

## Outing the Narrative:

The positioning of coming-out as cultural practice by narrative cinema through narrative disclosure, representation of the closet and attitudes towards homophobia.

Osama Ammar

Word count: 10,915

**Acknowledgements**

This dissertation has changed considerably since its conception and the reason behind this evolution is that to begin with it was not a dissertation. It was a collection of ideas about identification of gay characters and the implications of what that identification meant. This dissertation has become what it is through no small effort of my supervisor in directing me away from the polemicist side of my writing and pushing me towards actual research rather than what I thought it was. I'd like to thank Dr Daniel Chandler for his supervision, because without it you would be reading something not even half of what it now is.

I'd also like to thank Nigel Orrilard for helping me to grasp the techniques of narrative film. He gave considerable time to explain the workings of semiotics in narrative and also on the organisation of narrative signs.

Thanks also goes out to the many people who have helped me with my considerably poor computer skills and with those to whom it fell to keep my morale up during those dark days of transcription and data entry.

Finally, I'd like to thank the various interviewees, whom I cannot mention by name, but their contribution to this dissertation is invaluable and they took time when they too had their own dissertations to be writing.

## Contents

Abstract	5
Introduction	6
Conceptual Framework	9

Literature Review	24
Methodology	30
Narrative Disclosure	34
Representation of the Closet	44
Discussion and Conclusion	54
Appendices	59
Interview Transcription and summary	59
Semi-Structured Interview Guide	81
Get Real Analytic Description	82
In and Out Analytic Description	88
Three to Tango Analytic Description	93
Identification Data	101
Data Representation	115
Get Real Questionnaire	138
In and Out Questionnaire	139
Three to Tango Questionnaire	140
References	141

## Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to deconstruct the fictional narrative of coming out and, through audience research, come to an understanding as to how the narrative constructs the experience of coming-out. The narrative of the closet is used to

understand what moves are made by the fictional narrative, while the theory of representation is used to understand how the narrative is used by audiences to construct their understanding of coming-out. The dissertation illustrates how narrative disclosure and organisation can be instrumental in the building of characters and narratives. These techniques of narrative are also investigated to see how they help to create the coming-out narrative. Finally, through the audience research, the role of the narrative is analysed to understand how it helps to construct the image of coming out, the closet and gay identity.

## Introduction

This dissertation seeks to draw out the relationship between the narrative of coming out and the fictional representation of that narrative within contemporary cinema. This subject is of personal interest to me since, being gay I have experienced the process of coming out and noticed the differences between its representation and the

lived experience. It seemed quite a legitimate step to claim that the fictional film narrative that uses coming-out would manipulate the narrative in some way to comment on the process and would help to construct an idea of coming-out different from the experience. I wanted to draw those differences clearly so that the representation of the coming-out narrative could be deconstructed to understand the function it would perform in the construction of gay identity, coming out and the closet. Coming out is a part of every gay person's life whether they have done it or not. The representation of the experience will have an effect on the reception that a person coming out will have as well as on that person's own particular fears and desires. It is vital to understand how that representation is working to position people both in and out of the closet.

The three films selected to illustrate the coming-out narrative in film are *Three to Tango*, *Get Real* and *In and Out*. A full analytic description of the films can be found in the appendix, but for now a short synopsis of the films would seem appropriate. In *Three to Tango*, Oscar (a straight man) is mistaken for a gay man and asked to look after his boss's girlfriend. Oscar falls in love with the girl and they become good friends. In order to keep his job, Oscar must maintain the façade of his gay identity until Amy begins to fall in love with him. Thinking he is gay she decides that they should not be near each other. In an awards ceremony, in which Oscar has won 'gay business professional of the year,' Oscar comes out to everyone and he and Amy begin their relationship.

*Get Real* follows a teenager named Steven who is coping with being gay. He discovers that the most popular boy in school is gay and they initiate a relationship.

But John, the romantic interest, will not come out. When there is risk of being discovered, John attacks Steven to keep his image. Steven then comes out to an assembled audience for prize-giving, which includes his parents. The couple split up since John has not accepted his sexuality while Steven decides to move on.

In *In an Out*, Howard (a teacher) is outed by a former student who wins an Oscar. The only problem is that Howard is not gay, or at least he thinks so. Howard is badgered by the press, including a reporter named Peter. Howard is also about to get married and he struggles to repress his stereotypically gay behaviour. Yet when the wedding day comes, Howard cannot go through with it and comes out to the entire church. Howard is then informed that he can no longer be a teacher now that he is gay. At the graduation ceremony, Howard is reinstated because of the overwhelming support he receives from his community.

