

# “My Boy Like a Queen”

Musical and Visual Queer Performance in Music Videos of Sam Smith and Troye Sivan

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## **Abstract**

In this thesis, I examine the ways in which queerness is portrayed in music videos of Sam Smith and Troye Sivan, applying (queer) musicological and gender theories in order to argue that the medium of the music video is an appropriate one for communicating such queer messages explicitly. I expand on Judith Peraino's idea that the medium "music" is queer in essence because of its resistance to legibility by pointing out that applying images to music, as is done in the music videos of Smith and Sivan, creates an explicit expression of queerness. Nicholas Cook's notion of multimedia *conformance* serves to demonstrate the way in which audiovisual relations contribute to an explicit portrayal of queerness. Queer music videos of the 1980s are compared to Sivan's music video of "Lucky Strike" in order to demonstrate that explicitness plays a more important role in contemporary portrayals of queerness in mainstream media than in the 1980s. Then, Sivan's music video of "Bloom" is analysed with regards to the notions of masculinity and femininity and Smith's video of "How Do You Sleep?" is interpreted historically in order to compare the two artists and how they express their queerness through mainstream culture in different ways, nonetheless, with similar goals of fighting normativity and advocating for inclusivity. The fact that the music videos that I examine communicate queerness explicitly, shows that applying images to music according to Cook's model of *conformance*, can counteract music's queer feature of indirectness.

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## Introduction

Straight from the beginning of his music video “Lucky Strike,” Troye Sivan makes a queer statement: before the music starts, there is a shot of a rainbow-coloured parasol (see appendix 2: 0:07).<sup>1</sup> The music video techniques are rather conventional, with the singer lip-syncing the lyrics while a story unfolds.<sup>2</sup> Still, media expressions like these are worth studying due to the depiction of queer performance because, according to Lori Burns and Stan Hawkins, such performances “shape significant representations of gendered, sexualized, raced, and classed identities.”<sup>3</sup> According to José Esteban Muñoz queer performance prospects a future queer world in this “frustrating heterosexual present.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is important to discover what is going on in videos that deal with queer sexuality to get a better understanding of performance of queer sexuality. Additionally, music can have strong interactions to societal issues in which I am interested.<sup>5</sup>

This research attempts to form a queer musicological understanding of performance of homosexual queerness in music videos. Sam Smith and Troye Sivan are the biggest openly gay pop

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<sup>1</sup> This interpretation is certainly true for the western audience and particularly for queer listeners of Sivan’s music. The following sources show that Sivan’s videos are interpreted as such: Chris Mench, “Troye Sivan’s ‘Bloom’ Is A Metaphor-Filled Ode To Bottoming,” published on 4 May 2018, last accessed on 3 November 2019, <https://genius.com/a/troye-sivan-s-bloom-is-a-metaphor-filled-ode-to-bottoming>; Pier Dominguez, “Troye Sivan’s New Era (And Bottoming Anthem) Are What Pop Needs,” published on 13 September 2018, last accessed on 3 November 2019, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/pdominguez/troye-sivan-bloom-new-era-pop-star-queer-bottom-anthem>; André-Naquian Wheeler, “Listen To ‘Bloom,’ Troye Sivan’s Queer Anthem About Bottoming,” published on 3 May 2018, last accessed on 3 November 2019, [https://i-d.vice.com/en\\_us/article/zmgpk9/listen-to-bloom-troye-sivans-queer-anthem-about-bottoming](https://i-d.vice.com/en_us/article/zmgpk9/listen-to-bloom-troye-sivans-queer-anthem-about-bottoming); “Troye Sivan – Lucky Strike,” YouTube, published on 10 January 2019, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QsYn0j-7JQ>.

<sup>2</sup> Carol Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), XII.

<sup>3</sup> The word “queer” is a contested term: therefore, it is important to state how I use it. When speaking of queerness, I refer to those who identify as non-normative with regards to gender or sexuality. The term can therefore be interchangeable for the words gay, homosexual, or LGBTQIA+. Queer is a broad term, which allows me to be inclusive when writing about people that identify as non-conforming. Furthermore, the term queer describes a cultural position rather than sexual orientation alone, better than labels such as gay or homosexual do. I elaborate more on the term in chapter 1. Smith refers to themselves as queer; Sam Smith (@samsmith), “As a queer person ‘I feel love’ has followed me to every dance floor in every queer space from the minute I started clubbing. This song to me is an anthem of our community and it was an honour and most importantly so much fun to have a go at it. Highest song I’ve ever fucking sang. But a joy. I hope you all like it xx, Link to listen in bio x,” Instagram, 1 November 2019, <https://www.instagram.com/p/B4T3E4jg1ai/>; Tim Wray, “The Queer Gaze,” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar* 4 (2003): 69; Lori Burns, Stan Hawkins, ed., *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music Video Analysis* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019): 3.

<sup>4</sup> José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 49.

<sup>5</sup> For example, disco music that is interwoven in gay culture and seen as a threat by heterosexual men. Peraino states that “disco is an assault to oppressive sexuality. Disco forces ‘real men rockers’ to have sex without balls, to be the passive sexual partner, and thus be forced into gay sex.” Societal articulation of non-normativity in for example, Smith’s personae narrative can be found on their social media accounts on which they post pictures of themselves in high heels and make-up. Although this research focusses on music videos, I also include social media and interview sources in order to be specific about the queerness of the artist and how their real lives are reflected in their music videos; Judith A. Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens: Musical Technologies of Queer Identity from Homer to Hedwig* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006), 178; Kai Arne Hansen, “(Re)Reading Pop Personae: A Transmedial Approach to Studying the Multiple Construction of Artist Identities,” *Twentieth-Century Music* 16, no. 3 (October 2019): 523.

music artist of the 2010s.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, their videos make up the case studies of this research, supported by cue-based analyses. The research questions I pose are: how is homosexual queerness performed musically and visually in the contemporary non-heteronormative music videos of Sam Smith’s “How Do You Sleep?” and Troye Sivan’s “Lucky Strike” and “Bloom”?<sup>7</sup> What role does the medium of the music video play in portraying queerness?

In chapter 1, I survey the discourse on queerness with regards to sexuality currently constructed around musicology.<sup>8</sup> Since Smith identifies as non-binary,<sup>9</sup> it is important to understand what queerness means with regards to gender and sexuality. This part of the thesis is as complicated as it is essential. The term “queerness” denies pandering to labelling or categorisation since queer people and queer theory move away from traditional and binary categorisations and labelling. Judith Peraino states that music is queer in essence because it has a special position outside of language and it is resistant to legibility allowing music to be the appropriate to convey notions of queerness.<sup>10</sup> When writing about queer, it is necessary to call into question what is meant by the word.<sup>11</sup> Queer can be seen as a utopia rather than something that could actually be reached.<sup>12</sup> The guiding question is: what does queerness mean with regards to gender and sexuality and how is this currently constructed within musicology?

In order to construct a terminology to describe the performance of homosexuality within the music videos of Smith and Sivan, more extensive research on performance of homosexuality in music videos is necessary. In chapter 2, I focus on how representation of queerness is more explicitly presented in contemporary music videos compared to those of the late 1980s that contain homosexual content. The

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<sup>6</sup> To indicate their popularity, I include a list with the most popular solo artists at the moment and found the numbers of followers and listeners on social media and music platforms (see appendix 1). These artists include the top 20 of the “Billboard Artist Top 100” of the week of September 28, 2019. Sam Smith’s album *In the Lonely Hour* was awarded by Official Charts as biggest debut album of the decade with more than 2.59 million copies sold. “Artist 100, The Week of September 28, 2019,” *Billboard*, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.billboard.com/charts/artist-100>; Justin Myers, “Official Top 40 biggest debut albums of the decade,” *Official Charts*, published on 12 December 2019, last accessed on 18 December 2019, [https://www.officialcharts.com/chart-news/official-top-40-biggest-debut-albums-of-the-decade\\_27797/](https://www.officialcharts.com/chart-news/official-top-40-biggest-debut-albums-of-the-decade_27797/).

<sup>7</sup> Heteronormativity is defined in *Handboek Genderstudies in Media, Kunst en Cultuur* as the fact that in most western cultures, heterosexuality is the only unquestioned way of being and sexual orientation that is most represented. Heterosexuality is self-evident. For explanations of basic terminology in gender studies I refer to Rosemarie Buikema, Liedeke Plate, and Kathrin Thiele, ed., *Handboek Genderstudies in Media, Kunst en Cultuur* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 396; “Sam Smith – How Do You Sleep? (Official Video),” YouTube, published on 18 July 2019, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmYypVozQb4>; “Troye Sivan – Bloom,” YouTube, published on 6 June 2018, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41PTANtZFW0>; “Troye Sivan – Lucky Strike,” YouTube, published on 10 January 2019, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QsYn0j-7JQ>.

<sup>8</sup> A lot of literature that I use is written by queer authors, which I think is important when touching upon the subject of queerness, due to their personal experiences with the subject and their perspectives on it as a result.

<sup>9</sup> I, therefore, refer to Smith with non-binary pronouns; Sam Smith (@samsmith), “Today is a good day so here goes. I’ve decided I am changing my pronouns to THEY/THEM <3 after a lifetime of being at war with my gender I’ve decided to embrace myself for who I am, inside and out...,” Twitter, 13 September 2019, <https://twitter.com/samsmith/status/1172519872464662530>.

<sup>10</sup> Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Noreen Griffney, “Introduction: The ‘q’ Word,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Queer Theory*, ed. Noreen Griffney and Michael O’Rourke (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Munoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 49.

sub-question is: how did performance of homosexuality change from 1980s music videos of Madonna's "Cherish" and the Pet Shop Boys' "Domino Dancing" to Sivan's "Lucky Strike"?<sup>13</sup>

In chapter 3, I incorporate an audio-visual analysis of Sivan's "Bloom" and Smith's "How Do You Sleep?." Through analysing these clips, I search for certain markers that make these videos queer. The sub-questions are: what musical, visual, and historical elements contribute to a queer message in Sivan's "Bloom" and Smith's "How Do You Sleep?."? What role do masculinity and femininity play here? Peraino's *Listening to the Sirens* provides a musicological context of queer identities and their representations within mainstream culture.<sup>14</sup> Analysing the cases, I investigate the elements that contribute to the queer performance. When treating gay culture, it is important to be aware of notions of masculinity and femininity, since these play a role in stereotypical representation.

In sum, I argue that homosexual queerness is performed in both musically and visually in Smith and Sivan's music videos. Their queerness is reflected in their music and videos, creating an intrinsically queer message. Moreover, I argue that music's queer and inexplicit aspect (as ascribed by Peraino), is taken away by applying images. In the examples I provide, the images create an explicit queerness. This is a contradictory phenomenon: the fact that these videos are *explicitly* queer, takes away Peraino's notion of music being *inexplicit* (or queer) in essence.

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<sup>13</sup> "Madonna – Cherish (Official Music Video)," YouTube, published on 26 October 2009, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8q2WS6ahCnY>; "Pet Shop Boys – Domino Dancing," YouTube, published on 27 February 2009, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik2YF05iX2w>.

<sup>14</sup> Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*.

# 1. Queerness within Musicology

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework, concerning queerness and issues of gender and sexuality in music videos, on which I built my interpretation of the case studies and discussion of queerness within musicology.<sup>15</sup> This leads me to discussing gender roles in music videos. The guiding question in this chapter is: what does queerness mean with regards to gender and sexuality and how is this currently constructed within musicology?

## Gender Roles in Music Videos

Gender roles play an indispensable role in my research, since Smith, identifies as non-binary. Their gender, and gender roles in general, could therefore not be overlooked. In music videos sexualisation and gender stereotypes often play an important role.<sup>16</sup> Peraino states that “the aural dimension of gender and sexuality, voice and music, have haunted the margins of theory, but have seldom factored as centrally as the visual.”<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, she argues that the voice is often seen as a vehicle for language, while the voice itself actually is a primary source in determining someone’s gender.<sup>18</sup> When people sing, however, their voices seem to “open the doors of gender.”<sup>19</sup> Yvon Bonenfant states that queer vocal bodies reach out to other queer bodies, while queerness is often hidden due to heteronormativity.<sup>20</sup> Bonenfant also argues that “heteronormative power structures might not want to feel queerness touching them,” causing these voices often not to be heard.<sup>21</sup> Judith Butler states that “it seems there is no original or primary gender (...), but *gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original: (...)* [H]eterosexuality is always in the process of imitating and approximating its own phantasmatic idealization of itself—and *failing*.”<sup>22</sup> The gender of an individual is thus not inherent or stable according to Butler. It is produced by repetitive performance and imitation of heterosexuality.<sup>23</sup> Destabilising gender-normativity within gay culture often happens by using female pronouns as gay men.<sup>24</sup> Butler questions if this could be labelled as “colonising ‘appropriation,’” but opposes that, by stating that an accusation like that “assumes that the feminine belongs to women.”<sup>25</sup> The idealisation of heterosexuality is thus, like any other sexuality, a social construct that is always instable and does not want to be touched by non-normative sexualities.

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<sup>15</sup> Some more specific theories and histories, such as the history of homosexuality, ball culture, and vogue, as well as audio-visual theories, are introduced in the chapters below.

<sup>16</sup> Cara Wallis, “Performing Gender: A Content Analysis of Gender Display in Music Videos,” *Sex Roles* 64, no. 3-4 (February 2011): 161.

<sup>17</sup> Judith A. Peraino, “Listening to Gender: A Response to Judith Halberstam,” *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 11 (2007): 59.

<sup>18</sup> Peraino, “Listening to Gender,” 62.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>20</sup> Yvon Bonenfant, “Queer Listening to Queer Vocal Timbres,” *Performance Research* 15, no. 3 (2010): 74-79.

<sup>21</sup> Bonenfant, “Queer Listening,” 79.

<sup>22</sup> Emphasis original; Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 113.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Tara Susman, “The Vogue of Life: Fashion Culture, Identity, and the Dance of Survival in the Gay Balls,” *disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory* 9, no. 15 (Spring 2000): 119.

<sup>25</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), 167.

Cara Wallis examined the extent to which male and female lead performers in music videos adhere to conventional nonverbal gendered behaviours and states that “gender display is (...) a salient feature of music videos.”<sup>26</sup> She found that there are differences in the portrayal of gender between males and females and that gender expressions are portrayed according to stereotypes with regards to masculinity and femininity.<sup>27</sup>

### **Queerness and Homosexuality as Theoretical Framework**

Many gender studies scholars have tried to define the term “queerness,” however, the essence of the term is that it tries to escape from being labelled and defined: queerness is by definition indefinable.<sup>28</sup> The history of queerness begins with “the attempt to reclaim the slurs of bigots (...) as terms of respect and affection” and becomes an academic discussion of binaries and hierarchies.<sup>29</sup> Queer can designate odd, strange or not belonging, but it often merges together with a specific meaning of the word referring to sexual identity.<sup>30</sup> The term used to be a synonym for non-normative sexualities, but it would better be described as anti-identity since the term is used to break with normative assumptions.<sup>31</sup> Julian Wolfreys argues that although queer is a concept itself, it critiques “the limits of normative concepts, if not the act of conceptualization itself.”<sup>32</sup> Butler states that queer destabilizes categories of normativity, stating that it “might be understood as symptomatic of ‘the straight mind,’ modes of identifying with the oppressor’s version of the identity of the oppressed.”<sup>33</sup> By embracing fluidity in identity, queerness is recognising that identity is historically and socially constructed, denoting resistance to the rigidity of categories of identity and protests against the idea of the immutable nature of categories.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, David Getsy and William Simmons point out that “the usage of the term [queer] always implies at least two other things—a noun to which it is applied (a queer *what?*) and a norm or convention against which the term (...) is posed. So, the term is always historically and contextually contingent.”<sup>35</sup> Additionally,

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<sup>26</sup> Wallis, “Performing Gender,” 161.

<sup>27</sup> For example, males are more often playing a dominant nonverbal and more aggressive role, while women are engaged in more sexual self-touch and suggestive dancing; Ibid., 161-168.

<sup>28</sup> Crystal Rasmussen, *Diary of a Drag Queen* (London: Ebury Press, 2019), 205.

<sup>29</sup> Mitchell Morris, “On Gaily Reading Music,” *Repercussions* 1, no. 1 (spring 1992): 58

<sup>30</sup> Griffney, “Introduction,” 2; Eli Clare, “Stolen Bodies: Reclaimed Bodies: Disability and Queerness,” *Public Culture* 13, no. 3 (2001): 361.

<sup>31</sup> Buikema, et al., *Handboek Genderstudies*, 363-364.

<sup>32</sup> Julian Wolfreys, *Critical Keywords in Literary and Cultural Theory* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2004), 202-203.

<sup>33</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 166.

<sup>34</sup> Griffney, “Introduction,” 2-3.

<sup>35</sup> Moreover, they state that “[i]t infects and overtakes the nouns and things to which it is attached. One way of saying this is to say that it is performative in the strict sense, and its effects are to highlight and bracket the operations of implicit normativity.” Emphasis original; David J. Getsy in Conversation with William J. Simmons, “Appearing Differently: Abstraction’s Transgender and Queer Capacities,” in *Pink Labour on Golden Streets: Queer Art Practices*, ed. Dietmar Schwärzler, Ruby Sircar, and Hans Scheirl (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2015), 43-44.



“[q]ueer experience can incorporate attitudes (...) of resistance to compulsory heterosexuality that depart from its normative and procreative logics.”<sup>36</sup>

Queer theory, the academic branch of queerness, takes sexuality as main analytical focus in order to destabilise and problematise categories showing that gender and sexuality are socially and historically constructed.<sup>37</sup> Robert Hill sees queer as political tool, blurring “dominant binary gender distinction,” and argues that one can never sufficiently define identity.<sup>38</sup> Knowledge must constantly be re-evaluated and reinterpreted, since queer is politically, culturally, and socially rebellious.<sup>39</sup> Peraino opposes binary thinking by questioning whether one could speak of a queer identity.<sup>40</sup> An important part of queer theory is intersectionality.<sup>41</sup> Peraino states that queer theory questions concepts of identity based on same-sex desire and that it expands “the scope to include intersections of gender and sexuality with race, class, ethnicity, and nationhood.”<sup>42</sup> Intersectionality was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, who initiated a way of thinking in which axis of signification such as ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, nationality, and religion co-construct each other and work simultaneously.<sup>43</sup> Intersectionality calls for an approach in which gender always works together with these axes of difference. Because of the scope of this research, and its focus on sexuality and gender, additional analyses can be done on other axes of difference.

To write about homosexuality as opposite of heterosexuality is, of course, playing into the binary. Sexuality is personal and can change.<sup>44</sup> Besides, there are other sexualities to which individuals can relate.<sup>45</sup> However, to write about homosexuality it is important to be specific about what sexuality means within society.<sup>46</sup>

## Queer Musicological Theory

Queerness is an important issue in music. Peraino examines what role music can have in questioning “the ideological superstructure of ‘compulsory heterosexuality,’” by which she refers to the idea that natural desire involves a man and a woman, while other non-procreative sexual practices are seen as illegitimate.<sup>47</sup> Most scholarship about queer performativity, however, focusses on visual rather than

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<sup>36</sup> Getsy in Conversation with Simmons, “Appearing Differently,” 44.

