [...] Faut pas te faire mal, j'te dis calme-toi !*" ("Pick them up with your feet! In your country, you pick everything up with your feet, don't you? [...] Don't hurt yourself, I told you to calm down!") (Kassovitz, 1995). The command is not simply degrading; it constructs Hubert as racially and culturally other, invoking an imagined "country" to which he is presumed to belong and thereby denying his full inclusion within the French Republic.

Saïd is subjected to an even more overt form of symbolic exclusion. Whereas Hubert's French first name offers a partial, if fragile, conformity with national identity, Saïd's name marks him as irreducibly foreign. This distinction becomes explicit when the officers ask, "*Hubert, c'est lequel Hubert?*" before immediately identifying the other detainee with the remark, "*Non, celui-là, il s'appelle Saïd.*" In this moment, Saïd is not simply identified but categorised: his name functions as a racialised signifier that fixes him as a permanent outsider. The scene thus reveals how citizenship is not granted through formal status alone but mediated through embodied markers such as name, appearance, and perceived origin.

The scene removes the liberal fiction that policing is unbiased administration. Instead, the police appear as agents of humiliation, using mockery, intimidation, and physical coercion to enforce hierarchy (Kramer and Remster, 2021).

This scene is especially important because it shows that masculinity is produced under conditions of state pressure. The young men are not just performing for one another; they are also forced to negotiate how to maintain face under surveillance and abuse. Composure itself becomes a survival technique. Humiliation is political, not simply personal.

The scene further deepens the film's queer significance. It reveals how norms of proper citizenship and proper masculinity intersect. The protagonists are treated not only as criminalised bodies, but as failed or excessive masculine subjects too visible, too loud, too unruly, too little entitled to public dignity.

### ***The DJ Sequence: Sound, Pleasure, and Momentary Collectivity***

The DJ sequence offers one of the film's most memorable moments of collective energy. Music pours across the estate, temporarily reorganising the social field. Sound becomes a way to claim space, connect interiors and exteriors, and transform alienated architecture into a platform for expression. This scene matters because it interrupts the narrative of pure victimhood. The characters are capable not only of rage and despair, but of style, pleasure, rhythm, and group joy (Woods, 2022). Such moments are temporary, yet their temporariness is part of their significance. They show that under conditions of social abandonment, aesthetic and affective improvisation can produce fleeting forms of community.

### ***The Concluding Confrontation: Landing, anti-Closure, and Catastrophic Repetition***

The ending is devastating precisely because it refuses redemption. The parable of the fall returns with full force. The problem was never whether the protagonists would eventually integrate into a stable social order. The problem was always that the order itself was organised around their exclusion. The final gunshot, by itself, does not function as a shocking plot twist. It is the landing the film has been approaching all along (Vincendeau, 2005).

This conclusion is central to the queer temporal argument. It rejects the normative narrative expectation that hardship leads to maturity, reconciliation, or inclusion. Instead, the film concludes with suspended

catastrophe. The future remains foreclosed rather than opened. The film offers not closure but repetition, not healing but exposure.

### ***Form: Black-and-White, Sound, Repetition, and Suspended Time***

The film's formal choices are inseparable from its politics. Black-and-white cinematography gives the world a documentary severity while also stylising it. It drains warmth from many spaces and heightens contrast, making surfaces, bodies, and architecture appear harshly legible. The effect is not simply realist. It produces a world already stripped to tension. This monochrome visual field intensifies the sense that the characters inhabit a social order organised through hard distinctions, centre and margin, legitimacy and deviance, authority and exposure, even as the film itself complicates those binaries (Powrie, 1999; Vincendeau, 2000).

Sound is equally important. Noise, ambient street life, abrupt tonal shifts, and moments of music all contribute to the film's unstable affective rhythm. The DJ sequence in particular demonstrates how sound can temporarily create collectivity where institutions create fragmentation. But the film also uses silence and abrupt cuts to remind the viewer that such collectivity is precarious.

Temporally, the film is structured by compression and repetition. The twenty-four-hour frame creates pressure, but the film does not feel progressive. It feels circular, suspended, repeatedly returned to the same conditions of boredom, insult, and threat. This time-based organisation supports the article's larger claim: the protagonists are denied access to normative futurity. They do not move through time as successful liberal subjects. They inhabit a present tense of continual negotiation, where tomorrow offers no guarantee of transformation (Hanson, 2011; McDermott, 2020).