## Conceptual Framework

Owing to the fact that there have been, to the best of my knowledge, no studies in this specific area of the representation of the gay experience, the conceptual framework will form a significant part of the literature review. The purpose of the conceptual framework is to outline the epistemological position that this dissertation takes with regard to notions of hegemony, representation, narrative and coming-out. For this reason, this section of the dissertation will review the literature and the ideas contained therein, in order to provide a description of the theories and concepts that form the basis of the research.

The greatest implications for the epistemological position of this dissertation come from the subscription to social constructionism. The social constructionist position necessitates certain assumptions that will guide the outcome of the findings of this

study so it would seem prudent to state and comment briefly on these various assumptions. Burr summarises these assumptions and places “a critical stance towards taken for granted knowledge” as the first criterion (Burr 1995: 3). This “stance” places the social constructionist in opposition to empirical and positivist thought and, therefore, simple observation will not lead to the attainment of some kind of truth. Further, there is historical and cultural specificity to knowledge and the social action that it inspires. Importantly, for this dissertation, “knowledge is sustained by social processes,” which means that the knowledge taken for truth will vary between cultures and different periods of time but that knowledge can be maintained by interactions between people and with cultural artefacts (ibid.: 4). Burr also suggests that “knowledge and social action go together,” noting that negotiated understandings that are made from social processes and interactions take many forms and lead to differing forms of social action as a result (ibid.: 5). These negotiated understandings of the world are called *social constructions* and the variance between these constructions leads to the exclusion of some forms of social action and the preference and maintenance of other forms of social action. The purpose of subscribing to social constructionism is summarised when Burr states:

Different discourses construct social phenomena in different ways, and entail different possibilities for human action. So why do some discourses, some ways of representing the world, appear to receive the label of ‘truth’ or ‘common sense’? This raises the issues of power relations, because some ways of representing the world appear to have an oppressive or constraining effect upon some groups. (ibid.: 15)

Certain representations of the world receive the “truth” label and some of those representations can have an oppressive capacity on certain communities. One of these groups is the gay community, which has been under-represented in the past, and now has very little ownership of the current representations. The social action that results from the discourses raised from the representation of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals is here considered to be oppressive in nature. However, as Burr points out, the social constructionist position argues that ‘oppression’ is another discourse, an ideology that formulates a way of looking at the world and understanding a person’s place in that world (ibid.: 15). This example demonstrates the hub of social constructionist position. Since there is no objective reality or truth that can be directly attained, all things in the social world are constructions and are subject to interpretation. On a practical level, this assumption predicates that this dissertation must be aware of the interpretative steps that are made. A necessity is made of reflexivity, since the objects of study are texts open to interpretation, which provide findings that in line with social constructionism can be interpreted too. Jenkins, in his delineation of the work of Pierre Bourdieu, explains that a researcher has a “responsibility for the constitution of the social world as an object for analysis and, further, upon the need to be clear about the effects of the methods which we employ in undertaking research upon its results” (Jenkins 1992: 177). Bourdieu’s understanding is that a researcher’s findings will be subject to interpretation and so it is important that the structures that support those findings are visible so that they can be interpreted as well.

Now that the meta-narrative that formulates the basis of the dissertation has been outlined, it is possible to elucidate the conceptual framework that has been utilised in consideration of notions of hegemony, representation, narrative and coming-out. The

focus of this dissertation was to chart the influence of the hegemonic ideology on the representation of gay men in film. Barbero arms us with a concise summary of the complicated idea of hegemony when he announces:

In Gramsci's view, one class exercises hegemony to the extent that the dominating class has interests which the subaltern classes recognize as being in some degree in their interests too. And the term 'in some degree' means, in this context, that hegemony is not a stable state but that it is being continually disestablished in a 'lived process'.