<sup>37</sup> Buikema, et al., *Handboek Genderstudies*, 363-364.

<sup>38</sup> Robert J. Hill, “Activism as Practice: Some Queer Considerations,” *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 102 (2004): 85-87.

<sup>39</sup> Hill, “Activism as Practice,” 87.

<sup>40</sup> Since queer means resisting “rigid categories of sexual identity such as straight/gay, male/female, married/single;” Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Queer points out intersectionality with regards to identity, relationality, ethics, and norms.

<sup>42</sup> Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Buikema, et al., *Handboek Genderstudies*, 102.

<sup>44</sup> Not only can sexuality change from person to person but also over time within the life of an individual.

<sup>45</sup> Other sexualities, as for example bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, androsexual, gynosexual, and asexual, are not included in this thesis due to its scope and focus on homosexual artists.

<sup>46</sup> Which in the case of this research means Western twenty-first-century society.

<sup>47</sup> Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 5.

auditory content.<sup>48</sup> Bonenfant, focussing on sound and queerness as well, argues that queer vocals and queer listening are important in order to understand the “political dynamics of timbral exchange.”<sup>49</sup> Additionally, he states that queer voices “sometimes had to be hidden (...) in order to have a chance of reaching other queer bodies.”<sup>50</sup> Kai Arne Hansen adds that the singing voice is an important element in how identities are conveyed.<sup>51</sup> When a sound is created by a human’s phonetic apparatus, it makes sound waves, “fabricated by a living body (...) [carrying] a unique imprint of that body,” a “sonic fingerprint.”<sup>52</sup> Freya Jarman-Ivens argues that the voice plays an important role in conveying gender.<sup>53</sup> When a listener hears a voice, they must invent an assumed body that could be linked to that voice, sometimes without even seeing the physical body.<sup>54</sup> This is how voice can be part of identification, which plays an important role in the life of queer people. The same could be said about queer vocal music: the artist’s persona, and with that their gender and sexuality, are conveyed through voice.<sup>55</sup> The voices of Smith and Sivan carry an imprint of their queer bodies, drenching their music, strengthen the queer message of their songs.

In Smith’s persona, their voice plays an important role in the performative construction of gender with regards to pitch and register.<sup>56</sup> Smith often uses a falsetto with vibrato and ornamentations which led to people interpreting their voice as diva-like.<sup>57</sup> Smith said in an interview that there is a need for a “male diva” and that they strive “to have the presence vocally that some of the divas did.”<sup>58</sup> This narrates the significance of Smith’s gendered voice. High-pitched voices are often seen as fake, exaggerated, and other, but a falsetto voice can also serve to construct a gay persona.<sup>59</sup>

Music has a special position outside of language. According to Peraino, music is able to resemble the “impossibility of signifying subjectivities that lie outside normative heterosexuality,” making it queer in essence.<sup>60</sup> Peraino uses the word “queer” as a “sexually freighted synonym for

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<sup>48</sup> Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 113; Bonenfant, “Queer Listening,” 74.

<sup>49</sup> Bonenfant, “Queer Listening,” 74.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>51</sup> In this source, Hansen refers to Smith with the masculine pronoun since Smith had not come out as non-binary at the time Hansen wrote this text; Hansen, “(Re)Reading Pop Personae,” 504-505.

<sup>52</sup> Bonenfant, “Queer Listening,” 76. Hansen, “(Re)Reading Pop Personae,” 505.

<sup>53</sup> Freya Jarman-Ivens, *Queer Voices: Technologies, Vocalities, and the Musical Flaw* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>54</sup> Bonenfant, “Queer Listening,” 76.

<sup>55</sup> Hansen, “(Re)Reading Pop Personae,” 506.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 523.

<sup>57</sup> Mark Savage, “BBC Sound of 2014: Sam Smith,” BBC, published on 10 January 2014, last accessed on 20 November 2019, [www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-25635440](http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-25635440); Hansen, “(Re)Reading Pop Personae,” 523-524.

<sup>58</sup> Rob Ledonne, “Britain’s R&B Wunderkind (And This Weekend’s ‘SNL’ Guest) Sam Smith,” T Magazine, published on 25 March 2014, last accessed on 20 November 2019, <https://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/03/25/q-and-a-britains-rb-wunderkind-and-this-weekends-snl-guest-sam-smith/>; Hansen, “(Re)Reading Pop Personae,” 524.

<sup>59</sup> Because Hansen writes about “gay persona” rather than “queer persona,” I chose to use the word “gay” here instead of “queer;” Hansen, “(Re)Reading Pop Personae,” 524.

<sup>60</sup> Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 7, 113.

‘questioning’” rather than referring to a sense of community.<sup>61</sup> Butler wonders “whether the effects of the psyche can be said to be exhausted in what can be signified or whether there is not... a domain of the psyche which contests legibility.”<sup>62</sup> Music is vague because it does not directly signify meaning: “[m]usic is notoriously resistant to legibility; and although cultural, feminist, and queer theorists within musicology have worked hard to reveal the signatures of subjectivity and ideology in musical sounds, it is arguably music’s resistance to legibility that allows for the use of music as a strategy for negotiating queer identity within dominant heterosexual culture,” making it an appropriate queer medium.<sup>63</sup> Language has a sense of directness that makes it harder to apprehend queerness. In Western culture, gender and sexuality have always played an important role, a role that might be too complex for “verbal description and visual representation.”<sup>64</sup> I argue that the lack of visual representation of queer bodies has come to an end with today’s music videos that treat queerness. In the chapters below, I show that these videos represent queerness explicitly in order to attempt to break with normativity. Moreover, the medium of the music video, as employed by Smith and Sivan, does away with the queer feature of music, described by Peraino as resistant to legibility.<sup>65</sup> The music videos that I discuss more explicitly signify queerness than music without images would. Music videos do not have a resistance to legibility due to the fact that images are added to the medium of music.

### Queer Visual Theory

The *male gaze* is the male heterosexual point of view that objectifies women as the object of male pleasure.<sup>66</sup> Laura Mulvey states that “[i]n a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking had been split in between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*.”<sup>67</sup> According to Tim Wray, the gaze can be undermined by queer codes of looking “[g]rowing up queer there is always a point when we realise ourselves to be different, but this difference must immediately be controlled depending on where we are and who we are with. A tension is set up between the appearance we are obliged to project, and our

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>62</sup> Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 7.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>65</sup> Adding images to music provides new ways of employing music. Additionally, according to Ernst van Alphen, “visual images not only function as providers of content or messages, but also are indispensable in raising feelings and working through them. When images function this way, they are active agents, transmitting affects to the viewer or reader. Images are able to do this because they possess a concreteness that knowledge or propositional content do not have. The latter aspects are rather abstract or general.” Ernst van Alphen, “Affective Operations of Art and Literature,” *Res*, 53/54 (2008): 27.

<sup>66</sup> The term *male gaze* was introduced by Laura Mulvey in her seminal work “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6-18.

<sup>67</sup> Emphasis original; Edward Snow, “Theorizing the Male Gaze: Some Problems,” *Representations* 25, Winter (1989): 30; Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” in *Media and Cultural Studies*, ed. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 346-347.

sense of our own image. (...) [T]he queer gaze questions any ‘natural’ appearance, and the transformability of our identities contests that there can never be a unified subject who is the spectator of the world.”<sup>68</sup> The gaze is presumed to be from a white, cis-male, heterosexual perspective. Men appropriate the gaze by making women passive objects while seeking otherness in them. But the homosexual queer gaze is looking for “reflection of the same desires back.”<sup>69</sup> This version of the gaze treats men both as its subject and object. Gay men make themselves simultaneously visible and invisible.<sup>70</sup> Artists sometimes act different in their music videos than they would in personal life.<sup>71</sup> An artist can adjust their self-presentation in response to the reaction of an audience.<sup>72</sup> An artist can thus be queerer in their videos than in their personal life. Philip Tagg notes that there is nothing dishonest about adopting to the “appropriate role in the appropriate situation. (...) [I]t’s an essential social skill.”<sup>73</sup> Especially queer people’s bodies are often forced to be hidden.

### **Madonna as Queer Icon**

Queer icons are celebrated for circulating their differences in gender and sexuality within dominant culture by means of representation and making their identity explicit, ensuring confrontation and dialogue with the normative.<sup>74</sup> Madonna’s popularity and status as mainstream controversial make her the perfect example for my comparison. Her hypersexuality resonates with gay men, because according to Peraino their “post-liberation era culture of the 1980s tended to be organized around (...) sexual fetishes (...). Madonna’s myriad sexual costumes communicated a sex-positive message (...) [flaunting] a flamboyant sexual expression characteristic of gay subcultures.”<sup>75</sup> She portrays a sexual fluidity that appeals to queer people, liberating them from stereotypes that work toward discrimination.<sup>76</sup> Using sexual taboos and transgressions, combined with her mainstream, “radio-friendly pop” sound, creates an awkward discrepancy.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Wray, “The Queer Gaze,” 70.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Philip Auslander, “Musical Persona: The Physical Performance of Popular Music,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, ed. Derek B. Scott (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 306.

<sup>72</sup> According to Hawkins, “there is no reason to suppose that musicians present the same identity when playing music as when they perform their other life routines;” Burns, Hawkins, ed., *The Bloomsbury*, 95.

<sup>73</sup> Hansen, “(Re)Reading Pop Personae,” 507.

<sup>74</sup> Mainstream artist’s identities can often be ambiguous, while queer artists must often be made explicit; Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 110-111.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>77</sup> The performance of queerness in Madonna’s videos is rather implicit compared to Smith and Sivan’s music videos. Opposed to Smith and Sivan, Madonna conveys a certain female heterosexuality, but comparing them along the same lines as Madonna is interesting because they stress sexuality comparably; Ibid., 143-144, 150.

## 2. Portrayal of Homosexuality in Troye Sivan's "Lucky Strike"<sup>78</sup>

Not only are the Pet Shop Boys' "Domino Dancing," Madonna's "Cherish," and Troye Sivan's "Lucky Strike" all set on beaches, they also portray affection and curiosity towards the antagonists in a comparable way.<sup>79</sup> The sub-question is: how did performance of homosexuality change from 1980s music videos of Madonna's "Cherish" and the Pet Shop Boys' "Domino Dancing" to Sivan's "Lucky Strike"?<sup>80</sup> Music videos exist for selling the song, therefore, the song itself is the main element.<sup>81</sup> According to Hansen, music's relation to visual images "opens up a new space, where the acting out of identity is intensified by the possibilities offered by techniques of editing, processing, and manipulating sonic and visual material."<sup>82</sup> Diane Railton and Paul Watson argue that the audiovisual space is an important place for exploring "the interdependent construction of race, sex and gender."<sup>83</sup>

### Do the Images Conform to the Song's Message?

Nicholas Cook's models of multimedia provide an analytical framework for investigating the relation between queerness and music videos. When images are applied to music with regards to *conformance*, the medium of the music video is suitable for communicating gender and sexuality more explicitly than music without images would.<sup>84</sup> Cook argues that multimedia contains three basic models, being

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<sup>78</sup> The analysis of Sivan's music video originates from a paper written in the course Music and the Moving Image. Paraphrased sentences from this paper are referred to through footnotes; Tim Stormer, "Performance of Queerness in Troye Sivan's Music Video 'Lucky Strike,'" student paper, Music and the Moving Image, Utrecht University.

<sup>79</sup> The beach should not necessarily be seen as a queer space, because the male gaze and voyeurism play an important role in normative music videos as well. The fact that there are so many beach themed videos probably has something to do with the forceless element of nudity. An artist is able to be sensual without being vulgar. Some non-queer examples are Fifth Harmony's "All-in My Head," Katy Perry's "California Girls," Beyoncé's "Drunk in Love," Rihanna's "If Its Lovin' That You Want," and Kanye West's "I Won;" "Pet Shop Boys – Domino Dancing," YouTube, published on 27 February 2009, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik2YF05iX2w>; "Madonna – Cherish (Official Music Video)," YouTube, published on 26 October 2009, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8q2WS6ahCnY>; "Troye Sivan – Lucky Strike," YouTube, published on 10 January 2019, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QsYn0j-7JQ>.

<sup>80</sup> I investigate the differences between these music videos, comparing John Gill's view and my own interpretation on the Pet Shop Boys and Vernallis' analysis of Madonna's video with my own cue-based analysis of Sivan's video; John Gill, *Queer Noises: Male and Female Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video*.

<sup>81</sup> Music videos derive from the song they accompany, with directors designing images using the song as a guideline. Korsgaard states that Bente Kristiansen interprets music videos as "brief video productions that are made as a visual accompaniment to (...) music. The videos work as commercials to the musicians and as entertainment to the audience." Some scholars claim that music videos work as narratives, like a part of a film or television show, while others argue that the videos are antinarrative since their main focus is selling and setting the song. Either way, it is important to consider other narrative dimensions that music videos can contain such as "underscoring the music, highlighting the lyrics, and showcasing the star;" Henry Keazor and Thorsten Wübbena, *Rewind, Play, Fast Forward: The Past, Present and Future of the Music Video* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2010), 10; Mathias Bonde Korsgaard, *Music Video After MTV: Audiovisual Studies, New Media, and Popular Music* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 16-17, 25-26; Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video*, 3-4, 11-13.

<sup>82</sup> Hansen, "(Re)Reading Pop Personae," 505.

<sup>83</sup> Diane Railton and Paul Watson, "Situating Music Video: Between Feminism and Popular Culture," in *Music Video and the Politics of Representation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 88.

<sup>84</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 98-106.

*conformance, complementation, and contest.*<sup>85</sup> Testing the visuals and the audio of a case by doing the *similarity test*, one can determine which of these models can be applied to the case. The audio and visuals can be either *coherent* or *consistent*. The category of coherence splits up in two sub-categories: complementation, audio and visuals “fit together” and contest, they do *not* fit together.<sup>86</sup> When both audio and visuals communicate the same information, the test is *consistent*, and the medium is *conformant*. According to Ronald Rodman, the idea of *conformance* can be applied to the media that combine music and image.<sup>87</sup> Cook uses Joseph Kerman’s terms characterising “the complementarity of words and music in terms of denotation and connotation,” stating that “music says what words cannot, and words what music cannot, so that each medium makes good what would otherwise be a lack in the other.”<sup>88</sup> The music itself is vague and does not denote, making it a suitable medium to handle queerness. A signifying medium, as for example language, would be less appropriate because of its denotation. The medium of the music video combines the connotating (or in Peraino’s words queer) medium of music with the denotating medium of images making it suitable to express queerness explicitly. Employing the medium of the music video by means of conformance, the queer theme, that is implicit in the music can thus be made explicit in the music video by adding images.

In queer music videos of the 1980s, queerness is portrayed less explicit compared to contemporary videos. I include Madonna’s “Cherish” and The Pet Shop Boys’ “Domino Dancing” in order to get a better understanding of the history of queerness in music videos. In Madonna’s video of “Cherish,” the correlation between image and sound is rather implicit or even confusing.<sup>89</sup> The image’s portrayal of the lyrics often happen with delay causing confusion about what the lyrics point out.<sup>90</sup> Vernallis states that conforming elements are present in the video, but they are related to “carry[ing] the viewer through the video” rather than clarifying the music, its relationship to the images, or the notion of homosexuality.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, 98-99.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Rodman states that “[Claudia Gorbman, Kathryn Kalinak, Nicholas Cook, Philip Tagg, and Michel Chion] use different terms for the combined relationship of image and music, such as ‘anchorage’ (Gorbman), ‘conformance’ (Cook), and ‘synchresis’ (Chion).” I mainly use Cook’s terms in this research; Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, 98-100; Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, translated by Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Ronald W. Rodman, *Tuning In: American Narrative Television Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 42.

<sup>88</sup> Cook suggests that “[t]he identification of word with denotation and music with connotation suggests the kind of layered non-competitive relationship which [Cook] termed ‘complementation;’” Cook also states that “[t]here is (...) neither a neat separation nor a natural hierarchy between music and the word;” Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, 118-119.

<sup>89</sup> With references to cupid and *Romeo and Juliet*, of which the latter is, of course, very much heterosexual; Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video*, 217.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Vernallis does not explicitly mention Cook’s *conformance*, but she states that “[t]he muscular movement of the huge figures in slow motion, almost pulling themselves through the space, along with the waves rushing to and fro, give the ‘Cherish’ video a particular feel, which might be called a capacity to carry the viewer through the video. This parallels the way that the propulsive elements in the music—the bass line, the rolling drum

The lyrics of The Pet Shop Boys' "Domino Dancing" are gender neutral and do therefore not explicitly communicate homosexuality (nor heterosexuality).<sup>92</sup> Although the Pet Shop Boys make references to queer culture, they are not drawing attention to their potential queerness by keeping their references cryptic and neglecting to share any content or narrative.<sup>93</sup> In "Domino Dancing" this is the case as well: the storyline is about a love triangle between two Latino men and one woman. However, it does not become explicitly clear in the video, nor the lyrics, whose love is discussed. The fact that the boys are Latino says something about gaze and Otherness. The gaze is made stronger by Othering them for a western, white audience.<sup>94</sup> Edward Said states that the Other is represented in a way in which there is no space for an identity, voice, and desire of their own.<sup>95</sup> In "Domino Dancing" this is especially the case with the boys' bodies being objectified by being bare chested and filmed in slow motion while playing in the water. Moreover, it is ambiguous whether their desire is to be with each other or with the girl, while it is made quite clear that the man who is watching them has the desire to do so. The slow motion images of the boys playing in the sea and touching each other's naked chests, creates a sensual energy, but music journalist Jim Farber writes that the video "exemplified the mainstream exploitation of gay sex in the eighties, (...) doubling the repression by keeping openly gay expression closeted."<sup>96</sup> Thus, the video was closeted by not explicitly portraying homosexuality. Although conformance plays a role here with regards to literally showing what happens in the lyrics, it never makes the homosexual content explicit: when the lyrics "watch them all fall down" are sung, the boys play in the sea, pushing each other and falling down, while a man is watching them through his sun glasses. The images conform with the music, but do not make its queer meanings clearer. The lyrics are probably not really about dancing and falling down: the band never confessed it, but some fan theorists argue that the song is about the 1980s AIDS crisis and that the lyrics of "dancing" are about carefree young people having sex and "watch them all fall down" about collapsing from illness.<sup>97</sup>

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tracks, the harmonic motion—create and maintain the song's momentum." Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video*, 211-212.

<sup>92</sup> See appendix 3.

<sup>93</sup> Their songs "Later Tonight" and "One in a Million" for example are sung by men to other men and the close up photograph of Tennant and Lowe on their album cover of *Please* has a vogue kind of vibe; John Gill, *Queer Noises*, 4-9.

<sup>94</sup> Not only are they Othered to a white audience, but also to the white bandmembers Tennant and Lowe. The term *Otherness* was coined by Edward Said and implies that academic knowledge supports a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient." According to Said, the Other's identity was stolen by the process of orientalism; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York & London: Pantheon Books, 1978), 3; Buikema, et al., *Handboek Genderstudies*, 136.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Emphasis original; Jim Farber, "Beyond the Big Hair – Video News and Notes," *Rolling Stone Magazine*, 14-18 December 1989, 235.