### ***Women, Absence, and the Limits of the Film's Politics***

Any rigorous account must confront the film's gendered limitations. If the film queers masculinity, it does so within a world that remains overwhelmingly male-centred. Women are present but marginal. They appear as mothers, sisters, domestic figures, or brief passersby, rarely as subjects with comparable narrative richness or political centrality. This absence matters not because it cancels the film's insight, but

because it clarifies the limits of that insight [Avila-Saavedra, 2009; Francis, 2010].

First, destabilising masculinity is not the same as undoing patriarchy. A film can show that male identity is fragile without giving women greater agency or centrality. The film *often* does exactly that. The crisis of male subjectivity becomes the privileged site of significance.

Second, the marginalisation of women narrows the film's queer horizon. Queer cultural studies is not only about men relating differently to one another. It is also about wider challenges to gender hierarchies and normative social orders. The film *opens* one dimension of critique while leaving another comparatively underdeveloped.

Third, the absence of women is itself symptomatic. Public space in the film is heavily masculinised, and urban crisis is imagined mainly through male bodies. The film may be documenting a real social condition, but it also reproduces it. Recognising this contradiction makes the reading more precise, not less. It is politically interesting because it both unsettles and reproduces hierarchy. Its critique of masculinity is thus partial rather than emancipatory in any simple sense (Young, 2021; Hopkins and Giazitzoglu, 2024).

A closer look at the women who do appear in the film reinforces this critique. Vinz's mother and sister are glimpsed in the apartment block's domestic interior but are never granted the sustained attention or interior depth that the film lavishes on the three male protagonists. They appear as contextual backdrop, as markers of domestic space rather than as social agents in their own right. Similarly, the young woman the trio encounter briefly in Paris is present long enough to register as an object of male attention, but the film does not afford her a subject position of comparable weight. Her presence serves, at least in part, to confirm the heterosexual availability of the protagonists' world, even as the film declines to develop that availability into narrative. This structural marginalisation is entirely consistent with what feminist film theorists have identified as the masculine gaze inscribed in dominant cinema (Mulvey, 1975): women function as relational markers within a narrative fundamentally organised around male experience and male crisis.

It is worth asking what a more fully gendered account of the banlieue would look like. Tarr (2005) has documented the emergence of a *beur* and banlieue

filmmaking tradition in which women directors and female protagonists produce markedly different accounts of peripheral life: accounts in which domesticity is not simply backdrop yet contested space, in which young women negotiate patriarchal family systems alongside the racial and class pressures that the male protagonists face alone. Films such as Yamina Benguigui's documentary work or, later, Céline Sciamma's *Bande de filles* (2014) demonstrate that the banlieue can be filmed through a different gendered optic, foregrounding female solidarity, bodily autonomy, and the specific vulnerabilities of young women in racialised suburban space. By contrast, its almost exclusive focus on its male trio produces a vision of banlieue life as a masculine affair in which women's experiences of exclusion, surveillance, and structural constraint remain largely invisible. A complete cultural studies analysis of the banlieue as a social formation therefore requires moving beyond the film's frame, supplementing its insights together with work that centres women's views and perspectives (Tarr, 2005; Rollet, 2018; Mulvey, 1975).

### Why This Queer Reading Matters

Reading the film through queer cultural studies matters for several reasons.

First, it expands the scope of what counts as queer analysis. If queer criticism is restricted only to explicit *LGBTQ+* identity representation, then films like *La Haine* may seem peripheral. But if queerness is understood as a method for analysing normativity, performativity, non-reproductive temporality, and unconventional structures of attachment, then the film becomes extraordinarily rich (Warner, 1991; Warner, 1993).

Second, such a reading deepens banlieue studies. It shows that social exclusion is lived not only through economics, policing, and race, but also through demands about how masculinity should look, feel, move, and endure. The protagonists are compelled to perform manhood under conditions that make successful manhood nearly impossible.

Third, it foregrounds friendship as a serious cultural form. Family and romance frequently dominate critical accounts of intimacy, but it demonstrates that friendship can bear equal or greater emotional and political weight. In the film, friendship is not decorative. It is the infrastructure of survival (Kerrigan, 2021; Hanson, 2011).

Fourth, this approach resists stereotype. Public discussion frequently reduces banlieue youth to aggression or delinquency. By attending to vulnerability, dependence, awkwardness, care, and affective complexity, a queer reading produces a richer account of marginalised life without denying violence. It sees not only rage, but relation; not only conflict, but attachment.