(Barbero 1993: 74)

For the purposes of this study, the hegemonic power's role in the construction of identity through representation will be ascertained. The hegemonic power, in this context, is identified as heterosexual culture, which by virtue of its majority status has control of the representation of gay men on film. The appeal of the concept of hegemony is that it is constantly in flux and, like all social constructs, restructured by social interaction. The interest that gay, lesbian and bisexual people as a social group share with heterosexuals as a group is the desire for representation of any kind of the gay experience. For most of cinema's history, the homosexual was never represented in direct terms and the necessity for a particular type of encoding arose to allow gay characters into film (Russo 1981: 214). Today, Hollywood shows a greater willingness to portray gay characters and independent film has provided an alternative means of representation that has obviously been welcomed by the gay community. Hollywood's interest in the representation of gay men, like all of its interests, is based on the economic potential of the inclusion of gay characters, which draws in a gay audience. Yet, because of the hegemony of heterosexuality, the representations of

gay men and their experiences are mediated by the need to draw in straight audiences too. Since straight people form the majority, their needs are catered for because they can provide more revenue. This concept of the hegemonic is key to the findings of this dissertation. As Gitlin explains “popular culture absorbs oppositional ideology, adapts it to the contours of the core hegemonic principles, and domesticates it” (Gitlin 1987: 242). Cinematic representations of gay men and their experiences are adapted to the “contours” of straight representation in this way and so this will effect the coming-out narrative of the gay characters. The reason why this notion of the hegemonic control of popular culture is so useful is that it does not set this situation in stone. Hegemony is not stable and is subject to social interactions just as any social construct and this entails the potential for a re-thinking of the representation of the coming-out narrative. Gitlin points out that “popular culture is a realm for the expression of forms of resistance and oppositional ideology” (Gitlin 1986: 242). The purpose of this dissertation is to outline where the representation given by popular culture (in the form of cinema) is considered by a selection of gay and straight viewers to match with the actual potential pathways of the coming-out narrative.

The word representation has all ready been used quite frequently, so it is important to acknowledge what is exactly meant by this term. Chandler understands representation as referring to “the construction in any medium (especially the *mass media*) of aspects of ‘reality’ such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities and other abstract concepts” (Chandler 2002: 1). The use of the word construction is of vital importance to the notion of representation presented in this study. A representation is not an object fixed with one meaning. Rather representation is the process undergone between the production

reference and reception which formulates a construct. Producers of a film will attempt to incorporate or code for a particular meaning; the text will contain those codes but many others too, and those codes are then subject to reception.

Reception complicates the coding process considerably because of the cultural and historical specificity of knowledge. The codes are polysemic and so can be interpreted in numerous ways by different people. Certain codes may not be



### **The Signs that Characters Use**

In this shot, Lenore in the background is watching Peter and Oscar. She overhears them saying that they are both proud to be each other's "partner".

The audience knows the truth that Oscar and Peter are business partners but Lenore reads the available signs to conclude that the two men are a gay couple.

noticed and apparently unimportant details to the producers can become meaningful because of the reception. In other words, there is the capability to subscribe to a preferred reading, but absolutely no guarantee, because a viewer can negotiate their own meaning from a text and reject outright the coding that has been inserted by the producer (Moore 2000: 6). Again, this approach is considered to be constructionist. Although the materiality of the signs is not being denied, a meaning is not fixed to that sign: it is the conceptual system of representation through which meaning is made and expressed (Hall 1997: 25). Since different receptions are possible, it is necessary to include at least a sample of the potential readings that can be made from the films to be studied. For this reason, audience research has been used to cater to the

assumption that meaning is constructed and that there is no one truthful reading of the signs. It is too easy to be drawn into the situation of criticising a representation and implicitly stating that there could be one representation that is right. That is not the purpose of this research. The aims are to attempt to differentiate and draw similarities between the different narrative possibilities that are presented in the films and understand how coming out is positioned by those narratives.

The aim of this study is to discover a link between narrative disclosure as a process and coming out. Narrative is evidently central to the conceptual framework on which this dissertation is based. The process of coming out is represented on film as a series of events that build into a narrative, ending with the eventual coming out of the character. The narrative of coming out as a representation needs to be considered. In order to understand the representation of coming out in narrative it is first necessary to understand how narrative works to represent. Branigan calls attention to the process of 'narration', of which he says:

Narration is the overall regulation and distribution of knowledge which determines *how* and when the spectator acquires knowledge – that is how the spectator is able to know what he or she comes to know in a narrative. A typical description of the spectator's 'position' of knowledge includes the invention of (sometimes tacit) speakers, listeners, and watchers who are in a (spatial and temporal) position to know, and to make use of one or more *disparities* of knowledge. (Branigan 1992: 76)

The process of narration is reliant on the communication of various units of information. However, this communication is mediated so that knowledge is not just

dumped and picked through but rather given in an order that controls the flow of information. The spectator is provided with one knowledge unit followed by another, which build into the narrative. Further, the control of the flow of information allows for information to be withheld. The method of communication of these elements is the use of signs, coming from the images and the sound. Lothe notes the use of signs to communicate information in film when he comments:

If we link film communication to linguistic communication in this way, with the French semiologist Christian Metz we can answer the question of what film communication is as follows: film is a complex system of successive encoded signs (Metz 1974) (Lothe 2000: 12)

Using semiotics to understand how the information in the narrative flow is communicated, certain assumptions about the way in which these signs act can be made. Firstly, the polysemy of signs means that not all meanings are intentional, so that even if the producers code for one meaning there is no reason that it cannot be interpreted to mean something else. Secondly, a sign's meaning can be changed or modified by preceding or successive signs (private conversation with Nigel Orrillard, 08/02/02). Again, the implications of these assumptions is that different viewers will make different interpretations of the same signs and so there is a need to see how interpretations are made and what the effects of these particular readings have on the narrative. In order to do this, it is necessary to analyse the readings of a number of viewers to see how they use the signs with which they are presented.

Narration does not simply rely on the inclusion of signs to make meaning. The organisation of signs controls the story information through two methods. Temporal

organisation of the narrative, such as the use of flashback and flashforward can provide information that will change the meaning of all of the signs that had been given thus far (ibid.). The best example of this come from *Saving Private Ryan*, where the flashback takes up almost the entire film but reveals at the very end that the character we had assumed to be Tom Hanks as an old man was in fact Private Ryan of the title and that Tom Hanks' character died while rescuing Ryan. The second method of organisation in narration comes from the point-of-view that the audience is given in relation to the subject. Knowledge is aligned with certain characters or comes from an objective point-of-view and this can lead to information being withheld and disclosed to change the meaning of the preceding signs. *The Usual Suspects* illustrates this quite clearly, because the entire film is told by Verbal Kint in an interview with a detective, apart from the attainment of the one sign that will change the others. The audience's knowledge is aligned with the detective who is told the story of a group of thieves of which Verbal was little more than a bystander. When the final sign comes to light, a fax of a picture of the face of the man known as Keyser Soze who masterminded a slaughter, the preceding signs are utterly changed. The fax shows Verbal's face, he is Keyser Soze. The entire story was a lie. Here the alignment of audience knowledge with character knowledge allows a sign to be withheld and thus alter the narrative all at once. It is, though, important to remember that the codes that are placed in a film by its producers will not necessary be interpreted in the desired way. The control of story information is not total because audiences do not passively receive signs and follow the clues as given. Branigan points out that:

One must also expand the notion of a spectator's "knowledge" beyond immediate "seeing" to include various effects produced by the sound track,

our *memory* of previous scenes, anticipated pleasure or anxiety, generic and cultural expectations, and so forth. (Branigan 1992: 72)

The various kinds of knowledge that a member of an audience will be using in order to make their interpretations will evidently affect the experience of the film. Certain viewers will expect some characters to be straight, others gay and these expectations will affect the reading of the film. In the case of the films being studied, there seems to be a pattern of characters who are expected to be straight suddenly revealing that they are gay. The filmmakers, to an extent, code the characters as straight and withhold the information about their sexuality until it serves the plot to be revealed. That is not to say that some viewers will not have already found enough signs to suggest that a character is gay, but more that confirmation will be given by the signs.

The final section of the conceptual framework will draw the connection between narration and coming out. Gordon approaches the subject of the coming-out narrative from a retrospective position considering the way that coming out is seen as movement from 'in' to 'out'. Gordon notes that coming out is always represented through the notion of narrative progression. This parallel to a narrative is extended to include the patterning of a fictional narrative by following two tropes of fictional narration:

First, it understands its object by means of what Peter Brook calls the "anticipation of retrospection." That is, the meaning of adolescence is always understood to become apparent only in hindsight; it is structured throughout by a foreshadowed denouement, which is the subject's arrival at adulthood.

Second, however, this denouement must never occur too soon; the narrative must be allowed to run its course, resulting in an array of what Roland Barthes refers to as “dilatatory” strategies: detours, digressions, red herring, and the like.