<sup>97</sup> According to Vernallis, confusion is typical for music videos: "[m]usic videos can raise questions of cause and effect, foregrounding relations so ambiguous that the music seems to be the engine mobilizing people, objects, and environments;" Wayne Studer, "Domino Dancing," Geowayne, last accessed on 26 October 2019, <http://www.geowayne.com/newDesign/introspective/domino.htm>; "Pet Shop Boys – Domino Dancing," Song Meanings, last accessed on 26 October 2019, <https://songmeanings.com/songs/view/76467/>; Carol Vernallis, *Unruly Media: YouTube, Music Video, and the New Digital Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 190-191.

Comparing these videos to Sivan's "Lucky Strike" helps understanding how the portrayal of queerness in music videos evolved. In "Lucky Strike," the images do not only sell the song but also uses them to help the viewer understand the song better by providing context, making the queerness more explicit. The video's narrative is about a gay couple flirting on the beach. The rainbow-coloured parasol (referring to the rainbow flag) shown at the beginning of the video indicates the idea of the video being emancipative (see appendix 2: 0:07).<sup>98</sup> The lyrics of "Lucky Strike" (containing words like "him," "he," and "boy" (see appendix 2: 0:41 and 0:44)) indicate homosexuality. Combining these lyrics with images of the affection between two men, creates conformance between music and image, which makes the homosexual theme more explicit. Conformance takes place on a different level here than in "Domino Dancing," giving meaning to the lyrics, rather than portraying the lyrics literally. The fact that Sivan identifies as homosexual, strengthens the queerness in his video.<sup>99</sup> Sivan destabilises heteronormativity by explicitly portraying homosexuality, which is achieved by means of conformance and creates a sense of empowerment.<sup>100</sup>

### **Musical Queering**

In both the Pet Shop Boys' and Sivan's music, the synthesizer plays an important role. In the early 1980s, the usage of synths had a negative connotation and the relationship between synthpop and homosexuality was never uncomplicated as it inexplicitly comprehends same-sex desire.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, most synthpop artists played gay, but were actually straight.<sup>102</sup> Peraino discusses Wendy Carlos and the relation between her instrument, the synthesizer, and her queerness.<sup>103</sup> Peraino calls Carlos' music "radical travesty" that would "transverse socio-musical boundaries."<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, she points out that the critique on the instrument of being unnatural, imitative, immoral, and dangerous, intersects with the language used to criticise and describe non-normative gender and sexuality.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, using synthesizers has anti-patriarchal connotations. However, queerness in music was not intrinsically linked

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<sup>98</sup> The rainbow flag is the symbol of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQIA+) or queer community. In any other music video such colours could have been a coincidence, but with regards to the homosexual theme of the video, it certainly is not.

<sup>99</sup> Sivan told his fans about his coming out in a vlog on YouTube; "Coming Out," YouTube, published on 8 August 2013, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoL-MnXvK80>.

<sup>100</sup> Carol Tully, *Lesbians, Gay, and the Empowerment Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 113-147.

<sup>101</sup> Synthesizers were seen as the inauthentic counterpart of rock's authentic electric guitars. Neil Tennant, of the Pet Shop Boys, stated that "[i]t's kinda macho nowadays to prove you can cut it live. I quite like proving we can't cut it live. We're a pop group, not a rock and roll group" underlining the association of musical ability and live performance with rock and studio artifice with pop; Judith A. Peraino, "Synthesizing Difference: The Queer Circuits of Early Synthpop," in *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*, ed. Olivia Bloechl, Melanie Lowe, and Jeffrey Kalberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 293; Philip Auslander, "Tryin' To Make it Real: Live Performance, Simulation, and the Discourse of Authenticity in Rock Culture." in *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, ed. Philip Auslander (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 91.

<sup>102</sup> Peraino, "Synthesizing Difference," 293.

<sup>103</sup> Wendy Carlos is a transgender woman composer who is formerly known as Walter Carlos.

<sup>104</sup> Peraino, "Synthesizing Difference," 294-296, 298-300, 302.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 301-302.



to the identity of the performer, but the attack on heteronormativity stimulated later synthpop artists, including the Pet Shop Boys, to market themselves as gay without the negotiation of “robotic androgyny.”<sup>106</sup> By using the synthesizer in his music, Sivan builds on a queer history of the instrument because of its historically proven connotations with androgyny and queerness. Fighting heteronormativity and the topic of homosexual love, are strengthened using synthesizers.

“Domino Dancing” and “Lucky Strike” differ a lot musically, because they were made in a different era: the Pet Shop Boys’ sound is more classic synthpop with electronic timbres and percussive sharp rhythms, while in Sivan’s song the softer sounding synths are used less rhythmically.<sup>107</sup> The softer and less rhythmical elements of “Lucky Strike” relate to being more explicitly queer. Additionally, both songs utilise the queer history of synthesizers and lack substantial usage of electric guitars, which is uncommon for synthpop.<sup>108</sup> The electric guitar has a phallic and masculine connotation and contributes to the idea of rock authenticity which increases the notion of masculinity even more.<sup>109</sup> By dismissing the traditionally masculine electric guitar, the music becomes less masculine. The scarce masculinity performed by men creates a queer connotation.

### Visual Queering

The position of the viewers in the medium of the music video is more intimate compared to most other audio-visual media. Narrative films, for instance, place viewers in a distant position of mastery, which means that the viewer has a stable position and a certain power in the narrative space from which they are able to judge the action objectively.<sup>110</sup> Often, in music videos, shaky camera movements create an uncomfortable position for the viewer, inviting them to give up the secure position.<sup>111</sup> With Sivan looking into the camera in “Lucky Strike,” the fourth wall is broken, which reduces the distance (see appendix 2: 2:05 and 2:10).<sup>112</sup> The idea of mastery disappears and the song’s groove—its rhythmic figures drive across sectional division continuously—causes the viewer to give up their secure position.<sup>113</sup> The scene in which Sivan suddenly starts walking towards the camera with two (seemingly)

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<sup>106</sup> Peraino, “Synthesizing Difference,” 313.

<sup>107</sup> There is more variety of rhythmic layers built up of synths in “Domino Dancing” than “Lucky Strike;” Ibid., 288.

<sup>108</sup> Although the electric guitar is not used in the songs, a Spanish guitar is heard in “Domino Dancing,” however, this is used in order to emphasise and capitalise the Latin-American ethnicity of the two guys, rather than their masculinity; Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Lucia Krämer, “From Glam Rock to Cock Rock: Revis(it)ing Rock Masculinities in Recent Feature Films,” in *Performing Masculinity*, ed. R. Emig, and A. Rowland, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 166-167.

<sup>110</sup> Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video*, 212.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Breaking the “fourth wall” comes from the discipline of theatre scholarship in which the wall is “a transparent one through which the audience voyeuristically looks. The characters are not aware of the audience and, thus, make no direct statements to them.” The wall could be broken down by blurring the separation between the audience and the play. The theory is applicable to film and television studies as well. In Sivan’s video breaking the fourth wall happens as well; Philip J. Auster and Donald M. Davis, “When Characters Speak Directly to Viewers: Breaking the Fourth Wall in Television,” *Journalism Quarterly* 68, no. 1/2 (Spring/Summer 1991): 165.

<sup>113</sup> Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video*, 212.

random beach guests, looking straight into the camera, creates a sense of fantasy through the reduced distance and the breaking of the fourth wall (see appendix 2: 2:05 and 2:10).<sup>114</sup> This phenomenon is called the *fantastical gap*, introduced by Robynn Stilwell. It denotes the liminal space between diegetic (being part of the narrative) and non-diegetic (not being part of the narrative) in film theory.<sup>115</sup> This space creates a sense of unreality that “obtains as we leap from one solid edge toward another at some unknown distance.”<sup>116</sup> In film theory, the gap can indicate a dream or flashback creating the idea of being in someone’s mind. In this scene it indicates desire—for instance, in the form of a day dream—because the scene could be seen as partially inside Sivan’s head (portraying his fantasies and desires), partially in the actual world: he fantasises about the bartender while sitting on the beach staring at him (see appendix 2: 0:58).<sup>117</sup> Additionally, Sivan’s electronically doubled voices creates a sense of a choir singing.<sup>118</sup> The fact that the “choir” exists out of Sivan’s voice only strengthens the idea of internal desire and fantasy (see appendix 2: 1:05, 1:40, 1:52, 2:09, 2:10, 2:19, and 3:41).

### **The Role of Gaze**

Partial nudity is a fundamental part of the beach experience.<sup>119</sup> When visiting the beach, it is almost impossible not to watch. However, the gaze also functions the other way around, causing a constant consciousness of being watched. When looking at (audio)visual media, this consciousness is gone, and the viewer easily objectifies the characters in the video. All analysed videos in this chapter take place on the beach, where gazing plays a significant role due to partial nudity. Mulvey’s notion of “male gaze” pinpoints voyeurism, fetishism, and seeing the female body as object of male pleasure.<sup>120</sup> Since music videos present a commercialised package of a celebrity, they often use stereotypical elements.<sup>121</sup> Music video, used to be criticised by feminist scholars for its limited and regressive representation that caused an overly sexualised image of women.<sup>122</sup> However, limited and stereotypical representations of gender and sexuality are counterpointed more and more.<sup>123</sup> In “Lucky Strike,” the gaze is mostly on the male body. Richard Dyer calls the eroticisation of the male body the “female gaze,” assuming a heterosexual

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<sup>114</sup> The random aspect of this scene strengthens the idea of a fantastical gap.

<sup>115</sup> Although in music videos diegesis works differently compared to film scores, which are mostly nondiegetic, I apply the theory of diegesis here in order to elucidate Sivan’s music video; Robynn J Stilwell, “The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic,” in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, ed. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard D. Leppert (Oakland: University of California Press, 2007), 187.

<sup>116</sup> Stilwell, “The Fantastical Gap,” 187.

<sup>117</sup> Stormer, “Performance of Queerness,” 5.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> And there are only a few other public settings where nakedness is as socially accepted; Pau Obrador-Pons, “A Haptic Geography of the Beach: Naked Bodies Vision and Touch,” *Social & Cultural* 8, no. 1 (2007): 123.

<sup>120</sup> Snow, “Theorizing the Male Gaze,” 30; Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” 346-347.

<sup>121</sup> For example, when the celebrity is a woman, this package often contains a commercialised and exaggerated femininity. Normativity is important here because of the commercial aspect. Traditionally, normativity is more commercially interesting; Railton and Watson, “Situating Music Video,” 17.

<sup>122</sup> Gina Arnold, Daniel Cookney, Kristy Fairclough, and Michael Goddard, *Music/Video: Histories, Aesthetics, Media* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 6.

<sup>123</sup> Arnold, et al. *Music/Video*, 6.

eroticisation.<sup>124</sup> Steve Neale adds a homoerotic component by calling it the gay male gaze, in which the so-called gym-body of gay culture uses its muscles to appeal to someone else's desire.<sup>125</sup>

In "Lucky Strike," the male body is watched extensively (see appendix 4: 1:14, 2:10 and 2:19) and Sivan is constantly looking at the bartender's body. According to Mulvey it is conventional for the male gaze to have "cut-outs" of a female body part.<sup>126</sup> In "Lucky Strike," cut-outs of the bartender's body are found as well (see appendix 4: 1:14, 1:40, and 1:45). The portrayal of naked men is comparable to Madonna's "Cherish," in which swimming mermen are objectified by the camera's focus on their naked bodies, filming them with a slow-motion effect. There is a sense of a gay male or female gaze instead of a heteronormative male gaze because of the objectification of men embedded in the overall theme of the video.<sup>127</sup> The same goes for Sivan's video in which the camera films the half-naked body of the bartender as if through Sivan's own eyes (see appendix 2: 0:41, 1:14, 1:40, and 1:45).<sup>128</sup> Klaus Rieser points out that men can be the object of gaze, which is seen as a feminine characteristic of those men, increasing the queerness of these videos.<sup>129</sup>

The gaze in "Domino Dancing" works both ways causing a sense of ambiguity with regards to queerness. At the beginning of the clip two Latino boys are sitting under a tree. They are bare-chested while all the other people that are visible wear clothes. This strengthens the idea of Otherness, queerness, and the gay male or female gaze. However, the girl is continuously watched by the boys, invalidating these notions. In the last shot of the video we see a close up of a man's face wearing sunglasses. In the reflection we see the boys standing together near a fire. The fact that the boys are being watched by a man strengthens the idea of homosexuality, but the indirect way of filming them makes it ambiguous.

An important difference between the 1980s videos and Sivan's video is the muteness of the boys in "Domino Dancing" and the mermen in "Cherish" versus the communication with the bartender in "Lucky Strike." Sivan's video allows the gay character to communicate through the use of subtitles (see appendix 2: 1:26), whereas the mermen are not allowed to speak as "a matter of will or nature," since "their silent presence (...) becomes integral in the video."<sup>130</sup> Vernallis states that the muteness of the

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<sup>124</sup> Richard Dyer, "Don't Look Now," *Screen* 23, no. 3-4 (Fall 1982): 61-73.

<sup>125</sup> Wray adds that the gaze functions differently in the daily lives of queer people: "we judge the backward glance over our shoulders to see if the boy we just passed is looking too, or watch each other through the reflections in shopfronts. Rather than resisting the eeriness of the world of objects looking back at us through the gaze we are always conscious of being watched (...)," Caroline Evans and Lorraine Gamman, "The Gaze Revisited, or Reviewing Queer Viewing," in *A Queer Romance: Lesbians, Gay Men and Popular Culture*, ed. Paul Burston and Colin Richardson (London: Routledge, 2005), 31; Wray, "The Queer Gaze," 70.

<sup>126</sup> Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 347.

<sup>127</sup> It is of course risky to switch the male gaze around to homosexual or female gaze. However, I think it is appropriate here because of the queer theme and the obvious lack of traditional heteronormative male gaze in "Cherish" (and also in "Lucky Strike").

<sup>128</sup> Stormer, "Performance of Queerness," 7.

<sup>129</sup> Since heterosexual men are not commonly portrayed as such; Klaus Rieser, "Feminized Men or Non-Hegemonic Masculinity?," in *Masculinities – Maskulinitäten*, ed. Therese Steffen (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2002), 77.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid; Vernallis, "The Aesthetics of Music Video," 179.

mermen is also part of the convention of background figures in music videos.<sup>131</sup> But Sivan seems to break with this convention by giving the background character space to communicate via subtitles (see appendix 2: 1:26).<sup>132</sup> Carla Freccero points out that “subtitles permit voyeurism, but reject voyeuristic mastery by the viewer.”<sup>133</sup> Therefore, the already broken mastery perspective in the music video as a medium is strengthened by the use of subtitles in “Lucky Strike.” Moreover, subtitles are meant to make what is foreign, comprehensible.<sup>134</sup> In other words, the usually objectified and muted gay character gets a voice.

## Conclusion

Comparing the Pet Shop Boys’ “Domino Dancing” and Madonna’s “Cherish,” to Sivan’s video of “Lucky Strike,” I show that a lot has changed compared to the 1980s. Like Sivan, the Pet Shop Boys and Madonna touch upon the topic of homosexuality, but the 1980s music videos do this more cautiously and implicitly. Both the Pet Shop Boys and Madonna mute the gay characters in their videos completely, aggravating the gay experience of oppression. Musically, Sivan builds on a queer synthesize tradition as shown in the comparison to “Domino Dancing.” Although the beach should not necessarily be seen as a queer space, the fact that the idea of desire is strengthened by the notions of nudity and gaze contributes to the queerness of the videos.

Concluding, Sivan challenges heteronormativity by portraying homosexuality explicitly as standard in his music videos. Sivan can be explicit by using conformance between images and sound. The usage of synthesizers and absence of the electric guitar in Sivan’s music is a rather ambiguous reference to queer culture. By using a queer version of the gaze and giving the character, upon which the gaze is applied a voice, Sivan is able to destabilise normativity. Applying visual homosexual content, creates a more explicit portrayal of queerness.

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<sup>131</sup> Vernallis, “The Aesthetics of Music Video,” 179.

<sup>132</sup> Stormer, “Performance of Queerness,” 8.

<sup>133</sup> Carla Freccero, “Our Lady of MTV: Madonna’s ‘Like a Prayer.’” *Boundary 2* 19, no. 2 (Summer, 1992): 173.

<sup>134</sup> Freccero, “Our Lady of MTV,” 173.

### 3. Queering Differently: Troye Sivan’s “Bloom” and Sam Smith’s “How Do You Sleep?”

In this chapter I compare Sivan’s music video “Bloom” and Sam Smith’s music video “How Do You Sleep?” on the basis of an audio-visual cue-based analysis.<sup>135</sup> First, I discuss the notion of masculinity and femininity in “Bloom.”<sup>136</sup> Then, I discuss “vogue” and issues of gender in “How Do You Sleep?,” in order to compare the performance of queerness in both videos. Musical and visual parameters contribute to a queer message in these videos, in which masculinity and femininity play an important role. Comparing these videos shows how the medium of the music video is employed differently by Smith and Sivan with regards to expressions of sexuality and queerness. Both Smith and Sivan manage to incorporate matters of gay culture into mainstream popular music by explicitly communicating queerness. The guiding questions are: what musical, visual, and historical elements contribute to a queer message in Sivan’s “Bloom” and Smith’s “How Do You Sleep?”? What role do masculinity and femininity play here?

#### Queer Masculinity

It is important to take the notion of masculinity into account here, because of its divergent portrayals of it in the videos that I investigate.<sup>137</sup> The social construct of masculinity suggests power, privilege, and shows who has power in a patriarchal society.<sup>138</sup> However, many other lines of identification cross masculinity, decreasing its power due to class, race, gender, and sexuality.<sup>139</sup> According to Connell and Messerschmidt, the idea of a hierarchy of masculinities causes prejudice, homophobia, and violence from heterosexual men towards homosexual men.<sup>140</sup> Connell adds to this that, although in reality no man suffices to the idea of hegemonic masculinity, the gay man attains a subordinate position in relation to the heterosexual man because of a deviation of the norm.<sup>141</sup> Hegemonic masculinity is the socially

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<sup>135</sup> I incorporate Sivan’s “Bloom” here, instead of building on the analysis of “Lucky Strike” because the “Bloom” video brings interesting new perspectives to this research with regards to masculinity and femininity that play an important role in Smith’s video as well; “Troye Sivan – Bloom,” YouTube, published on 6 June 2018, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41PTANtZFW0>; “Sam Smith – How Do You Sleep? (Official Video),” YouTube, published on 19 July 2019, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmYypVozQb4>.

<sup>136</sup> When I write about masculine and feminine, I refer to what western society traditionally labels as masculine or feminine.

<sup>137</sup> People can have various levels of masculine and feminine traits that lead to masculine, feminine, and androgynous (high on both types) individuals; Aaron J. Blashill and Kimberly K. Powlishta, “Gay Stereotypes: The Use of Sexual Orientation as a Cue for Gender-Related Attributes,” *Sex Roles* 61, no. 11 (December 2009): 784.