Fifth, a queer reading opens productive questions about audience reception and spectatorship that existing scholarship has largely left unexamined. Hall's encoding/decoding model reminds us that no film text guarantees its own reading; the meanings produced are the outcome of encounters between its encoded representational strategies and the interpretive frameworks audiences bring to bear. The film's French theatrical release in 1995 generated considerable controversy, including a reported audience of police officers who watched it and responded with derision, and a screening for government ministers that prompted Prime Minister Alain Juppé to describe it as "important" yet ultimately fail to address its political demands (Vincendeau, 2005). These divergent receptions are not incidental. They demonstrate that the film's disturbing force arises at the intersection of text and context, and that different social positions yield different dominant, negotiated, or oppositional — readings of its meanings. A queer spectatorial position, in particular, may be especially attuned to what the film encodes about gendered performance and male intimacy, attending to registers of bodily vulnerability and emotional dependency that normative readings systematically disavow. Queer spectatorship, as theorised by scholars such as Dyer (1997) and White (1999), involves an attentiveness to non-normative forms of desire and identification that mainstream criticism regularly overlooks or neutralises. Applied to film, this mode of viewing reveals a text whose affective charge cannot be exhausted by sociological interpretation alone: the film prompts identification with bodies under pressure, attachments under threat, and futures foreclosed precisely the coordinates of queer experience as cultural studies has understood them (Hall, 1980; Dyer, 1997).

Finally, queering *the banlieue* also means queering the centre. If Paris and the Republic appear coherent only by disavowing the margins, then the film reveals that the centre's normality is itself unstable. The gallery, the police station, bourgeois public space, and universal citizenship all depend on exclusions the film renders visible (Costelloe, 2014; Body-Gendrot, 2016).

## CONCLUSION

*La Haine endures* because it is far more than a film about riots, policing, or suburban anger. It is a film about how people are made to live inside structures that deny them dignity. It is about violence, but equally about performance; about humiliation, as well as about relation; about territorial marginality, but equally about the unstable norms through which belonging is distributed. This article has argued that one of the most productive ways to understand the film is through queer cultural studies.

Such a reading does not claim that the film offers explicit queer identity or concealed same-sex romance. Its queerness lies elsewhere. The film presents masculinity as labour rather than essence. Vinz's hypermasculinity is theatrical, compensatory, and fragile. Hubert offers a counter-model grounded in restraint, care, and ethical discipline, though one constantly threatened by structural futility. Saïd's masculinity is improvisational, humorous, and relational. Together, they demonstrate that there is no singular "banlieue masculinity," but rather contested performances determined by social pressure (Young, 2021; Francis, 2010).

The film also imparts friendship with extraordinary emotional substance. The relationship among Vinz, Hubert, and Saïd displaces heterosexual romance as the primary source of narrative meaning. Their intimacy, coded through proximity, banter, irritation, loyalty, and dependence, does not need to become explicit eroticism to carry queer significance. It matters because it reorganises affective value around non-normative relation (Sedgwick, 1990; Kerrigan, 2021).

At the same time, the article has insisted on the film's limits. It *remains* overwhelmingly male-centred and grants women little comparable narrative agency. Its queer politics are therefore partial. It unsettles masculinity without fully escaping patriarchy. That contradiction is not incidental. It is part of what makes the film analytically rich.

Ultimately, a queer reading is to recognise that the crisis of the banlieue is also a crisis of normativity. Who counts as a man? Who belongs in public space? Whose body is read as citizen and whose as threat? Which attachments are recognised as meaningful, and which remain unspeakable or devalued? The force of Kassovitz's film rests in its refusal to resolve these questions. It gives us not reconciliation, but pressure;

not moral closure, but suspended catastrophe; not stable identity, but performance under duress.