(Gordon 1999: 3)

Gordon’s understanding of the coming-out narrative recognises the parallels between the fictional narrative. The ending, though not always in sight, is always expected. The end that Gordon refers to is adulthood and being ‘out’, because his frame of reference for the coming-out narrative only includes the adolescent coming out. Since this study uses two films that depict older gay men coming out the equation of adulthood and ‘outness’ seemingly does not hold. The second consideration that Gordon makes is that the narrative has a particular ending point that can only be achieved after some kind of growth (again this growth in Gordon’s mind is from adolescence into adulthood). The usefulness of Gordon’s work stems from his application of a narrative framework to coming out. Through this application, Gordon illustrates two of the tropes of a fictional narrative in action within the conceptualisation of coming out. This type of application is paramount to the background theories in action. Coming-out follows a narrative pathway and in its representation in film, this narrative is used and adapted to tell a story. As has been mentioned, narration relies on the inclusion of signs that code for different meanings. Gay identification relies also on these signs, as Dubin states when he announces:

Homosexual argot captures an important aspect of this with the phrase “dropping your hairpins,” or giving off signals that a savvy recipient can decipher or identify someone as gay...here the problem is to manage information and regulate self-disclosure. (Dubin 1998: 135)

Dubin suggests that identification of sexuality depends on signs being read by a “savvy recipient”. This stance again draws parallels between coming-out and film narration. Just as a viewer watching a film will be using signs to decipher information about characters and the plot, a person can use signs to identify another person’s sexuality. Dubin also mentions the management of information, which can be placed alongside the organisation of signs in a film to withhold certain signs. A film narrative can “regulate” the signs that identify a character as gay so that they can be suddenly revealed as gay.

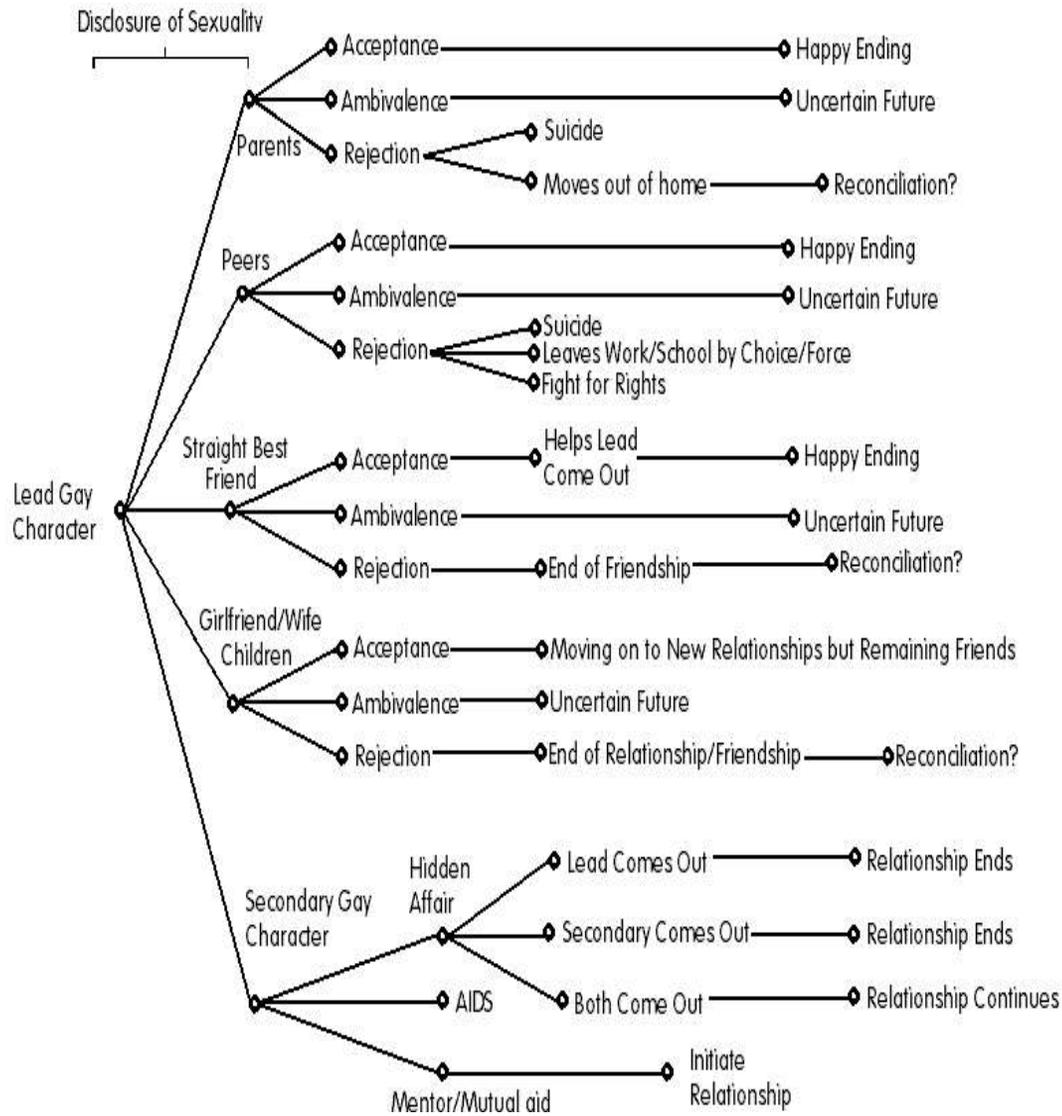
The formulation of this connection led to the possibility of drawing up a template of narrative options following someone coming out (shown overleaf). The template is an attempt to be as inclusive as possible, the pathways need not occur all at once and certain pathways will not be taken at all. The purpose of this template is to illustrate the narrative potentials of coming out, which will allow the mapping of the narrative pathways of the particular films being studied. Although the template is supposed to be exhaustive, the potential remains for certain pathways not to be mapped, since the experience of coming out varies greatly from person to person. However, as a tool, the template will be of great use to see how the representation of the coming-out narrative varies in film.