<sup>138</sup> I refer to Halberstam with Jack/Judith in this footnote because Halberstam published “Female Masculinity” as a woman (Judith), but now he identifies as trans-man and changed his name to Jack; Buikema, et al., *Handboek Genderstudies*, 170; Jack/Judith Halberstam, “Female Masculinity,” in *Literary Theory Second Edition*, ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 936.

<sup>139</sup> Halberstam, “Female Masculinity,” 936.

<sup>140</sup> Raewyn Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender & Society* 19, no. 6 (December 2005): 831.

<sup>141</sup> Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 71.

dominant and culturally idealised form of masculinity; the masculinity that has the most authority and social power on a certain place and on a certain moment.<sup>142</sup> Hegemonic masculinity plays an important role in homophobic behaviour which is what the videos that I discuss try to deconstruct. I study the portrayal of masculinity and male femininity in Sivan's music video "Bloom" and make a comparison with the performance of Smith in "How Do You Sleep?" at the end of this chapter investigating how masculinity and femininity are performed in these videos.<sup>143</sup>

Rieser studies non-normative masculinity on movie screens and points out that non-normative men are often seen as feminized, soft, hysterical, and childish.<sup>144</sup> Rieser asks: "is femininity always the property of a powerless object?" I oppose this. In examples such as Madonna's "Girl Gone Wild" and Smith's "How Do You Sleep?," feminine men are portrayed as strong rather than powerless, by confidently dancing on high heels and gazing straight into the camera.<sup>145</sup> The appropriate word to describe such actions is "fierceness." In gay culture the word "fierce" has a specific connotation with regards to "anything of exceptional quality (...) or awesome as in 'Oh my gosh, the party was fierce.'"<sup>146</sup> Rieser observes femininity as something weak or bad, while in the case studies of this thesis, femininity is portrayed as fierce. I argue that this fierceness, makes the notion of queerness more explicit in the videos, which is empowering for the queer community.

Judith Butler states that gender is performative "that is, constituting the identity it is purposed to be," and that "[t]here is no expression of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results."<sup>147</sup> This means that the normative feminine and masculine gender identities that Rieser addresses are only a performative expression of gender convention. Wallis reveals that in the realm of music videos, "women are still depicted as more fragile and thus in need of the protection of men."<sup>148</sup> Masculine men are valued more than feminine men. Feminine men are represented as failed.<sup>149</sup>

Marc LaFrance investigates masculinity in P!nk's "Please Don't Leave Me" video, which illustrates normative display of masculinity and femininity.<sup>150</sup> In the video, P!nk appropriates phallic symbols, that are linked to her boyfriend's masculinity, agency, and autonomy.<sup>151</sup> Stereotypical ideals

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<sup>142</sup> Buikema, et al., *Handboek Genderstudies*, 170, 395.

<sup>143</sup> With male femininity, I refer to expressions that are traditionally seen as feminine and that are performed by a person that identifies as male (in this case Troye Sivan performing an androgynous character by wearing traditionally female clothes and make-up).

<sup>144</sup> Rieser, "Feminized Men or Non-Hegemonic Masculinity?," 77.

<sup>145</sup> I elaborate on these examples below.

<sup>146</sup> Diana Rowan, Dennis D. Long, and Darrin Johnson, "Identity and Self-Presentation in the House/Ball Culture: A Primer for Social Workers," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 25, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 184.

<sup>147</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 34.

<sup>148</sup> Wallis, "Performing Gender," 168.

<sup>149</sup> Burns and Hawkins, *The Bloomsbury*, 397.

<sup>150</sup> Burns and Hawkins, *The Bloomsbury*, 399-422; "P!nk – Please Don't Leave Me (Main Version)," YouTube, published on 25 October 2009, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eocCPDxKq1o>.

<sup>151</sup> Masculinity is portrayed in the video as something powerful; Burns and Hawkins, *The Bloomsbury*, 387.

of masculinity are characterised by bravery, invulnerability, strength, and stoicism.<sup>152</sup> Smith does the opposite in their video: female characteristics are appropriated by the dancers and Smith themselves (see appendix 5: 0:54 and 0:56).<sup>153</sup> Feminine traits are valued instead of mocked: bravery, invulnerability, strength, and stoicism are appropriated by feminine “men” in order to create a sense of empowerment by being fierce.

### **Handling Masculinity as a Queer Artist**

The social construction of masculinity is an important aspect to consider when discussing queerness. Dominant groups in societies (such as masculine, heterosexual, white men) define what the suitable behaviours are for a specific gender, and that “subordination and marginalization of those who violate these norms are used to sustain the constructs.”<sup>154</sup> The masculinity ideology dictates a set of rules that include not to be feminine, show fear, emotions in general, and affection towards other men.<sup>155</sup> Gay men fail to follow these rules by definition. The ideology excludes gay men for violating the criteria.<sup>156</sup> The rules indicate that it is harder for a gay man to gain a dominant position. However, a gay man can be dominant in relation to another gay male.<sup>157</sup> The trait masculinity is generally preferred over femininity in western society, which may result in oppressive effects towards more feminine gay men.<sup>158</sup> These power relations play an important role in gay culture.

In “Bloom,” Sivan portrays himself outspokenly feminine by wearing heavy make-up, colourful clothes, and wigs (see appendix 4: 0:19, 0:27, 0:29, and 0:51).<sup>159</sup> In addition, his juvenile appearance creates a more feminine image, because, according to Rieser, youthfulness indicates an immaturity which is perceived as feminine.<sup>160</sup> The other character in the video is a man whose muscular appearance and stoic movements would, in western society, be perceived as masculine (see appendix 4: 0:54, 1:28, 1:29, 1:31, and 1:36). Although the man is more masculine than Sivan, he is also more feminine than the stereotypical heterosexual man. Not only does he move his hands gracefully and wears a pink, feather wig (see appendix 4: 1:07, 1:29, and 2:00), the viewer gazing upon him effeminates him yet more. The viewer only sees parts of his naked body, and his face is never filmed (see appendix 4: 0:54, 1:07, 1:15, 1:28, 1:29, 1:31, 1:36, 2:00, and 2:14).<sup>161</sup> Although the feminine Sivan is being gazed upon by the viewer (for instance when his lips are filmed close up, see appendix 4: 0:19 and 0:29), the gaze is much more

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<sup>152</sup> Moreover, the feminine is traditionally seen as less powerful and vulnerable in western society. Because of this role in society, men that have feminine traits are traditionally seen as weaker than masculine men; Burns and Hawkins, *The Bloomsbury*, 388.

<sup>153</sup> Their elegant movements could be seen as traditionally feminine.

<sup>154</sup> Francisco J. Sánchez, Stefanie T. Greenberg, William Ming Liu and Eric Vilain, “Reported Effects of Masculine Ideals on Gay Men,” *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 10, no. 1 (2009): 73-74.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>157</sup> Stormer, “Performance of Queerness,” 3.

<sup>158</sup> Sánchez, et al., “Reported Effects,” 74-75, 83.

<sup>159</sup> Feminine in the sense of what society traditionally views to be feminine traits.

<sup>160</sup> Rieser, “Feminized Men or Non-Hegemonic Masculinity?,” 78.

<sup>161</sup> The images of his body have a framework around it all the time making the gaze upon him even stronger.

upon the other character, which objectifies him more than Sivan. Rieser points out that men who are objectified by the gaze, are seen as more feminine.<sup>162</sup> The notion of gaze could be linked to hegemonic masculinity. The muscular man, of whose body the viewer only sees parts, is more masculine than Sivan. However, he is still effeminised by means of the gaze, placing him in the unmarked position of hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, Sivan seems to be the one that is gazing when he is standing behind the slats looking into the camera; at one point he opens the slats with his fingers to be able to look through them (see appendix 4: 1:49, 1:54, 1:56, 2:01, and 2:03). By turning around the gaze, the feminine character has the power to gaze upon the masculine character, which is remarkable with regards to hegemonic masculinity. Turning around the gaze strengthens the queerness of the video, making it more explicit.

Several fan theories point out that Sivan's song is a "bottoming anthem" or an "ode to bottoming."<sup>163</sup> As explained above, a homosexual man can never be dominant according to hegemonic masculinity. He can, however, have a dominant position in relation with another gay man by being more masculine than the other.<sup>164</sup> In the sexual act of a homosexual couple, the top is, stereotypically, dominant over the bottom. The top is therefore associated with masculinity and the bottom with femininity.<sup>165</sup> According to fan theories, the lyrics of "Bloom" are about someone's first passive sexual intimacy experience. The lyrics "Take a trip into my garden, the fountains and the waters are begging just to know ya," would indicate penetration and "Baby, I've been saving this for you" indicates that the song is about losing virginity. However, Sivan denies these claims, tweeting that "it's about flowers" and that "[t]he word [bloom] means so much to me. Feels like I've done so much growing up and growing into myself and growing into love and life and I feel like it just summed all that up."<sup>166</sup> The feminine portrayal of Sivan strengthens the expectation of the fans that the song is about bottoming. Although the expression of homosexual sex is rather implicit, the feminine man is celebrated in this video, creating a rather explicit queer appearance.

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<sup>162</sup> Rieser, "Feminized Men or Non-Hegemonic Masculinity?," 77.

<sup>163</sup> Chris Mench, "Troye Sivan's 'Bloom' Is A Metaphor-Filled Ode To Bottoming," published on 4 May 2018, last accessed on 3 November 2019, <https://genius.com/a/troye-sivan-s-bloom-is-a-metaphor-filled-ode-to-bottoming>; Pier Dominguez, "Troye Sivan's New Era (And Bottoming Anthem) Are What Pop Needs," published on 13 September 2018, last accessed on 3 November 2019, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/pdominguez/troye-sivan-bloom-new-era-pop-star-queer-bottom-anthem>; André-Naquian Wheeler, "Listen To 'Bloom,' Troye Sivan's Queer Anthem About Bottoming," published on 3 May 2018, last accessed on 3 November 2019, [https://i-d.vice.com/en\\_us/article/zmgpk9/listen-to-bloom-troye-sivans-queer-anthem-about-bottoming](https://i-d.vice.com/en_us/article/zmgpk9/listen-to-bloom-troye-sivans-queer-anthem-about-bottoming).

<sup>164</sup> Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities*, 71.

<sup>165</sup> Which is seen in gay culture as a very toxic categorisation.

<sup>166</sup> Troye Sivan (@troyesivan), "it's about flowers," Twitter, 30 April 2018, <https://twitter.com/troyesivan/status/990986600988393472>; Troye Sivan (@troyesivan), "The word means so much to me. Feels like I've done so much growing up and growing into myself and growing into love and life and i feel like it just summed all that up," Twitter, 11 May 2018, [https://twitter.com/troyesivan/status/994760337642541056?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E994760337642541056&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fgenius.com%2Fannotations%2F14474071%2Fstandalone\\_embed%3Fsimple%3Dtrue](https://twitter.com/troyesivan/status/994760337642541056?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E994760337642541056&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fgenius.com%2Fannotations%2F14474071%2Fstandalone_embed%3Fsimple%3Dtrue).



Wallis points out that when female characters touch themselves in a sexual way, they become sexual objects, ready to be consumed by men.<sup>167</sup> Sivan and the masculine character in “Bloom” touching themselves (see appendix 4: 0:51, 1:06, 1:11, 1:29, and 2:10) seems to enforce the idea of sexual objectification. To strengthen this objectification, Sivan stands in the garden in the second refrain, leaning back and holding a flower at crotch height playing with it (see appendix 4: 2:14). When Sivan sits in the chair, leaning back, he suddenly humps up and falls down again creating a very sexual movement (see appendix 4: 1:30). Portraying the characters as sexual objects, convincingly indicates their sexual queerness.

The music of “Bloom” can be interpreted as sexual, but not homosexual or queer per se.<sup>168</sup> Sivan sings with a very breathy voice, adding an intimate feeling to the song. The song starts with Sivan’s voice only on the upbeat (see appendix 4: 0:19). A bass drum kicks in on the first beat and a tom drum on the after beat. Other instruments are not introduced until the fifth measure (see appendix 4: 0:44). The fact that Sivan’s voice is not accompanied by melodic instruments, suggests an idea of secrecy or a private space. In addition, the lyrics “Take a trip into my garden, I’ve got so much to show ya,” (see appendix 4: 0:19) strengthen the idea that Sivan sings a private message to the listener. The lyrics “Baby, I’ve been saving this for you, baby” are doubled by a breathy and echoing voice of Sivan (see appendix 4: 0:30). The almost moaning second voice creates a sexual effect. When Sivan sings the lyrics “I need you to” the moaning is even heavier (see appendix 4: 0:51) making the sexual connotation stronger. In the refrain, Sivan breaths heavy after almost every word:

“I bloom” / breath / “I” / breath / “bloom” / breath / “just for you”  
(see appendix 4: 1:06, 1:08, 1:09, and 1:10)

The heavy breathing between every word could be heard as moaning during the sexual act. In the bridge, Sivan’s voice is distorted, making it lower and deeper, singing the same lyrics as in the refrain (“I bloom, just for you”) (see appendix 4: 2:42). The words are spoken rather than sung and the beat (in the drums and bass) is gone, creating a moment of musical relaxation (see appendix 4: 2:42 and 2:59). The accompanying instruments indicate a sense of breathing here as well, playing swelling notes. After the bridge, a bass drum starts to play on every beat and synthesizers play a crescendo accompanying the lyrics “baby, baby, I’ve been saving this for you, baby” creating a build-up (see appendix 4: 3:03). A second voice (of Sivan as well) sings the lyrics “I’ve been saving this for you” but higher and echoed (see appendix 4: 3:03). After a rising glissando in the synthesizers, the refrain kicks in again, creating a musical climax (see appendix 4: 3:03). Due to the private spheres of the video and the sexual aspects

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<sup>167</sup> Cara Wallis, “Performing Gender,” 168.

<sup>168</sup> This is contrasting to Sivan’s “Lucky Strike,” in which the music contains a queer message due to the notion of conformance, as explained in chapter 2. In “Lucky Strike,” the music validates the lyrics, sung by a male voice, that are about the love and desire for a man, indicating homosexual love.

ascribed above, this musical climax could be perceived as a pastiche of a sexual climax. However, all these sexual elements are not homosexual in essence and could indicate any sexuality. It is the visual aspect of this video applied to the audio that creates a queer message. The images alone would communicate a sense of androgyny due to the effeminate facets, but not explicitly of homoeroticism. The highly sexualised moaning character of Sivan's voice accompanying the images achieves exactly this explicit homoeroticism. The combination of auditory and visual aspects of "Bloom" fits within Cook's category of *complementation*.<sup>169</sup> It is this combination that makes the notion of queerness explicit.

### Vogue as Historically Collective Identity

Smith's music video "How Do You Sleep?" contains elements of voguing. In order to understand vogue in Smith's video, it is necessary to understand how vogue became a part of gay culture, in which ball culture cannot be overlooked since this is where voguing originates.<sup>170</sup> In the 1920s, balls were an important part of gay culture (especially in New York). Due to the double life homosexuals had to live and the disrespect of (American) society, they created a subculture in order to form a collective identity.<sup>171</sup> Balls have a specific organisation in Houses, consisting of groups of young urban gays (mostly of colour, called children or kids) who are often rejected by their own families and live on the streets. They compete in balls in different categories, one of which is vogue.<sup>172</sup> The basic voguing imitates the posing of runway fashion models, but other dance styles are incorporated as well.<sup>173</sup> Vogue is a "nice, polite *fuck you* to the people in charge" and it is both an "ally and critic of hegemonic ideals," because vogue imitates superstars as a mockery against, but also as glorification of standardised western beauty ideals, sexuality, and class.<sup>174</sup> An improvised duet between the DJ and MC, announcing

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<sup>169</sup> Cook's notion of *complementation* refers to "the 'separate spheres' model of gender relations that was current in the nineteenth century: the difference between the constituent media of an IMM is recognized—but at the same time the conflict between them that characterized the contest model is avoided because each is assigned a separate role;" Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, 103-104.

<sup>170</sup> Jennie Livingston's documentary film *Paris is Burning* is an important source that brought 1990s ball culture out of the underground. Unfortunately, although the intersectional aspect of ball culture (elements of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status play an important role here) is very interesting, I only focus on the aspects of gender and sexual orientation due to this thesis' scope; Jennie Livingston, *Paris is Burning*, 1990; Tara Susman, "The Vogue of Life," 124.

<sup>171</sup> Ball culture could be seen as a subculture due to its tension between the heteronormative world and the balls; George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 286-291; Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London, New York: Routledge, 1979), 2-3.

<sup>172</sup> Competition in these categories takes place in different gender categories: women (people that are biological women regardless their sexual preference), butches (lesbian women that look like men), butch queens (gay men who look like men), and femme queens (people who are born as male but live as women). "Despite social mixing, a child is strictly required to compete within her gender category" The feminine pronoun is most suited here because of its use to describe all of the gender divisions; Susman, "The Vogue of Life," 118-119.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>174</sup> Susman, "The Vogue of Life," 125-126; Constantine Chatzipapatheodoridis, "Strike a Pose, Forever: The Legacy of Vogue and its Re-contextualization in Contemporary Camp Performance," *European Journal of American Studies* [Online] (2017): 1.

categories and giving opinionated, often humorous, commentary about the contestants, structures the balls keeping the tempo up and the crowd energised.<sup>175</sup> The opinionizing quality of the balls ensures that the contestants are encouraged to be fierce, looking self-assured, almost arrogantly towards the judges, their counterparts, and the crowd. Voguers skilfully battle improvising from a “broad vocabulary” of movements, making quick choices with regards to when and where particular movements should be performed.<sup>176</sup> Tara Susman compares voguing to the self-defensive dance form capoeira that was created during African enslavement in Brazil and states that vogue originates from African-American practice: the “Africanist struggle” is an important feature of vogue.<sup>177</sup>

Commercialisation of vogue began with Madonna’s “Vogue,” in which she vogues together with three men in suits.<sup>178</sup> This commercialisation was expanded by Madonna in “Girl Gone Wild,” which also contains vogue and is highly homoerotic, with naked men erotically touching each other.<sup>179</sup> Smith uses vogue in a comparable way as in “Girl Gone Wild,” performing a choreographed performance that includes elements of vogue. Both Madonna and Smith are white artists. Using vogue in their videos, therefore, inherently causes cultural appropriation, due to its African-American roots.<sup>180</sup> Appropriating vogue and decontextualizing it from its subculture, they are taking possession without having the authority.<sup>181</sup> However, by using elements of vogue in their videos, and with that, implement it in popular culture, Madonna and Smith attempt to normalise queerness. Halberstam argues that “mainstream culture (...) should be defined as the process by which subcultures are *both* recognized and absorbed” and that “most of the interest directed by the mainstream media at subcultures is voyeuristic and predatory.”<sup>182</sup> Incorporating queer culture in mainstream media, it can become recognized. Although using elements of vogue as white popstars could be seen as cultural appropriation, they are both having

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<sup>175</sup> Susman, “The Vogue of Life,” 120-124.

<sup>176</sup> The term battle is used here because voguing contests recall its substitution for fights; Ibid., 124.