## REFERENCES

- Avila-Saavedra, G. (2009). Nothing queer about queer television: Televised construction of gay masculinities. *Media, Culture & Society*, 31(1), 5–21.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443708098243>
- Body-Gendrot, S. (2016). Making sense of French urban disorders in 2005. *European Journal of Criminology*, 13(5), 556–572.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370816640819>
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Calnitsky, D., & Martinez, M. B. (2023). A class functionalist theory of race. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 20(1), 239–267.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X22000224>
- Costelloe, L. (2014). Discourses of sameness: Expressions of nationalism in newspaper discussion of French urban violence in 2005. *Discourse & Society*, 25(3), 315–340.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926513519533>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalising the intersection between race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139–167.
- Dyer, R. (1997). *White*. Routledge.
- Dikeç, Mustafa. 2006. *Badlands of the Republic: Space, Politics and Urban Policy*. Oxford: Blackwell.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470712788>
- Francis, B. (2010). Re/theorising gender: Female masculinity and male femininity in the classroom? *Gender and Education*, 22(5), 477–490.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540250903341146>
- Freeman, Elizabeth. 2010. *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1198v7z>
- Hall, S. (1980). Encoding/decoding. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, & P. Willis (Eds.), *Culture, media, language* (pp. 128–138). Hutchinson.
- Hall, S. (1986). On postmodernism and articulation: An interview with Stuart Hall. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10(2), 45–60.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/019685998601000204>
- Hall, S. (1997). The spectacle of the “Other.” In S. Hall (Ed.), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (pp. 223–290). Sage.
- Hall, S., & Jefferson, T. (Eds.). (1976). *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain*. Hutchinson.
- Gamson, J. (2003). Reflections on queer theory and communication. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 45(2–4), 385–389.  
[https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v45n02\\_27](https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v45n02_27)
- Halberstam, Jack. 2005. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press.
- Hanson, E. (2011). The future's eve: Reparative reading after Sedgwick. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 110(1), 101–119.  
<https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-2010-025>
- Hopkins, P., & Giazitzoglu, A. (2024). Hegemonic masculinity: New spaces, practices, and relations. *Progress in Human Geography*, 49(1), 84–98.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/03091325241307387>
- Ingraham, C. (1994). The heterosexual imaginary: Feminist sociology and theories of gender. *Sociological Theory*, 12(2), 203–219.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/201865>
- Kassovitz, M. (Director). (1995). *La Haine* [Film]. Canal+.
- Kerrigan, P. (2021). After marriage: The assimilation, representation, and diversification of LGBTQ lives on Irish television. *Television & New Media*, 22(1), 47–64.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476420976122>
- Kramer, R., & Remster, B. (2021). The slow violence of contemporary policing. *Annual Review of Criminology*, 4, 43–66.  
<https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/zuyuch>
- Mbembe, A. (2001). *On the postcolony*. University of California Press.
- McDermott, M. (2020). The (broken) promise of queerbaiting: Happiness and futurity in politics of queer representation. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 24(5), 844–859.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877920984170>
- Podmore, Julie and Bain, Alison. 2021. Please insert the full title from your bibliography.
- Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen*, 16(3), 6–18.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-14428-0\\_27](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-14428-0_27)
- Powrie, P. (1999). *French cinema in the 1990s: Continuity and difference*. Oxford University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198159582.001.0001>
- Rollet, B. (2018). Banlieue cinema: Filming the suburbs of Paris. *French Cultural Studies*, 29(4), 371–384.
- Sadock, Johann. 2004. “L’origine dévoilée du discours sur la violence et les relations interethniques dans le cinéma de Kassovitz.” *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 8(1): 63–73.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10260210310001635513>
- Sayre, N. (2009). Space, difference, everyday life: Reading Henri Lefebvre. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(4), 1088–1090.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2009.00934.6.x>
- Sedgwick, E. K. (1990). *Epistemology of the closet*. University of California Press.
- Tarr, C. (2005). *Reframing difference: Beur and banlieue filmmaking in France*. Manchester University Press.
- Vincendeau, G. (2000). *Stars and stardom in French cinema*. Continuum.
- Vincendeau, G. (2005). *La Haine*. I.B. Tauris.  
<https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755695522>
- Wacquant, Loïc. 1999. “Urban Marginality in the Coming Millennium.” *Urban Studies* 36 (10): 1639–1647.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098992746>
- Warner, M. (1991). Fear of a queer planet. *Social Text*, 29, 3–17.
- Warner, M. (Ed.). (1993). *Fear of a queer planet: Queer politics and social theory*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Warner, Michael. 1999. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. New York: Free Press.
- Woods, O. (2022). Reading is fun-da-mental: Queering queer “safe” spaces within drag culture. *Feminist Media Studies*, 23(6), 2514–2529.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2022.2062411>
- Young, A. A. (2021). Black men and Black masculinity. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 47, 213–230.  
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-091620-024714>

Received on 08-08-2026

Accepted on 10-01-2026

Published on 10-09-2026

<https://doi.org/10.6000/2817-2310.2026.05.03>

© 2026 Stephane Narcis.

This is an open-access article licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the work is properly cited.