### Reflexive Considerations

The template itself constitutes a representation of the coming-out experience, so as any representation is subject to the control of the producer and the reception of its reader.

I have tried as best as possible not to position any pathway as more acceptable than any other, but undoubtedly, there is the potential for the template to be read in this way.

Further, the template is not meant to represent the truth of coming out, but merely demonstrate as many of the possibilities involved in the process as possible.





## Literature Review

As was mentioned before, there has been little study into the area of the coming-out narrative, but some does exist and the Literature Review will critically analyse these studies to glean from them insights and keys to the research question. The first step to take is to outline why this dissertation is of importance to consideration of the representation of the gay experience. Coming out is “the one strategy unique to lesbian and gay politics. No other group is quite literally invisible” (Dyer 1990: 249). As coming out is such a vital and peculiar experience to gay identity, the representation of the process will have an effect on the thoughts and feelings that both gay and straight have about homosexuality. The representations of coming out come not only from Hollywood, but the power of this institution in making and distributing images of all kinds, means that some of the power of representation lies in the hands of corporations. Moritz, in her analysis of the representation of lesbians on television says:

These are not scripts that argue for the rights, legal or otherwise, of homosexuals. They are, instead, productions designed to attract mass audience who will have varying degrees of willingness to accept any lesbian depictions in the first place. (Moritz 1994: 141)

The film industry is based around the financial success of its films. In the end, it comes down to films that can draw in large audiences, just as television. Moritz contends that in the representation of gay and lesbian characters there must be a balance struck to ensure the bankability of the film. If gay characters are portrayed in film and television, that representation is tempered by the need to also draw in an audience who will not be willing to see that representation at all. Aspects of a gay

character are omitted to allow them presence. This matches quite strongly with the understanding of hegemony that will mould the representation to domesticate the subaltern position. Moritz takes the opinion that television represents gay characters using this condition of acceptability to the whole potential audience.

Farmer recognizes in a position such as Moritz's that the research will identify the "deformative" effects of the heterocentric agenda in the representations (Farmer 2000: 4). The problem with this approach is that it assumes that all audience readings will be the same and Farmer discusses the analytical position of more recent work on representation of gay characters that understands the polyvalence of the representational systems at work in film. Farmer considers that:

although Hollywood's role as an institution of heteronormativity is indisputable and its representational strategies of homophobic abuse glaringly evident, this in no way exhausts the vast range of cinema's signifying effects or the dynamic ways in which it is often used and interpreted within the contexts of gay and lesbian reception.

(Farmer 2000: 5)

Farmer understands the representational strategies of film as allowing gay spectators to be able to make meaning differently from straight audiences. Gay experience leads to a different culturally defined ability to read and make sense of the signs that build into the narrative. Therefore, criticising the deformative effects of the representations will not necessary prove useful because different readers make meaning in different ways. However, this does not let the representations off the hook. The fact remains that cinema's role in representing homosexuality has not been emancipatory. It is still

clear that there are few gay characters in contemporary cinema and even fewer narratives dealing with exclusively gay experiences. Yet, Farmer's understanding of hegemony gives him the ability to see that boundaries of acceptable representation are shifting and that more and more often gay characters and themes are being expressed in cinema (Farmer 2000: 43). Further, Farmer remarks:

Generations of gay men have used film to produce their sexual and social subjectivities with the result that spectatorship has, as Judith Mayne noted, developed as a fundamental "component of the various narratives that constitute the very notion of a gay/lesbian identity".