<sup>177</sup> However, “it would be wrong to claim that all of the participants in the Balls identify with an Africanist struggle,” because other ethnic groups are often present as well. Ethnicity plays an important role in ball culture, but unfortunately, due to the scope of this research, I do not give the amount of attention to this element as it deserves, because this research focuses on queerness rather than ethnicity; Ibid., 124-125.

<sup>178</sup> One of which is one of the most important vogue choreographers; Jennie Livingston, *Paris is Burning*, 1990; “Madonna – Vogue (Official Music Video),” YouTube, published on 26 October 2009, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuJQSAiODqI>.

<sup>179</sup> Bare-chested men, of different ethnicities, dance a choreographed performance, using elements of vogue, wearing high heels. The fact that the routine is choreographed is unusual in vogue. Madonna seems to refer to the dancers with feminine pronoun which is rather typical for vogue; Susman, “The Vogue of Life,” 118-119, 124;

“Madonna – Girl Gone Wild (Official Music Video),” YouTube, published on 21 March 2012, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYkwziTrv5o>.

<sup>180</sup> “Cultural appropriation, defined broadly as the use of a culture’s symbols, artefacts, genres, rituals, or technologies by members of another culture (...). It is involved in the assimilation and exploitation of marginalized and colonized cultures and in the survival of subordinated cultures and their resistance to dominant cultures.” However, Madonna hired members of the House of Xtravaganza, one of the biggest and most valued houses of ball culture to assist her in a tour; Richard A. Rogers, “From Cultural Exchange to Transculturation: A Review and Reconceptualization of Cultural Appropriation,” *Communication Theory* 16, no. 4 (Fall 2006): 474; Chatzipapathodoridis, “Strike a Pose,” 1-5.

<sup>181</sup> Rogers, “From Cultural Exchange to Transculturation,” 475.

<sup>182</sup> Emphasis original; Chatzipapathodoridis, “Strike a Pose,” 3.

dancers in their music videos of several ethnicities. Additionally, both artists are part of queer culture—Smith due to identifying as non-binary and Madonna as an ally—and they both incorporate anti-normative gender expression.<sup>183</sup> The multiplicity and intersectionality of vogue contribute to the problematisation of appropriation and it is important to be aware of the privileged position of the artists.

### Vogue as Reference to Gay Culture

In Sam Smith's "How Do You Sleep?," voguing plays an important role in making explicit that the song is about gay culture. Several components of voguing come to the surface in Smith's video. First, fashion is of great importance in the ball culture. The name of "vogue" originates from poses of models in *Vogue Magazine* and Houses are often named after famous fashion designers.<sup>184</sup> Moreover, balls are comparable to fashion shows, with a runway on which contestants perform their walks, although instead of selling the fashion, the model has become the main subject in ball culture.<sup>185</sup> Their clothes must fit their body movements and match with their expression of identity.<sup>186</sup> The dancers in Smith's clip wear waist height sweatpants and are bare chested (see appendix 5: 0:30). This strengthens the feminine movements of their upper body and hip, but their bare chests also emphasise their masculinity.<sup>187</sup> Mostly, clothing in ball culture is extravagant with big dresses and overdone outfits. In videos of vogue contests on YouTube, contestants move femininely and wear extravagant outfits that have tight tops, which emphasizes the male upper bodies of the butch queens.<sup>188</sup> According to Susman, the men in ball culture define themselves against the mainstream trend of "more simple, coarse, unchangeable, and somber," with "remarkable and fantastic modes of dressing."<sup>189</sup> Looks and movements are strongly connected in voguing because "[t]he ability to change oneself by shaping one's looks and one's movements may be one of the few options to assert power."<sup>190</sup> Moreover, "[f]ashion allows the children to develop their individuality."<sup>191</sup> In Smith's and Madonna's videos, the artists and the dancers are dressed in simple black outfits (see appendix 5: 0:30) creating a sense of uniformity. The stress on individuality seems to be vanished in the interest of the focus being on the singer rather than the backing dancers. The men

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<sup>183</sup> Madonna only incorporates anti-normative gender expression in her video "Girl Gone Wild." In "Vogue," the men are portrayed as men in their appearance. "[A]n ally is someone who advocates and works to address issues involving human and civil rights. Allies' awareness of social issues and their capacity to understand human needs compel them to contribute to positive social change;" Alicia Anne Lapointe, "Standing 'Straight' Up to Homophobia: Straight Allies' Involvement in GSAs," *Journal of LGBT Youth* 12, no. 2 (2015): 148.

<sup>184</sup> Zoi Arvanitidou, "Fashion, Dressing, and Identities in Ballroom Subculture," *Journal of International Cooperation and Development* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 41; Rowan, et al., "Identity and Self-Presentation," 182.

<sup>185</sup> Arvanitidou, "Fashion, Dressing, and Identities," 47.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. 47-48.

<sup>187</sup> Because of the lack of breasts that is explicitly shown.

<sup>188</sup> "Bq Vogue Fem @ Latex Ball 2019 Part 1," YouTube, published on 23 June 2019, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ydTfwnNScM>; "BUTCH QUEEN VOGUE FEM at The Revolution of Colors Ball," YouTube, published on 27 March 2019, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkroAKHJw5E&t=751s>.

<sup>189</sup> Susman, "The Vogue of Life," 121.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>191</sup> The word "children" refers to members of the ball community: "A House typically consists of a *mother*, *father*, and *kids*. Emphasis original; Ibid. 118; 134.

being bare-chested, in combination with their queer behaviour, not only brings a sense of homoeroticism to the clips, but also strengthens the idea of androgyny: both their masculine characteristics (the lack of having breasts) and feminine characteristics (their elegant movements) are plainly shown.<sup>192</sup>

The dancers in Smith's video would, in ball culture, be part of the butch queen category, because they are "men who look like men."<sup>193</sup> The style that is performed in Smith's video is comparable to the "old way vogue," in which contestants slowly strike pose after pose like models in a fashion show.<sup>194</sup> "Butch queen vogue femme" is an evolution of old way voguing compared with elements of new way.<sup>195</sup> Sometimes the dancers in "How Do You Sleep?" perform a choreography that is obviously rehearsed and therefore, in contrast to voguing in ball culture, not improvised.<sup>196</sup> However, at other moments, the movements are less stylised, making the idea of improvisation more convincing (see appendix 5: 1:19 up to and including 1:28). During the legato parts in the music in the beginning of the song, the dancers' movements are more legato as well (see appendix 5: 0:54 and 1:00). When the music becomes more staccato in the pre-chorus, the movements of the dancers are as staccato as the music, with a pose on every beat (see appendix 5: 1:28). A continuous beat of eighths in the synths is accompanied by, or in Cook's terms conformed to, a staccato, syncopated rhythm on which the movements take place (see appendix 5: 1:28). The fact that staccato and legato parts in dance and music are alternated strengthens the emphasis on femininity and fierceness: in the legato parts, the dancers move elegantly (feminine); in the staccato parts, the dancers move resolute and determined. Musically, this alternation creates a sense of queer empowerment, strengthened by the alternation between traditionally masculine and feminine movements.

The section in which Smith looks and points into the camera while sitting on a chair (see appendix 5: 1:02), refers to the vogue contest "arms control," which is performed from the waist up with emphasise on the arms.<sup>197</sup> Dancers face each other while they sit on a chair while performing with their upper body only; their legs are not allowed to move. Smith refers to this contest, although their arm

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<sup>192</sup> Blashill and Powlishta, "Gay Stereotypes," 784.

<sup>193</sup> I intentionally do not use the word cisgender here. Susman describes the butch queen category as "gay men who usually look like men." Since I do not want to assume the dancers' gender identity (I do not know whether they identify as men or not). According to ball culture labels, they would be part of the gender category of butch queens. Additionally, this category is most likely to perform different kinds of vogue; Susman, "The Vogue of Life," 119, 125.

<sup>194</sup> "Old way vogue" distinguishes from "new way" by being more basic. New way vogue includes quick hand and arm movements, spins on the ground and elegant stretches. Specific gender categories perform specific types of vogue: "Femme queens vogue only straight Old Way of New Way (without stretch or gymnastics), women somewhere between Old Way and New Way (again fairly plain), butches rarely vogue at all (...), while butch queens have a range of styles." New way vogue contains elements of breakdance like gymnastic movements and "dramatic displacement of double-jointed shoulders, leg splits on the floor." Butch queen vogue femme is one of the most popular dances and it is often performed with "hyper-exaggerated effeminacy," in which male contestants perform small steps and dips, requiring attitude, star power, and glamour. Susman, "The Vogue of Life," 123-124.

<sup>195</sup> Rowan, et al., "Identity and Self-Representation," 186.

<sup>196</sup> Susman, "The Vogue of Life," 124.

<sup>197</sup> Looking straight into and pointing towards the camera, addressing the audience breaks the fourth wall, which is important with regards to the gaze and power structures, providing the performers with a certain power over the viewer by breaking with the viewer's mastery view; Susman, "The Vogue of Life," 125.

movements are a lot less virtuoso and their legs move more than usually performed. The viewer is put in the awkward position of being Smith's opponent in a voguing battle, especially when Smith and the dancers start looking straight into the camera; into the viewer's gaze, just before the pre-chorus (see appendix 5: 0:54 and 0:56). In addition, the dancers are fiercely striking poses behind and around Smith, intimidating the viewer (see appendix 5: 0:54 and 0:56). The gazing into the camera of Smith and the dancers gives a feeling of an invitation to be part of the message of the video. The viewer is invited to be part of the story that Smith is about to tell.

### **Smith's Gender Identity in Their Music Videos**

According to Stuart Hall, identities are "constantly in the process of change and transformation."<sup>198</sup> Smith's identity, and with that the performance of their identity, changed after coming out as non-binary on their Twitter account.<sup>199</sup> The music video of "How Do You Sleep?" could be interpreted as coming to terms with gender identity. Smith's announcement on Twitter was just two months after the premiere of the video. Hansen states that "Smith's music is (...) routinely interpreted as an expression of his real-life experiences and emotions," additionally, Smith stated that they recount actual relationships in their songs.<sup>200</sup> Therefore "How Do You Sleep?" could be interpreted as Smith's personal experience with coming to terms with their gender. In the making-of-video of "How Do You Sleep?," Smith states that "every single weird thing you see (...) is deeply, deeply personal to me."<sup>201</sup> The highly personal content, also means that some elements of it are hard to interpret as general phenomena, thus, the conclusions that I draw below are my interpretations of the video while some other striking aspects of the video are left out, because generalising conclusions about these aspects would be farfetched since they might relate to Smith's personal life rather than any general expression of queerness.

In the video, there is a portrayal of two "versions" of Smith. In the beginning of the video, Smith sits slumped down on a chair, wearing a white T-shirt and blue denim jeans that is being dragged away by a man (see appendix 5: 0:01, 0:40 and 0:46). This man is, I argue, a personification of contemporary Western society's patriarchy. A man and a woman's voice say: "He's alright, he's fine. Just get him dressed," and "I think he looks great" (see appendix 5: 0:01). Not only do these voices use the masculine pronoun that Smith two months later changed to "they/them," they also bluntly state that Smith, conforming to gender roles by wearing traditionally masculine clothes, "looks great," while Smith actually seems miserable, sitting slumped down and does not move or react to the man dragging them

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<sup>198</sup> Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), 1-7.

<sup>199</sup> Sam Smith (@samsmith), "Today is a good day so here goes. I've decided I am changing my pronouns to THEY/THEM <3 after a lifetime of being at war with my gender I've decided to embrace myself for who I am, inside and out..." Twitter, 13 September 2019, <https://twitter.com/samsmith/status/1172519872464662530>.

<sup>200</sup> Hansen uses the masculine pronoun here because the text was published before Smith came out as non-binary; Hansen, "(Re)Reading Pop Personae," 521.

<sup>201</sup> "Sam Smith – How Do You Sleep? (Behind The Scenes)," YouTube, published on 2 August 2019, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stGzY1-fTxg>.

away (see appendix 5: 0:01, 0:33, 0:40, 0:43, and 0:49). These elements of marginalising gender struggles are a critique of contemporary Western societal ignorance with regards to such struggles. Additionally, pre-chorus shots of Smith in a glass cage stress marginalisation especially (see appendix 5: 2:30 up to and including 2:36). Announced by a shot of a security camera, Smith is filmed in anti-cinematic lighting, by four of such cameras (see appendix 5: 2:33). These cameras reflect society's gaze upon queer gender identifications. Later in the video, Smith is dancing on a cage in which a life size puppet is sitting on a chair, wearing the exact same outfit that Smith was wearing before; white T-shirt and blue denim jeans (see appendix 5: 1:39). Capturing the puppet, that stands for Smith's former identity, and dancing on its cage, could be seen as prospecting Smith's coming out as non-binary. Smith dances on the cage, in which the puppet sits, being freed by society's normative gender roles (see appendix 5: 1:39). Musically, the change in the two versions of Smith is portrayed in timbre and pitch. In the beginning of the song, when Smith sits slumped down, the music includes a synthesizer melody in eighths, with some level of reverb, which in pop music is generally used when aiming to create a dream-like atmosphere (see appendix 5: 0:30).<sup>202</sup> Smith's voice is breathy and light. But when Smith wears their black, "effeminate" clothes, they suddenly start moving and singing much higher and clearer (see appendix 5: 0:30, 0:31 and 0:38).

## Conclusion

Both analysed videos fight normativity and communicate queerness, but they focus on different elements. Smith focusses on gender-normativity by historic references to gay culture. Sivan focusses on fighting heteronormativity by including abstract references. Often linked to agency and autonomy, masculinity plays an untraditional role in both videos. As I argued, Sivan destabilises heteronormativity by making homosexuality the standard in his music video. He achieves this by implying a romantic relationship between himself and a male character. The desire for homosexual love is expressed in both images and the lyrics, making the references less abstract. Comparing "Lucky Strike" with "Bloom," I conclude that notions of masculinity and femininity differ radically. "Lucky Strike" portrays a sense of masculine ideology, demanding a desire towards the masculine homosexual man, while in "Bloom" male femininity is celebrated rather than eschewed. In "Bloom," Sivan is portrayed more outspokenly feminine, putting him in a subordinate position to the other character in the clip. But because of the feminine characteristics of his on-film counterpart, these elements of femininity are celebrated.

Smith also expresses homosexuality, although less obvious than Sivan and they include issues of non-normative gender as well. Including voguing in the video, Smith automatically adds a queer message to their music due to vogue's history. Both in Smith and Madonna's videos, use of vogue in the accessible medium of popular music video plays an important role in making queer culture visible. Knowing the history of vogue and ball culture, with its narrative of oppression and Africanist and gay

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<sup>202</sup> This dreamy atmosphere additionally, conforms the title of the song.

struggle, Smith empowers and encourages viewers to express their identity with regards to queerness, attempting to create a sense of inclusivity within popular culture, away from gender and heteronormativity. However, the notion of cultural appropriation cannot be overseen. The parallels with their personal life (coming to terms with their gender), make the music video more credible and empowering. Moreover, these parallels strengthen the explicitness of queerness in the music video.

Although they do it in a different way, both Sivan and Smith succeeded in incorporating queerness in contemporary mainstream media. Elements of a queer history and masculine femininity are portrayed in their videos, in order to communicate a queer emancipatory message. This begs the question if mainstream audiences interpret these videos the same way as queer listeners would. Additionally, if a mainstream audience would not understand the queer message, speaking of emancipation in mainstream culture would be farfetched. Nevertheless, the fact that queer artists who represent themselves as such in their music videos, are able to do so in mainstream culture, in which they are usually underrepresented, proves that the medium can carry an explicitly queer message. This means that the queerness that is communicated through the audiovisual relation, is explicit and that the indirectness, as Peraino argues, makes the medium of music queer, is made direct by applying images to music the way these videos do.



## Conclusion

In this thesis, I argue that homosexual queerness is performed by queer artists through both music and images by making references to historical elements, portraying non-normative characters and desires, and penetrating these elements into mainstream culture. Probably not every listener would understand these queer themes, however, the fact that the performers are more explicit with regards to queerness in their videos compared to ambiguousness in the 1980s, contributes to emancipation. In the Pet Shop Boys' music video "Domino Dancing" and Madonna's "Cherish," elements of queerness and homosexuality are ambiguous. Moreover, those videos muted gay characters, aggravating the gay experience of oppression. The lack of visual representation of queer bodies has come to an end with contemporary music videos that treat queerness.

Smith and Sivan refer to queerness by performing outspokenly and explicitly queer, in their works and daily lives via social media. Moreover, they refer to queer histories, both musically and visually. Sivan implements queer musical elements by using the synthesizer. Leaving out the electric guitar, which has a phallic connotation of masculinity and rock authenticity, distinguishes his sound from regular pop music, making it queerer. Smith refers to a queer historical collective identity by using vogue as one of the main aspects. Notions of masculinity and femininity play an important role in portraying queerness in the music videos of both performers as they play with normative gender roles. Their videos represent queerness explicitly in order to attempt to break with normativity.

Peraino states that due to music's special position, outside language, the medium is able to resemble the impossibility of signifying queer subjectivities, making it queer in essence, not directly signifying meaning.<sup>203</sup> Music is resistant to legibility, allowing it to be a strategy for discussing queerness implicitly within heteronormative culture. Employment of the medium of the music video by Smith and Sivan with regards to Cook's notion of conformance, takes away the queer feature of music, described by Peraino as resistant to legibility, making it suitable to be explicit.<sup>204</sup> Doing close analysis using multimedia models and theories is important in order to understand how media handle queerness. By explicitly using queer images in music videos, music's resistance to legibility is undermined. Adding images allows artists to be more explicit on the topic of queerness than music without images would. The explicitness of these videos enables the performers to be visible in mainstream media. Their queer bodies do not have to be hidden anymore.

## Further Research

White queerness is the focus of this research, in order to be specific on the topic of queerness, causing ignorance with regards to ethnicity, which deserved more attention. An intersectional approach would be interesting in further research. Non-white queer people probably have different experiences with regards to oppression, resulting in other performances of queerness in music videos. Researching other

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<sup>203</sup> Peraino, *Listening to the Sirens*, 113.

<sup>204</sup> Cook, *Analyzing Musical Multimedia*, 100.

sexualities than homosexuality is important because queer performers that identify with other sexualities probably employ music videos differently in order to convey queerness.

Incorporating ball culture into popular culture deserves more academic research with regards to post-colonialism and gender studies, especially with regards to cultural appropriation. Since ball culture has roots in African-American and Latino cultures, cultural appropriation plays an important role in incorporating ball culture into mainstream culture, which should be investigated within academia. Musicological research is necessary with regards to incorporating elements of vogue into popular music choreographies. Additionally, the musical aspect of vogue deserves academic attention as well since music is an important facet of ball culture. Stereotyping with regards to gender defines normative music videos.<sup>205</sup> Since queer music videos often avoid stereotypical depiction, researching such videos with regards to stereotypes is important. Including the issues of the gaze in researching differences in queer and normative music videos is crucial because of its different function in queer people's daily lives.<sup>206</sup> When researching other musical genres, stereotypes, gaze, and masculinity have to be taken into account in researching non-normative music videos.

Lastly, I did not pay much attention to the changes that the medium of the music video went through during the last thirty years.<sup>207</sup> The medium has changed from a televisual medium to one that is consumed through different screens and via internet, effecting the aesthetics of the medium. Researching the effect of the changing medium with regards to gender and sexuality depiction by comparing 1980s queer music videos with contemporary counterparts would show how performance of queerness evolved with the changes of the medium.

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<sup>205</sup> Wallis, "Performing Gender," 161.

<sup>206</sup> Wray, "The Queer Gaze," 70.

<sup>207</sup> Keazor and Wübbena, *Rewind, Play, Fast Forward*; Korsgaard, *Music Video After MTV*; Henry Keazor and Thorsten Wübbena, *Video Thrills the Radio Star: Musikvideos: Geschichte, Themen, Analysen (erweiterte und aktualisierte Auflage)* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2011); Hearsum, Paula and Inglis, Ian, "The emancipation of music video: YouTube and the Cultural Politics of Supply and Demand," in *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*, ed. John Richardson, Claudia Gorbman, Carol Vernallis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 484-499.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Solo artists

In this appendix, I listed the most popular solo artists of the moment in alphabetic order. I included the first twenty solo artists of the “Billboard Artist Top 100” of the week of September 28, 2019 and added some other big artists of today.<sup>208</sup> The numbers are in millions and gathered on September 30, 2019. The numbers in the “Spotify” section are the number of monthly listeners. The “Instagram” and “Twitter” section indicate the number of followers. The “YouTube” section is about the number of subscribers to their channels. The numbers are rounded to millions, unless an artist has less than one million followers/subscribers/monthly listeners. The “X” in Drake and Khalid’s “Instagram” box indicate that they do not have an account on this social media network. Although many of the artists in this list are allies of the queer community, Smith and Sivan are the only artists that identify as queer themselves.

Artist	YouTube	Spotify	Instagram	Twitter
Ariana Grande	38	48	165	66
Beyoncé	19	29	134	15
Billie Eilish	21	45	39	3
Bruno Mars	26	31	22	43
Camila Cabello	11	59	41	10
Chris Brown	18	31	57	31
DaBaby	2	16	5	0.2
Drake	19	41	X	39
Ed Sheeran	42	66	32	19
Halsey	7	36	16	12
Justin Bieber	47	43	119	107
Kanye	5	26	0.5	29
Katy Perry	35	30	86	108
Khalid	7	54	X	4
Lady Gaga	15	27	37	80
Lana del Rey	9	29	15	10
Lewis Capaldi	1	27	4	0.8
Lil Nas X	7	39	5	3
Lizzo	1	24	6	1
Luke Combs	1	7	2	0.4
Post Malone	15	61	18	5
Sam Smith	12	42	14	8
Shawn Mendes	24	57	52	24
Taylor Swift	36	39	122	85
Troye Sivan	7	17	11	9

<sup>208</sup> “Artist 100, The Week of September 28, 2019,” Billboard, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.billboard.com/charts/artist-100>.

## Appendix 2: “Lucky Strike” – Troye Sivan

This appendix contains the lyrics and a cue-based audio-visual analysis of Troye Sivan’s music video “Lucky Strike.”<sup>209</sup>

### Lyrics

Oh, I want to know just how to love you  
The jewel of California  
Oh, I want to skip stones on your skin, boy  
And drown me in your water

And my boy like a queen  
Unlike one you've ever seen  
He knows how to love me better  
A hit of dopamine, higher than I've ever been  
He knows how to love me better

'Cause you're safe like spring time  
Short days, long nights, boy  
Tell me all the ways to love you  
'Cause you taste like Lucky Strikes  
You drag, I light, boy  
Tell me all the ways to love you  
Tell me all the ways to love you  
Tell me all the ways to love you

Oh, I wanna tip toe through your bliss, boy  
Get lost the more I find ya  
Oh, don't wanna miss a second of this, boy  
Hold tight and love me longer

And my boy like a queen  
Unlike one you've ever seen  
He knows how to love me better  
(He knows how to love me better)  
A hit of dopamine, higher than I've ever been  
He knows how to love me better

'Cause you're safe like spring time  
Short days, long nights, boy  
Tell me all the ways to love you  
'Cause you taste like Lucky Strikes  
You drag, I light, boy  
Tell me all the ways to love you  
Tell me all the ways to love you  
Tell me all the ways to love you

Breathe me in, exhale slow

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<sup>209</sup> “Troye Sivan – Lucky Strike,” YouTube, published on 10 January 2019, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QsYn0j-7JQ>.



Take me to anywhere you wanna go  
 Breathe me in, exhale slow  
 Take me to anywhere you wanna go

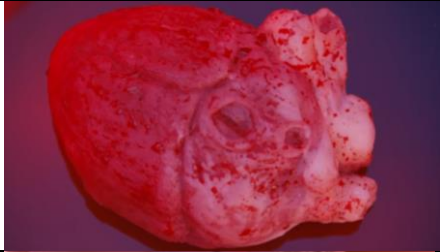

'Cause you're safe like spring time  
 Show days, long nights, boy  
 Tell me all the ways to love you  
 'Cause you taste like Lucky Strikes  
 You drag, I light, boy  
 Tell me all the ways to love you  
 Tell me all the ways to love you  
 Tell me all the ways to love you  
 Tell me all the ways

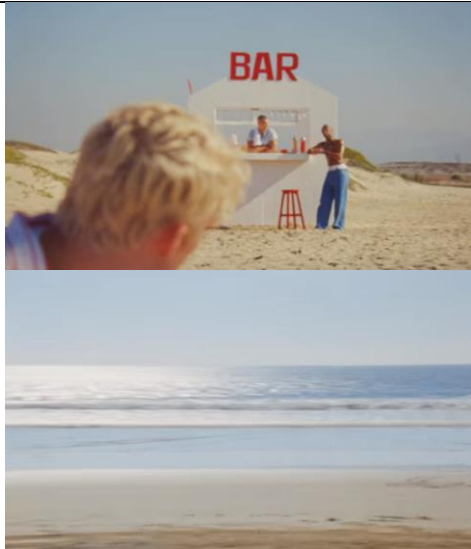

Tell me all the ways  
 (Tell me all the ways to love you)  
 (Tell me all the ways to love you)  
 (Tell me all the ways to love you)




**Analysis**




<b>Time</b>	<b>Visual</b>	<b>Audio</b>	<b>Images</b>
0:00	White screen	Sound of waves washing up ashore	
0:01	View of the sea to the horizon		
0:07	Rainbow-coloured parasol from down	Distant seagulls squawking	
0:14	Beach from above. People of different ages, genders, colours are enjoying the beach. There is a great diversity with regards to colours as well: people wearing colourful bathing suits and have colourful attributes. The words "Lucky Strike" are shown one by one.	Waves, seagulls and people talking. When the words become visible, two clicks are heard. One click per word, like a typewriter.	

0:19	We see Troye Sivan sitting on the beach facing the camera.	Sound of waves is still hearable	
0:21	Sivan starts singing (lip-sync)	<b>Verse</b>  Text: “Oh, I want to know just how to love you. The jewel of California.”  Music: electronic synthesizers, after the beat. No drums, percussion or rhythm instrument.	
0:24	Camera slowly starts turning around Sivan. In the background a beach house with the letters “BAR” comes in the shot.	Text: “Oh I want to skip stones on your skin boy. And drown me in your water.”  Music: synthesizer stays playing the background chords.	
0:41	Sivan looks over his shoulder towards the bar.	Text: “And my boy like a queen, unlike one you’ve ever seen.”  Music: Synthesizer build-up of crispy-sounding sample. Beat and bass come in after the third beat in sync with the moment Sivan looks up: bass on beat 1 and finger snap on beat 3. Syncopated electric guitar riff every other bar.	
0:44	Shot change to bar on beat 1 (together with bass). Bartender behind the bar, two guests drinking at the bar. Zooming in towards the bartender.	Text: “He knows how to love me better.”  Music: together with shot change: bass. Electric guitar gets heavier when zooming in.	
0:49	Shot change to Sivan who is lip-syncing the lyrics.	Text: “A hit of dopamine, higher than I’ve ever been. He	





		knows how to love me better.”	
0:56	Close up of Sivan	Synthesizer build-up of crispy sample	
0:57	Shot of a beating heart	Short silence	
0:58	Shot change to a close up of Sivan held by a man. Different colour scheme with more tones of red. Fast shot changes to hand-held camera shots of Sivan and the bartender laying on the beach, in a boat and cuddling. We see the bartender running from the sea on to the beach while the sun sets.	<b>Refrain</b>  Text: “Cause you’re safe like spring time. Short days, long nights, boy.”  Music: bass and beating starts again, this time heavier and on the beat instead of syncopated. Electronic bass melody. A distorted voice sings “oh”	
1:05	Sivan lip-syncs. Background: sea and sunset.	Text: “Tell me all the ways to love you.”  Music: synthesizers playing a melody as response to the text. Beginning and ending on the I. The text is sung by Sivan’s electronically doubled voice creating a sense of a choir singing (later referred to as electronic choir).	
1:07	Hand-held shots, fast shot changes, of Sivan and the bartender. When Sivan sings “Lucky Strike” we see the bartender smoking a cigarette.	Text: “Cause you taste like lucky strikes, you drag, I light, boy.”	

1:14	Shot change back to bright colours of the beginning. Sivan lip-syncing the lyrics once. Shot from behind Sivan. He looks at the bar. A short close up shot of the bar tender's eyes; when the bartender looks up, Sivan looks away to the sea. We see the see from his eyes, with the camera rotating along the shoreline and zooming in towards the horizon.	Text: "Tell me all the ways to love you." 3x  Music: Same synthesizer melody as response, first time ending on I, second time on IV, third time I. Text is sung by the electronic again.	
1:23	Sivan looks over the beach. Camera films two couples that are enjoying the sun on the beach. Very quick shots.		
1:26	Sivan suddenly stands at the bar. Sivan and the bartender are talking with each other. We see their lips moving, but we do not hear them. Their speech is subtitled in yellow: BT: "what can I get for ya?" Sivan: "just...whatever" BT: "k" Sivan: "thanks..."	<b>Verse</b>  Text: "Oh, I wanna tip toe through your bliss boy. Get lost the more I find ya."  Music: beat stops, bass disappears. Same synthesizer background as in the beginning. Only with the finger snaps on the third beat as a rhythmic pattern.	
1:40	Sivan looks away shyly when the bartender is preparing his drink. Close up of Troye, who looks at the bartender. Close up shot of the bartender's lips, then eyes, then squeezing of a lemon.	Text: "oh, Don't wanna miss a second of this boy. Hold tight and love me longer."  Music: the bass comes in again on the first and fourth beat. A synthesizer plays a choir-like chord (synth choir).	
1:45	Close up of the naked, tattooed chest of the bartender. Then a close up of Sivan biting his lip	Text: "And my boy like a queen, unlike one you've ever seen."	

	when they have eye contact.		
1:52	A quick shot of Sivan standing at the bar, then of the bartender squeezing a heart above Sivan's drink. Blood seeps down.	Text: "He knows how to love me better."  Music: the synth choir "ah" while the text is sung by the doubled voice choir alternating with his solo voice.	
1:54	A close up shot of Sivan's chest. His white shirt become red at the place of his heart.	Text: "He knows how to love me better. A hit of dopamine, higher than I've ever been."  Music: "Higher than I've ever been" is sung in two voices, the highest being more dramatic and less monotone.	
1:59	The bartender seductively licks the straw that he thereafter puts in Sivan's red drink while they look at each other.	Text: "Cause he knows how to love me better."  Music: again, the crispy synthesizer builds up before the beat toward the refrain.	
2:01	Shot of the bar. Sivan stands at the bar together with two other guests. The bartender runs away from the bar in the direction of the sea wearing a red speedo only. Sivan looks up from his drink.	<b>Refrain</b>  Text: "Cause you're safe like spring time"  Music: Strong on beat bass, synthesizer bass melody returns.	
2:05	The three barguests walk on the beat of the music in the direction of the camera looking into the camera.	Text: "Short days, long nights, boy."	
2:09	At the word "boy" we see the bartender dive into the sea.	Text: "boy. Tell me all the ways to love you."  Music: Sivan sings with together with the electronic choir.	

2:10	The bartender and Sivan stand against each other at the bar. Sivan is lip-syncing and dancing. The bartender is smoking. They both look into the camera	Text: "Tell me all the ways to love you."  Music: Sivan sings higher and less monotone this time alternating with the electronic choir. Alternated with a synthesizer melody.	
2:13	Quick hand-held shots of the bartender handing a red drink with a straw, Sivan drinking the drink, the bartender squeezing the heart with his arm raised in the air. Followed by Sivan lip-syncing and dancing on the beach with the two other barguests.	Text: "Cause you taste like lucky strikes, you drag, I light, boy."	
2:19	Shot of Sivan and the bartender against the bar. Followed by a close up, hand-held shot of the squeezing of the heart by the bartender. This is repeated, as the text is repeated as well. We see the image of the muscular bartender bare chested squeezing out the heart.	Text: "Tell me all the ways to love you." 3x  Music: the last two times that this sentence occurs, it is sung by the choir only indicating that the song is going to a different part.	
2:39	Shot changes to the sea with a red filter.		
2:42	Sivan lays in a boat on red pillows on the water.	<b>Bridge</b>  Text: "Breathe me in, exhale slow."  Music: the beat is gone. The finger snaps are back again. Syncopated chimes are introduced creating a dreamy effect. The same bass melody.	



2:46	Distant shot of the boat. Sivan laying in it, while the bartender looks through binoculars over the sea.	Text: “Take me to anywhere you wanna go.” 3x  Music: last time “anywhere you wanna go” sings Sivan higher building up to the next part. The “O” sound endures until half of the next sentence.	
2:59	Shot of the beach, it is dark. We see Sivan dancing and running around the beach while the sun is almost set.	Text: “cause you’re safe like spring time.”	
3:01	Hand-held shots with people partying on the beach.	Text: “Short days, long nights, boy.”  Music: Sivan sings this sentence in two voices, the straight melody and a higher second voice.	
3:04	Sivan lip-syncing in front of the dancing people on the beach alternated with hand-held shots of the partying people.	Text: “Tell me all the ways to love you.”	
3:25	Other people, that are filmed close up, start lip-syncing the lyrics alternated with Sivan’s lip-syncing.	Text: “Tell me all the ways to love you.”	
3:41	Back to the bright colour scheme. We see Sivan sitting on the beach with his eyes closed. When he opens them, he starts lip-syncing the lyrics.	Text: “Tell me all the ways to love you.”  Music: the synth choir “sings” “Oh” and “Ah” while the other instruments make a decrescendo. The electronic choir sings one more time “Tell me all the ways to love you”	
3:47	When the music stops, Sivan looks down.	The music stops. We hear sounds of the waves washing up ashore.	

3:52	A shot of the beach with the heart shown with the words "The End"		 A photograph of a person sitting on a sandy beach, viewed from behind. They are wearing a light-colored, vertically striped shirt. To their left is a dark, cylindrical cooler. The ocean waves are visible in the background under a clear sky. A large, semi-transparent red heart is overlaid on the image, containing the words "The End" in a white, cursive font.
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### Appendix 3: “Domino Dancing” – Pet Shop Boys

This appendix contains the lyrics of the Pet Shop Boys’ “Domino Dancing.”<sup>210</sup>

I don't know why, I don't know how,  
I thought I loved you but, I'm not sure now,  
I've seen you look at strangers,  
Too many times,  
The love you want, is of a different kind

All day, all day, watch them all fall down,  
All day, all day, Domino dancing,

Remember when we felt the sun,  
A love like paradise,  
How hot it burned,  
A threat of distant thunder,  
The sky was red,  
And where you walked you always,  
Turned ev'ry head

All day, all day, watch them all fall down,  
All day, all day, Domino dancing,

I thought that when we fought  
I was to blame,  
But now I know you play,  
A different game,  
I've seen you dance with danger,  
Still wanting more,  
Add another number, To the score

All day, all day, watch them all fall down,  
All day, all day, Domino dancing,  
When you look around you wonder  
Do you play to win or are you just a bad loser?  
All day, all day, All day, all day,

I don't know why, I don't know how,  
I thought I loved you but, I'm not sure now,  
I hear the thunder crashing, the sky is dark,  
And now a storm is breaking, Within my heart.

All day, all day, watch them all fall down,  
All day, all day, Domino dancing,  
All day, all day, watch them all fall down,  
All day, all day, Domino dancing,  
All day, all day, watch them all fall down

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<sup>210</sup> “Pet Shop Boys – Domino Dancing,” YouTube, published on 27 February 2009, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik2YF05iX2w>; “Pet Shop Boys Lyrics ‘Domino Dancing,’” AZ Lyrics, last accessed on 14 January 2020, <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/petshopboys/dominodancing.html>.

## Appendix 4: “Bloom” – Troye Sivan

This appendix contains the lyrics and a cue-based audio-visual analysis of Troye Sivan’s music video “Bloom.”<sup>211</sup>

### Lyrics

Take a trip into my garden  
I've got so much to show ya  
The fountains and the waters  
Are begging just to know ya

And it's true, baby  
I've been saving this for you, baby

I guess it's something like a fun fair  
Put gas into the motor  
And, boy, I'll meet you right there  
We'll ride the rollercoaster

'Cause it's true, baby  
I've been saving this for you, baby

I need you to  
Tell me right before it goes down  
Promise me you'll  
Hold my hand if I get scared now  
Might tell you to  
Take a second, baby, slow it down  
You should know I, you should know I

I bloom just for you  
(I bloom) just for you  
(Yeah, I bloom) I bloom just for you  
(I bloom) just for you  
Come on, baby, play me like a love song  
Every time it comes on  
I get this sweet desire  
(Yeah, I bloom) I bloom just for you  
(I bloom) just for you

Now it's the perfect season  
Yeah, let's go for it this time  
We're dancing with the trees and  
I've waited my whole life

It's true, baby  
I've been saving this for you, baby  
I need you to

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<sup>211</sup> “Troye Sivan – Bloom,” YouTube, published on 6 June 2018, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41PTANtZFW0>.