(Farmer 2000: 24)

The representations of gay men on film help to constitute the subjectivities of gay men according to Farmer. One of the "narratives" that builds into the notion of being gay is the coming-out narrative, which again through its representation helps gay men and lesbians understand the experience. It becomes clear from this understanding that the link between the coming-out narrative and its representational counterpart in fiction film is strengthened by the suggestion that they inform each other. The experience of coming out will be put on film and in the transference be converted into the fictional narrative. Then, when viewed, the narrative will inform, to an extent, the experience of coming out of the closet by gay men, lesbians and bisexuals, which is of particular import to closeted individuals whose only contact with the gay community is through its representation. The particular approach that Farmer uses is very useful to the aims of this study, because he acknowledges the importance of the representations to the construction of gay identity without merely suggesting that the representations enforce homophobia. If that were true, then no gay people would ever watch those representations and certainly not enjoy them. Farmer's understanding of

the concept of gay spectatorship is very useful for the goals of the study, but it is important to note that Farmer subscribes to psychoanalytic theory which cannot lock with the social constructionist position. Therefore, Farmer's work will only provide a base of knowledge from which to work.

The final piece of research that bears resemblance to the intended goals and practices of this dissertation is Keller's analysis of the conversion fantasy often framed within a coming-out narrative (Keller 2000: 9). Keller even uses one of the films that this study has chosen, *Get Real*, which he uses to show the use of a fantasy narrative of an ostensibly straight character being revealed as gay. Often, Keller remarks on the closet, because the characters facing the conversion will be troubled by their newfound sexuality and will have to decide whether or not it is possible for them come-out. The particular value of Keller's study is that he considers issues relating to the positioning of coming out by the narratives that he is analysing. A pertinent example of this technique comes when Keller notices that characters who do not come-out of the closet are portrayed as "cowardly and irresponsible" (Keller 2000: 43). The positioning of the spectators and the portrayal of the characters usually means that the audience is aligned with a character who is coming out and by the end of the film does. If there is a character who does not come out, then that choice is often represented as the wrong one. To be clear, there seems little doubt that being out of the closet is the only way that a gay man, lesbian or bisexual can be honest and free to do as they wish, but the film's code is that staying in is irresponsible without exception. This trope of the coming-out narrative is one that will be investigated further in this dissertation, but Keller demonstrates that through an analysis of the narrative that the closet is subject to construction through its representation. This notion of the construction and positioning of coming out and the closet forms the

central point of investigation within this study. Keller's work is extremely useful for illustrating a dimension of the construction, but where his investigation fails is that it relies only on his interpretation. It is clear that if this is a deconstruction of the representation of the closet and coming out that there will be need to understand if other people use the signs in the same way and whether or not they recognise the same positioning by the narrative. What Keller does do is provide a starting point for the research questions because it is clear that within the coming-out narrative that there are considerations to be made about how the narrative is acting to position the actions of the characters both in and out of the closet.

## Methodology

The objects of analysis in this dissertation are the narratives of three films: *Get Real*, *Three to Tango* and *In and Out*. These films were selected because they exhibit features within their narrative that are to be studied. Owing to the fact that the purpose of the dissertation is to dissect the hegemonic representation, Hollywood films were needed. There are few Hollywood films that deal with coming out and so *Three to Tango* and *In and Out* were the only apparent choices that dealt with coming out with sufficient detail to render comment. All three films contain within them coming-out narratives of sorts for one or more of the characters. *Three to Tango* and *In and Out* are Hollywood films, while *Get Real* is a small British film. The intention behind using *Get Real* is show how the coming-out narrative operates outside if Hollywood production methods as well as in. The narratives focus on differently aged characters and since it is a trope of the coming-out film to focus on younger gay characters *In and Out* presented itself as an interesting version of the narrative since it involved an older character. *Three to Tango* is of interest because it uses a straight character who is thought to be gay and has to out himself as a straight man. Finally, *Get Real's* narrative interest is owed to its focus on a young gay character and an illicit affair with a gay man who has not accepted his own sexuality. The narrative pathways are all different but there is the common theme that by the end of the film, the protagonist has come-out.