Tell me right before it goes down  
 Promise me you'll  
 Hold my hand if I get scared now  
 Might tell you to  
 Take a second, baby, slow it down  
 You should know I, you should know I


I bloom just for you  
 (I bloom) just for you  
 (Yeah, I bloom) I bloom just for you  
 (I bloom) just for you  
 Come on, baby, play me like a love song  
 Every time it comes on  
 I get this sweet desire  
 (Yeah, I bloom) I bloom just for you  
 (I bloom) just for you





Just for you  
 I bloom just for you  
 I bloom just for you  
 Baby, baby, I've been saving this for you, baby, baby




I bloom just for you  
 (I bloom) just for you  
 (Yeah, I bloom) I bloom just for you  
 (I bloom) just for you  
 Come on, baby, play me like a love song  
 Every time it comes on  
 I get this sweet desire  
 (Yeah, I bloom) I bloom just for you  
 (I bloom) just for you


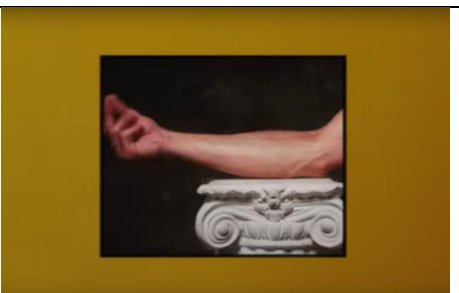
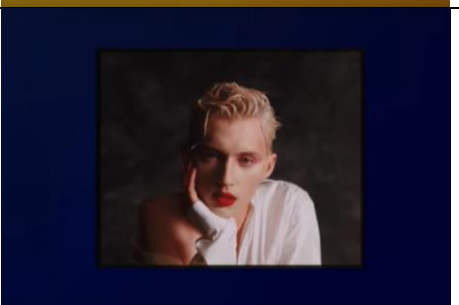

Just for you  
 I bloom just for you  
 I bloom just for you  
 Just for you  
 I bloom just for you  
 I bloom just for you

**Analysis**





<b>Time</b>	<b>Visual</b>	<b>Audio</b>	<b>Images</b>
0:00	<p>The clip is not shot for wide screen but square.</p> <p>It starts off with shots of pink flowers and a zooming in onto a bouquet of flowers.</p> <p>After this short introduction passage</p>	<p>This musical material is not on the studio album. We hear arpeggiated piano chords and something that sounds like electronically reversed. The resonance comes first, followed by the start of the notes. The passage ends with two</p>	



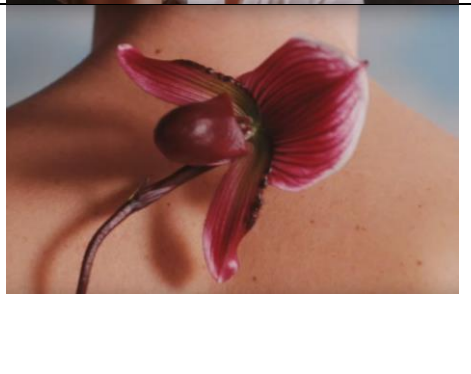

	the image becomes dark blue with the white capitals “BLOOM”	pizzicato strings. Then it becomes silent.	
0:19	A very close up image of Sivan’s red painted lips. He is lip-syncing the lyrics.	The song starts with Sivan singing the first words in a monotone melody. After the first two words (up-beat) a bass and a tom-tom drum kicks in. The bass being the first beat of the bar and the toms the afterbeat. This beat continues.  <b>Verse</b>  Text: “Take a trip into my garden, I’ve got so much to show ya. The fountains and the waters, I’m begging just to know ya.”	
0:27	Frontal shot of Sivan’s heavily made up face.	Text: “And it’s true”  On the word “true” a synthesizer chord is played.	
0:29	On the word “baby” the camera is closer to his face only filming his lips again then filming his face again.	Text: “Baby”	
0:30	Camera filming his face.	Text: “I’ve been saving this for you”  On the word “you” the synthesizer stops and after a short pause, the next chord is played.	





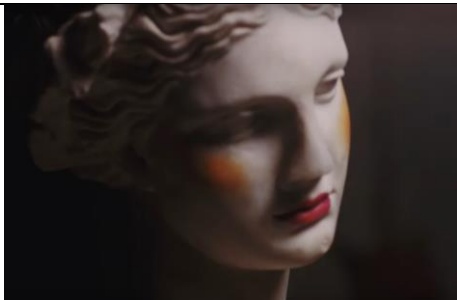
0:32	Filming his lips.	Text: "Baby"  After the word "baby" another synth chord is played. The chord changes are alternated on and after the beat.	
0:34	First unclear, not sharp, then a flash, we see a vase with flowers. Just takes one second. The flash is on the beat of a bass drum kick.		
0:35	Flash of a yellow frame, then becoming green. Framing around a shot of a side view of Sivan's head and shoulders. His head resting on his hand with painted nails. His blond hair seems wet. His white shirt is pulled down over his right shoulder.	Text: "I guess it's something like a..."	
0:38	Longer shot of Sivan is a photo studio sitting on a barstool with his legs and arms crossed. Then he spreads his legs and sits straight in front of the camera leaning forward. His shirt still pulled down over his shoulder.	Text: "... fun fair. Put gas into the motor. And boy I'll meet you right there. We'll ride the rollercoaster."	
0:44	Closer and frontal shot of Sivan. Still in the photo studio. The camera zooms in slowly. A wind machine blows through his hair. Then a short snapshot close up of his face (frontal).	Text: "Cause it's true, baby, I've been saving this for you. Baby."  A rising synthesizer counter melody before the last "baby"	




0:51	Sivan sits on a red leather armchair before a red screen with his legs over the armrest of the chair. He wears white leather boots, a yellow coat (open) and a light blue wig made out of feather like material. His nails are now painted light blue.	Text: "I need you to tell me tell me right before it goes down."  After "I need you to" more synthesizer sounds come in creating a small build up. The words "I need you to" are doubled electronically with Sivan's voice.	
0:54	A yellow frame: a muscular male arm resting on a pillar snapping his finger.	Text: "Promise me"  The words are doubled electronically by Sivan's voice.	
0:56	A blue frame: close up of Sivan's face wearing the white shirt still pulled down over his shoulder.	Text: "you'll"  Snare drum and tambourine accompany the beat.	
0:57	Sivan sitting on the red chair again.	Text: "hold my hand if I get scared now. Might tell you to."	
1:00	Close up of Sivan sitting on the chair leaning forward and then falling down into the chair.	Text: "Take a second baby slow it down."	
1:03	Close up of Sivan with his white shirt pulled down over his shoulder not lip-syncing.	Text: "You should know I."	





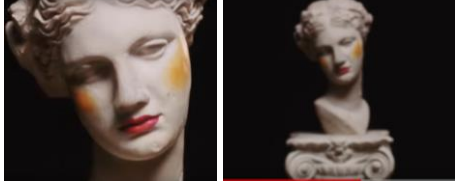







1:04	A close up of Sivan in his yellow coat and blue wig laying on the chair. He is not lip-syncing. Then a shot from further away. He sits with his legs over the armrest again.	Text: "You should know I."  Synthesizer build up and a short break after this sentence.	
1:06	A close up of Sivan touching his face with his fingers.	<b>Refrain</b> Text: "Yeah, I bloom"  The synthesizer beat of the bass is stronger now playing a melody with syncopated quarter notes. The drum plays a simple four fourth beat.	
1:07	A snapshot of a muscular man from behind. We see his upper back and a pink feather wig. This shot only takes a fraction of a second. And is followed by a zoomed in snapshot, badly lighted, closer to the mysterious man.		
1:08	A shot of Sivan sitting on the red chair.	Text: "I"	
1:09	Close up of his face.	Text: "Bloom"	
1:10	A snapshot of some flowers.		
1:10	Shots of Sivan in the photo studio and Sivan sitting before the red screen are alternated very quickly. Then we see him standing before the red screen. He moves his head from away from the camera towards it.	Text: "For you"	






1:11	Sivan standing in the photo studio with a pink lint around his waist. Then a snapshot of flowers followed by a close up of Sivan lip-syncing.	Text: "I bloom"	
1:12	Sivan before the red screen with his wig and yellow coat followed by a snapshot of flowers and him in the photo studio.	Text: "Just for you"	
1:14	Sivan sits still before the dark screen facing the camera. His chin leaning on his fist.		
1:15	Fast shots of Sivan falling into the red chair and the muscular mysterious man with the pink feather wig. Then a shot of his back with a flower before it, first close, then further away. Very fast shot changes.	Text: "Yeah I bloom"	
1:16	Close up of Sivan lip-syncing and posing in front of the red screen. A snapshot of the muscular man with the pink wig. Shots of Sivan sitting in the red chair and lip-syncing in front of the dark screen.	Text: "Just for you. I Bloom. Just for you"	
1:22	A snapshot of a female statue with make-up (same colour lipstick as Sivan wears) followed by a shot of Sivan dancing in the photo studio.	Text: "Come on baby, play me like a love song. Every time it comes on"	




1:28	A shot of a muscular arm on a pillar.	Text: "I get this sweet"	
1:29	A shot of the muscular back of a man with his fingers in his neck stretching his muscles.	Text: "desire"	
1:30	A shot of Sivan in the red chair, this time his wig is gone. He humps up and falls down again.	Text: "Yeah, I bloom."	
1:31	A very close up shot of the muscular man's back. Then back to Sivan in the red chair.		
1:31	Sivan in his chair lip-syncing.	Text: "I bloom"	
1:33	A shot of the female statue in make-up.	Text: "Just for you"	
1:35	Sivan lip-syncing in the photo studio.	Text: "I bloom"	

1:36	Shot of the muscular man from behind. He is stretching his back. Then a shot of Sivan in the red chair followed by a shot of him in the photo studio.	Text: "Just for you"	
1:39	A blue framed shot of Sivan from the side looking into the camera wearing a black leather cap and a dark red leather jacket. He stands before slats. He is wearing heavy make-up.	<b>Verse</b>  Text: "Now it's the perfect season."  Music becomes calmer, ongoing beat stops and there are finger snaps instead on the second and fourth beat. And the bass drum and toms of the beginning reoccur in the same way. The same counts for the way the synthesizer chords are played.	
1:41	A snapshot of a flower and the back of the muscular man. Then a close up of Sivan's heavily made-up face. He lip-syncs the lyrics.	Text: "Now let's go for it this time"	
1:43	Dark close up shot of the muscular man's body moving followed by a side shot of Sivan's face. He suddenly looks to his left, straight into the camera.	Text: "we're dancing with the trees"  On the word "trees" there is a short-synthesized reverb.	
1:45	Sivan lip-syncing and dancing before the slats.	Text: "I've waited my whole life. It's true"	
1:48	A shot of the muscular man's back moving through the image.	Text: "Baby"	


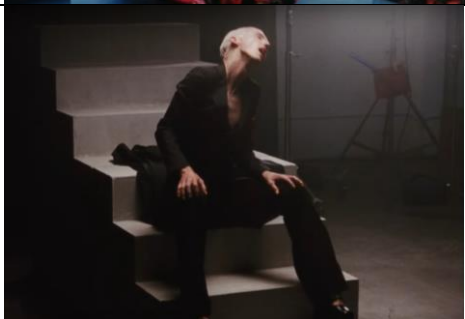
1:49	Sivan now stands behind the slats. But in the next shot he stands before them again.	Text: "I've been saving this for you"	
1:52	Same shot of the muscular man's back moving through the image.	Text: "Baby"	
1:53	Sivan dancing before the slats snapping his fingers	The snapping of his fingers is on the beat.	
1:54	A shot of Sivan dancing behind the slats. First, there is no frame, then a yellow frame comes in. Then a snap close up shot of the muscular man going with his fingers over his body.	Text: "I need you to"  Here the beat of the drum starts playing its four fourth measure again creating a build-up.	
1:56	A shot of Sivan dancing and lip-syncing behind the slats.	Text: "Tell me right before it goes down"	
1:59	Close up shots of the man touching his body.	Text: "Promise me you"	
2:00	A shot of the man's hand moving gracefully. The background is yellow, the frame is beige.	Text: "Hold my hand"	
2:01	A red framed shot of Sivan looking through the slats, then looking away.	Text: "If I get scared now"	
2:02	A short shot of the female statue on a black background. Then the camera moves and zooms out.	Text: "I tell you to"	




2:03	Sivan looking through the slats and touching them while lip-syncing.	Text: “Take a second”	
2:05	Close up shot of the man’s back.	Text: “Baby slowdown”	
2:06	Sivan behind the slats in a red frame.	Text: “You should know I”	
2:07	Sivan standing behind flowers, before a light blue wall with clouds painted on it. He wears a white tank top shirt. The camera zooms in. Then a snapshot of flowers.	Echoed lyrics.  Text: “You should know I”	
2:10	Close up of Sivan standing before the wall with the clouds having his arms above his head pulling them down dramatically. On the word “bloom” a snapshot of a flower is shown.	<b>Refrain</b>  Text: “Yeah, I bloom, I bloom”  Heavier beat, as in the previous refrain.	
2:13	A shot of Sivan wearing the red leather jacket and black leather cap, lip-syncing before the slats. He dances with his arms above his head.	Text: “Just for”	
2:14	A shot of the muscular man’s right arm. He stands in the “garden” and has a tattoo of Siamese looking men on it.	Text: “You”	

2:14	A shot of Sivan standing in the garden leaning back and holding a flower at crotch height.	Text: "I bloom"	
2:15	Shots of Sivan dancing behind the slats and in the garden. He points towards the camera on the word "you." The camera zooms in. We can now see that he is wearing yellow nail polish.	Text: "just for you"	
2:20	Snap shots of flowers on the word "bloom" and shots of Sivan dancing in the garden. He looks straight into the camera or points towards the camera on the word "you."	Text: "Yeah, I bloom, I bloom. Just for you"	
2:24	Snapshot of a bouquet and flowers in a white frame. Again: Sivan looks straight into the camera on the word "you"	Text: "I bloom. Just for you."	 
2:26	Sivan sitting in the garden between the flowers lip-syncing the lyrics and dramatically touching his face.	Text: "Come on baby, play me like a love song. Every time it comes on"  The lyrics are sung in an electronic choir if Sivan's voice with his voice as a solo above it creating a second voice.	

2:31	Sivan standing in the garden with his hands dramatically touching his head alternated with a shot of him sitting in the garden. On the word “desire” he stares into the distance after which he touches his torso.	Text: “I get this sweet desire”	
2:35	Images of Sivan dancing, sitting, and lip-syncing in the garden and dancing/lip-syncing before the slats. Between this and the next section, there are some snap shots of flowers and Sivan in the garden.	Text: “Yeah, I bloom, I bloom. Just for you”	
2:42	Sivan stands in a room with walls made out of mirrors. His face is painted white with a red rectangle from his eyebrows to his mouth. Above his eyes, he is painted blue. He is wearing a dress with big flowers on it. He looks into the camera lip-syncing the words.	<p><b>Bridge</b></p> <p>Sivan’s voice is distorted which makes his voice sound lower and deeper. The words are spoken rather than sung.</p> <p>The beat is gone here. The synthesizer chords are still played, and a short high-pitched synthesizer melody is played. There is also a bass accompanying playing bended notes.</p> <p>Text: “I bloom, just for you.” (2x)</p>	
2:59	Sivan dressed all black moves from the right to the left over the screen and lies down on stairs.	Text: “Baby, baby”  A bass drum kicks in playing four notes per bar.	
3:03	In the next shot is stands and is filmed from down.	Text: “I’ve been saving this for you, baby”  A crescendo cymbal and rising glissando in a	



		synthesizer note is played just before a bass plays a descending note.	
3:06	Sivan in the flower dress in the room with the mirrors. First close up, then zoomed out.	Text: “Yeah, I bloom, I bloom. Just for you. I bloom, just for you.”  After the bass note, an electric guitar plays the chords to accompany the lyrics.	
3:14	Images of Sivan dancing in the flower dress and his black suit are alternated. We now see that he is wearing platform soles.	<b>Refrain</b>  Text: “Yeah, I bloom, I bloom. Just for you.”  The drums (playing four fourth measure) and the synth bass kick in	
3:22	Images of Sivan in the flower dress and black suit alternated.	Text: “Come on baby, play me like a love song. Every time it comes on, I get this sweet desire.”  This sentence is doubled by Sivan’s voice again, creating the second voice.	
3:31	Flower dress and black suit sections still alternated. On the word “bloom” an image of a flower is shown once.	Text: “Yeah, I bloom, I bloom. Just for you”	
3:38	Sivan sitting between the flowers in the garden.	Text: “Yeah, just for you.”	

3:40	We see Sivan dancing outside in a dark street in the flower vest and skirt. The outfit now also contains headgear covering his face.	Repetition of the text in the singing voice. The distorted voice of Sivan's speaking voice goes through the lyrics of the song saying the same text but unrhythmic.	
3:41	A shot of Sivan hanging in the red chair with the bleu feather wig and the yellow coat and a shot of Sivan in his black suit on the stairs followed by him dancing in the garden. Then a shot of him dancing before the slats and in the street in the vest and skirt.	Text: "Just for you"	
3:46	A shot of the muscular arm snapping its finger in a yellow frame followed by the dancing Sivan in the photo studio. Then a green framed shot of Sivan before the slats followed by a shot of him sitting in the photo studio.	Text: "I bloom just for you. Just for you"	
3:48	A shot of Sivan from the side in a frame of flowers.	Text: "I bloom just for you"	
3:55	We see Sivan walking towards the camera looking straight into it wearing the flower vest and skirt outfit with the face covering head gear.	The music suddenly stops, and we hear high heels walking on the street. Then we hear a crescendo cymbal after which the song had really come to an end.	

## Appendix 5: “How Do You Sleep?” – Sam Smith

This appendix contains the lyrics and a cue-based audio-visual analysis of Sam Smith’s music video “How Do You Sleep?”.<sup>212</sup>

### Lyrics

I'm done hatin' myself for feelin'  
I'm done cryin' myself awake  
I've gotta leave and start the healin'  
But when you move like that, I just want to stay

What have I become?  
Lookin' through your phone now, oh, now  
Love to you is just a game  
Look what I've done  
Dialling up the numbers on you  
I don't want my heart to break

Baby, how do you sleep when you lie to me?  
All that shame and all that danger  
I'm hopin' that my love will keep you up tonight  
Baby, how do you sleep when you lie to me?  
All that fear and all that pressure  
I'm hopin' that my love will keep you up tonight

Love will keep you up tonight  
(Tell me how do you)

Oh no, how did I manage to lose me?  
I am not this desperate, not this crazy  
There's no way I'm stickin' 'round to find out  
I won't lose like that, I won't lose myself

Look what I've done now  
Dialling' up the numbers on you  
I don't want my heart to break

Baby, how do you sleep when you lie to me?  
All that shame and all that danger  
I'm hopin' that my love will keep you up tonight  
Baby, how do you sleep when you lie to me?  
All that fear and all that pressure  
I'm hopin' that my love will keep you up tonight

Yeah  
Yeah, yeah, yeah  
Love will keep you up tonight  
(Tell me how do you)



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<sup>212</sup> “Sam Smith – How Do You Sleep? (Official Video),” YouTube, published on 18 July 2019, last accessed on 17 January 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmYypVozQb4>.




Oh  
 Love will keep you up tonight






Baby, how do you sleep when you lie to me?  
 All that shame and all that danger  
 I'm hopin' that my love will keep you up tonight  
 Baby, how do you sleep when you lie to me? (oh)  
 All that fear and all that pressure  
 I'm hopin' that my love will keep you up tonight  
 (Tell me how do you)





**Analysis**

Time	Visual	Audio	Images
0:01	We see Sam Smith sitting in a photo studio on a chair before a white screen. Smith sits slumped down. It is dark at first, but it becomes lighter slowly. Smith is wearing a white T-shirt and a blue denim jeans. Filmed from above, the camera slowly zooms in on Smith and comes down.	Silence. Then we hear a man say "He's alright, he's fine. Just get him dressed" Then a woman says, "I think he looks great." We also hear some inaudible voices in the background. Then a man says: "Yeah, roll camera." Then we hear three beeps after which the music starts (a lot louder than the voices of the beginning).	
0:30	In sync with the beat, the shot changes to a frontal shot of Smith still sitting on the same chair, but now dressed in a black transparent top, black trousers and black shoes. Behind him, ten dancers (of several different ethnicities) stand in two lines facing each other. They are bare chested and wear waist	The melody is an electronically produced synthesizer sound in eights imitating a marimba sound. Because of the echo of the synths, it is a bit dreamy.	

	height trainers. Smith sits in the middle of the screen and looks straight into the camera.		
0:31	The dancers in the background start walking slowly and in sync with each other on the same moment that Smith starts to sing.	<b>Verse</b>  Text: "I'm done"  Smith starts off with a breathy, light voice.	
0:33	Shot change just after the beat back to Smith sitting on the chair in his white shirt/denim jeans. Shot from the side. Smith is lip-syncing the lyrics. The camera is still zooming in.	Text: "hatin' myself for feelin'. I'm done"	
0:38	Shot change to Smith sitting on the chair in his black outfit. The dancers are now closer to each other. Smith is lip-syncing the lyrics.	Text: "cryn' myself awake."	
0:40	Shot change to Sivan in his white shirt, a bigger, more muscular guy dressed fully in black comes. The man picks Smith up from behind with his hands under Smith's armpits.		
0:43	Shot from further away. We see the man dragging Smith away from the chair.	Text: "I've gotta leave and start the healin'."  A crispy drum computer beat comes in.	
0:46	Shot of the man dragging Smith from closer. He drags Smith into a darker place next	Text: "But when you move like that"	





	to the white screen. Smith is lip-syncing the lyrics.		
0:49	A shot from the side. The man in black lays Smith down on the floor and in one smooth move walks away and leaves Smith there on the ground. The camera zooms in on Smith, who is still laying on the ground.	Text: “I just want to stay”	
0:54	A shot of Smith dressed in the black top sitting on the chair. The dancers stand in one line behind Smith and start to jump out of the line. Smith dramatically kicks his right leg over his left. The dancers constantly move elegantly behind Smith.	Smith is now singing higher.  Text: “What have”  An electronic, deep bass comes in on a descending glissando playing a melody of long notes. Together with the clear synths and the crispy beat, it forms an R&B feeling sound. The lyrics “what have” are doubled by a choir of Smith’s voice.	
0:55	Shot of Smith in his white shirt lying on the ground dramatically coming up with his head in his neck.	Text: “I become”	


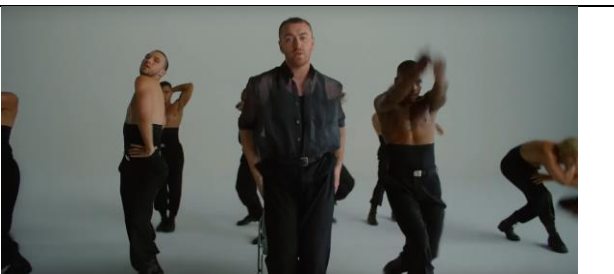


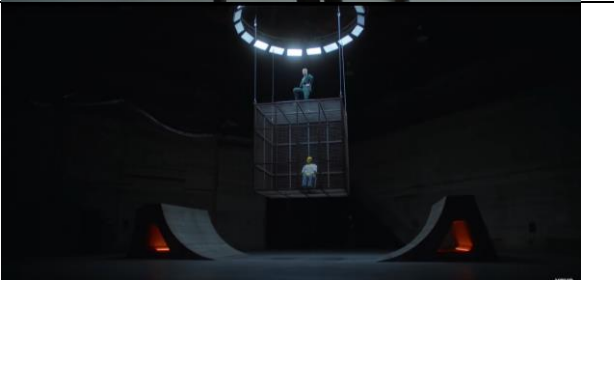
0:56	Snapshot of Smith sitting in the chair with his legs over each other. The dancers behind Smith move their hands before their faces. Smith has his hands up at the height of his head. Smith lip-syncs the end of the word “become”		
0:56	Shot back to Smith in white laying on the ground.	Text: “Looking through your phone now, oh now.”  The bass is playing a melody of long ascending notes.	
1:00	Shot of Smith in black sitting with his legs over each other. The dancers stand behind Smith in a V-formation, one by one jumping down.		
1:02	The white screen becomes black and lighting becomes darker. The dancers in the back, still in V-formation, are posing (this posing comes from the vogue dance style).	Text: “Love to you is just a”  The word “just” is sung a lot higher than the rest of the words.	
1:03	Shot to Smith lying on the ground in his white shirt trying to stand up with his right.	Text: “game”  On the word “game” Smith makes a melismatic run making it sound emotional. He almost inserts a sob on the “a.”	




1:04	Smith in black, sitting on the chair. The dancers behind Smith pose in a symmetrical formation. The white background turns black again on the word “I.” The dancers in the back dance behind Smith from the pose to the line behind Smith.	Text: “Look what I have done”  The words “look what” are doubled by Smith’s voice.	
1:08	Screen back to white and the dancers are still graciously moving behind Smith back and forth. Smith graciously moves his hand from above his head along his head down.	Text: “Dialling up the numbers on you”	
1:13	Frontal close up shot of Smith moving his hands down from before his head. In the background we vaguely see the dancers move.	Text: “I don’t want my”	
1:14	Smith sitting on the chair. The dancers come closer to the camera now. The two dancers in the front facing the camera and looking straight into it. Smith looks into the camera as well while lip-syncing the lyrics, still moving his hands dramatically on chest height. The dancers are posing around Smith. Shot change on the word “heart.” On the word	Text: “heart to break, baby”  The word “heart” is very high in the melody line, compared to the other words of the sentence. The word “break” is sung with the same melisma as the word “game” before. On the word “break,” the beat stops and bass plays a bended long note. On the	




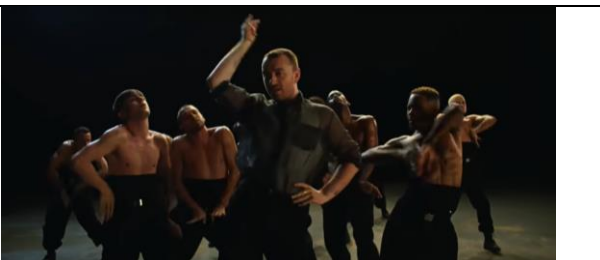





	second syllable of the word “baby” all the dancers turn towards Smith.	word “baby” there is no background music.	
1:18	Shot change to black screen. Close up of Smith, still sitting and lip-syncing the lyrics. The dancers behind Smith still posing.	<p><b>Pre-chorus</b></p> <p>Text: “How do you”</p> <p>When the refrain starts, the synths begin to play again together with the beat and the bass. Another synth sound is introduced here playing a more rhythmical role playing on the beat in the beginning of each bar and playing syncopated notes on each end of the bars creating a staccato section. The bass is now playing in the same rhythm instead of playing long notes. The synth melody is still playing the same melody in the same sound.</p>	
1:19	Back to white screen. Shot from further away. Dancers posing around Smith.	Text: “sleep when you lie to me?”	






1:19	Shot change on the word “me” closer to Smith and the dancers. The screen becomes black again. After the word, Smith begins to pose together with the dancers, but remains seated.	Text: “All that”	
1:20	Shot from further away and background turns white again. Smith and the dancers still posing.	Text: “shame and all that danger”	
1:23	Shot of the dancers and Smith posing from closer. Shot change on the word “that” to close up of Smith and black background. Smith stops posing. The dancers continue. Smith looks over his right shoulder. His arms are crossed.	Text: “I’m hoping that my love will”	
1:25	Shot change to further away and white screen. Dancers still posing around Smith. Smith is still looking over his right shoulder but moves his head fast and looks straight into the camera on the word “up”	Text: “keep you up tonight, baby”  From the word “tonight” on the bass plays eights instead of the syncopated rhythm with the synths. However, it is still playing the same ascending motive.	






1:28	The camera zooms in and Smith starts posing together with the dancers (still seated). The dancers are posing continuously (on every beat), but Smith only moves on the first beat of the music. On the word “me” the zooming in stops and the camera stays in the same position. The dancers continue to pose on every beat.	Text: “How do you sleep when you lie to me? All that fear and all that pressure”	
1:35	Smith stands up, looking in the camera continuing to li-sync.	Text: “I’m hopin’ that my love”	
1:37	Black background. Smith stands up still and stares into the camera, still lip-syncing. The dancers still posing.	Text: “will keep you”	
1:38	White background. Smith starts walking towards the camera together with the front two dancers.	Text: “up tonight”	
1:39	Black background. Smith stands on a hanging cage in which a life size puppet sits on a chair. This puppet is wearing the white shirt and blue denim jeans that Smith was wearing before.	<b>Refrain</b>  Text: “Tell me how do you”  In these lyrics, Smith’s voice is electronically distorted and doubled. There is no	

	Smith is dancing on this cage. Under the cage we see a half pipe on which two cyclists (BMX) cycle.	background music here.	
1:40	Shot of Smith and the dancers performing a choreography.	Right after the lyrics a piece of electronically produces music is played. The bass plays the long notes from the beginning again, but this time it is a sharper sound. The drum computer plays tight R&B like four fourth measure. The melody is made out of up-bending high notes, distorting Smith's voice so that it is unrecognizable.	
1:47	Shot of the half pipe and hanging cage with the puppet and Smith dancing on it.	Text: "love will keep you up tonight."  The high melody stops when Smith start singing the lyrics.	
1:50	A shot from under the cage. We see Smith from beneath. The camera is turning around slowly.	Text: "Tell me how do you"  Smith's voice is distorted in the same way as it was when he sung these lyrics before.	





1:52	A shot of Smith in a photo studio before a screen on which trees in a forest is seen upside down, slowly turning around so that it is not upside down anymore. A white robotic figure sitting on one knee making photos of Smith. Smith is wearing a white suit with a dark overcoat and high heels. With one-foot Smith stands on the chair of the beginning.	<p><b>Chorus</b></p> <p>Text: “Oh no, how did I manage to lose me?”</p> <p>The bass plays a high descending riff before the lyrics are sung to introduce the next chorus and then starts playing eights again. The beat continues.</p>	
1:59	Shot change to the photographer robot. It is holding an old looking camera with a lightbulb and is wearing a plague mask and a cowboy hood and a chain with a lock on it.	Text: “I am not this desperate”	
2:00	Smith strikes another pose waving his coat and dropping down next to the chair. We see the back of the robot.	<p>Text: “not this crazy”</p> <p>On the word “crazy,” on the same moment that Smith squats down, we hear a descending ad lib. The word “crazy” is also echoed.</p>	
2:02	Black background. Dancers posing with smith in their midst		




2:05	<p>Then the background switches to white again and they start doing a choreography holding their hands above their heads moving their hips from left to right. Smith lip-syncing the lyrics while moving his hips in the same way, only Smith is not moving forward, letting the dancers pass.</p>	<p>Text: “There’s no way I’m stickin’ ‘round to find out”</p> <p>The words “find out” are echoed.</p>	
2:08	<p>The dancers and Smith now stand in one line next to each other. Shot change to further away. The dancers and Smith are still moving their hips, walking on their place. On the second “lose” a shot change brings the camera closer to Smith. Now in front of the black screen again.</p>	<p>Text: “I won’t lose like that, I won’t lose myself”</p>	
2:14	<p>Just after “look what” a shot change to further away. We see all the dancers dancing around Smith who is still lip-syncing the lyrics. They are making gracious and slow movements with their arms. On the word “done” the dancers pose against each other and Smith, standing still for a moment while Smith still lip-syncs. The camera</p>	<p>Text: “Look what I have done now. Dialling’ up the numbers on you. I don’t want my”</p> <p>The words “done” and “on you” are doubled by a second voice of Smith himself. The bass stops playing. The synth melody from the beginning reoccurs, the beat continues.</p>	





	zooms in onto the group.	Other synths play the long notes that the bass was playing before. The syncopated notes are played by synths again.	
2:22	Shot change on the word “heart” to some of the dancers filmed from beneath. They are holding their hands above their heads with their wrists curved outside then slapping their arms down.	Text: “heart to break”  The word “heart” is sung higher than the rest of the notes. The word “break” is sung on a melismatic descending run.	
2:24	Shot change to Smith on his own before the white screen ending the move of the dancers.		
2:25	Shot change back to the dancers performing the choreography.	Text “Baby”  Silence in the music on the word “baby”	
2:26	Shot change to a black environment with a white glass cage in which someone sits on a bed. The cage is very white lit with fluorescent tubes.	<b>Pre-chorus</b>  Text: “How do you sleep when you lie to me?”  The beat kicks in again. Music of the last pre-chorus comes back.	
2:30	Shot change to the side of the glass cage. We now see that Smith sits there. Smith seems to talk to a white robot that is sitting on a bench. The	Text: “All that shame and”	



	camera slowly turns around it while zooming in.		
2:32	Shot change to a detail of inside the cage. We see a security camera hanging at the roof of the cage.	Text: “all that danger”	
2:33	Shot change to four smaller screens suggesting that these shots are made with the security cameras. We see Smith walking around in this cage. The robot is also there. Smith is wearing a black coat with a pink turtleneck under it.	Text: “I’m hoping that my love will keep you up tonight”	
2:36	Shot of outside the cage. Smith sits on the bed next to the robot.		
2:37	Shot of the dancers moving on the “ba” of “baby” and of them standing in a line throwing their heads to the side on the “by” of “baby.” The latter is seen in the image.	Text: “baby”  Bass plays the high and descending riff again.	
2:38	Image of Smith standing on the cage. In the cage, the robot in Smith’s former white T-shirt outfit is seated on a chair. The light is less white this time. On the words “lie to me”	Text: “how do you sleep when you lie to me?”	






	we see one of the bikers make a jump at the half pipe.		
2:40	Shot change to Smith and the dancers posing together in a line. Their arms are crossed with each other. The black dancer in the middle is looking straight into the camera, while Smith (still lip-syncing) is looking away from it.	Text: “all that fear”	
2:43	Shot change of Smit on the cage. Filmed against the light. Smith is looking down at the camera creating a powerful situation over the viewer.	Text: “and all that”	
2:44	Shot change to the same pose of Smith and the dancer but now before the black screen. The three in the middle looking straight into the camera now.	Text: “pressure. I’m hoping that my love”	
2:46	Shot change to the white screen on the moment that the dancers and Smith throw their hands down. Dancers and Smith walking into their V-formation positions.	Text: “will keep you up tonight.”  The words “keep you up tonight” are vocalised by a second voice of Smith.	




<p>2:49</p>	<p>While in V-formation, they are performing the choreography. With their hand against one of their cheeks communicating the gesture for sleeping. While walking on their place and shaking their hips mutually from left to right the background screen switches from white to black to white again. The camera zooms in onto Smith's head slowly. All the dancers and Smith are looking straight into the camera.</p>	<p>Text: "tell me how do you"</p> <p>Smith's voice is distorted like the other times this lyric was sung and there is no music accompanying it.</p>	
<p>2:55</p>	<p>Then they all drop down spreading their legs and dance squatted moving their hips. Smith laughs for the first time in the video in this shot.</p>	<p>Text: "yeah, yeah yeah yeah"</p> <p>The piece of electronically produces music of the last refrain is played again. The melody, made out of up-bending high notes, is doubled by Smith vocalising on "yeah." This melody is descending.</p>	
<p>2:58</p>	<p>Shot of Smith dancing on the cage.</p>	<p>Text: "Love will keep you up tonight."</p>	


3:01	Shot of the bicycle jumping in front of the hanging cage.	Text: “tell me how do you”  Smith’s voice is distorted again.	
3:04	Shot of Smith and the dancers posing in the photo studio before a red screen with trees. Then a snapshot of the dancers posing before the black screen.		
3:06	Shot of the dancers walking in formation around Smith before the less-white screen. It is now lit with light pink colours. Smith walks towards the camera and then stops walking and looks straight into the camera when he starts lip-syncing the lyrics. The dancers are still posing around and in front of Smith while looking into the camera.	Text: “Love will keep you up tonight”  The word “tonight” is doubled and sung on a melisma.	
3:10	Shot change on the word “tonight” to the dark screen. The dancers standing around Smith, going down. On the “ba” of the word “baby” the dancers lift their hands. On the “by” of the word “baby” they put their hands around their necks. Smith is lip-syncing the	Text: “baby”  The word “baby” is sung in multiple voices.	

	<p>lyrics (“tonight”) and looks into the camera with their hand on their chest. The word “baby” is not being lip-synced.</p>		
<p>3:13</p>	<p>The dancers, with their hands holding their necks, together with Smith, are looking up to the left and right and down to the right and then left at the same time together with shot changes to different background colours on every beat. Smith is lip-syncing the whole time.</p>	<p>Text: “How do you sleep when you lie to me? All that shame and all that danger. I’m hopin’ that”</p> <p>The lyrics “how do you sleep when you lie to me” and “that danger” are sung polyphonic with Smith vocalizing on the words “me” and “danger.”</p>	
<p>3:20</p>	<p>Smith and the dancers posing in the photo studio before the screen with the green trees.</p>	<p>Text: “my love will keep you”</p>	

<p>3:21</p>	<p>Back to the scene in which Smith and the dancers are looking to the left and the right.</p>		
<p>3:23</p>	<p>Shot of them posing in the photo studio before the screen with the red trees.</p>	<p>Text: “up tonight”  The lyrics “keep you up tonight” are sung polyphonic and the word “tonight” is sung as a melisma.</p>	

<p>3:24</p>	<p>Back to the scene in which Smith and the dancers are looking to the left and the right.</p>	<p>Text: “baby”</p>	
<p>3:25</p>	<p>Smith in the middle, the dancers posing around Smith. Smith is looking straight into the camera.</p>	<p>Text: “How do you sleep when”</p>	
<p>3:26</p>	<p>The dancers standing still behind Smith. Smith is lip-syncing the ad libs.</p>	<p>Text: “you lie to me?”  Ad libs on the word “oh” through the lyrics.</p>	

3:27	Smith is lying in the bed in the glass cage together with the white robot. Smith's arm is on the robot's shoulder. Behind the bed there are wires hanging from the ceiling. The lights are flashing.	Text: "all that fear"	
3:29	A shot of the glass cage from further away, with the flashing lights.	Text: "and all that pressure"	
3:30	Smith and the dancers are standing in front of the black screen in V-formation. Smith is lip-syncing the ad libs while moving his arms. The dancers stand still.	Text: "I'm hopin' that my" Smith sings ad libs on the "oh"	
3:32	Shot of the glass cage. The light is not flashing anymore and darker, creating a sepia like effect.	Text: "love will keep you up"	

3:34	<p>The dancers are standing against to Smith. Smith is holding one of them in their arms. All the dancers have their eyes shut; Smith is looking straight into the camera. When the last lyric of the song is sung, the dancers open their eyes and look up. Smith theatrically wipes away a tear and rolls it between their thumb and middle finger.</p>	<p>Text: “tonight. Tell me how do you...”</p> <p>On the words “keep you up tonight” same performs a run. The words “tell me how do you” are sung with the distorted voice of Smith.</p>	
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