The method of analysing these films will be through audience research combined with textual analysis. At certain points in the films, such as after a character reveals their sexuality or comes out, the film is stopped and the viewers fill in a questionnaire (in appendices) asking them to decide which characters they think are straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual or other. These pause points were selected because of their proximity to revelations of sexuality and pertinent signs that seemed to code to homosexuality. These results are used to discuss narrative disclosure and its implications on the representation of the closet and coming-out. The viewers also fill in a section of the questionnaire that attempts to track how they feel about the characters. The questions they are asked are: who do you like most?; who do you dislike most?; who do want to be most

### Reflexive Considerations

The interview process has several considerations to be made. Firstly, often the interviewee will only start to think about the concerns of the question when it has been posed. Their normal viewing practice of every viewer does not necessarily involve deciphering the sexuality of each of the characters.

Secondly, the answers provided by the interviewees are subjected to their control. An openly gay man conducted the interviews.

The consequence of this is that the interviewees would be reluctant to say anything that could be construed as homophobic but also they may also adopt an indignant tone about the poor representation of homosexuals in order to concur with the interviewer. The information from the interviews again becomes a text to be read and so the potential for the polysemy of signs bears its head to remind that the results of this study too will become yet another text to be interpreted.

like?; who is most like someone you know?;

who do you sympathise with most?. These questions will show how a character is liked or disliked after certain revelations about their sexuality. These results will be used to understand how the narrative positions the closet and the homosexuals who are in it. After the viewers have seen the film, they are given a short semi-structured interview asking them about which signs prompted them to decide whether or not a character is the sexuality they chose, the representation of homosexuality, the narrative's effect on the portrayal of coming-out and the closet and finally the homophobia within the film. Summaries and relevant transcriptions from the interviews as well as the interview guide can be found in the appendices. The semi-structured interview process is used in order to allow the interviewer to probe points of interest but also to gain the information relating to the specific goals of the research.

The audience research involves twelve viewers who watch the films. The viewer selection process firstly required that all of the viewers be film and television students because this allowed them to be more capable of talking about the signs that they used to decipher a character's sexual identity. The second requirement was that the sample was to contain gay viewers as well as straight viewers. This was to ensure that there was neither a bias towards heterosexual or homosexual spectatorships and to increase the scope of the research. Since this is a piece of

qualitative research the need for representative results is lessened and a "snowball sampling" technique was used

in order to gain sufficient numbers of interviewees (Bryman 2001: 98). The sample is not supposed to be totally representative since within the scale of this dissertation that is impossible. Instead, the sample is supposed to be as wide as possible

within the confines of the study. The potential that the viewers had seen the films before was present and obviously this would mean that those viewers would know for definite the sexualities of the characters. These viewers were asked to disclose whether or not they had seen the film before and they were asked to comment on how the signs' meanings had been changed by their knowledge.

### Reflexive considerations

In selecting film and television students the question arises to their abilities to read film texts in different ways from the general public. Film students are aware of traditions of representations and genre expectations. Treating texts as they do will mean that their readings are significantly more complex and more based in knowledge of the subject.

The data has been tabulated and put into chart form to better represent the changing attitudes of the viewers and this can all be found in the appendices although pertinent parts of the data will be displayed within the analysis of the films.

## Narrative Disclosure

This chapter of the dissertation seeks to understand how the narrative's use of disclosure has an effect on the representation of the gay characters, the closet and coming out. Narrative disclosure operates using the techniques of narrative organisation and the inclusion of signs as explained in the conceptual framework. An important question to be answered is that of the nature of the signs that are placed. Viewer ten provides an answer to this question when she talks about her reasoning behind considering Jack in *In and Out* to be gay:

VIEWER 10:            This kid / I felt he was being shown as a in a Hollywood shorthand for gayness / which is sensitive / slightly intellectual / that / terribly terribly tidy / not inclined to belch or fart as opposed to his friend.

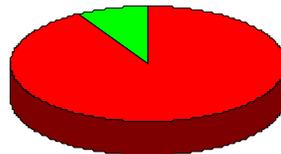
The term that is of most interest is the notion of "Hollywood shorthand", which brings to the fore idea that signs are being placed to identify the character as gay. What is more, the signs that are being used are part of a tradition of signifying that Hollywood has used enough for the viewer to recognise as a "shorthand". This idea of the frequent use of a specific set of signs for the representation of gay characters seems to be extendable to the concept of stereotype. Dyer's work on stereotypes helps to understand how they work in order to identify a character, when he says:

Stereotypes as a form of 'ordering' the mass complex and inchoate data that we receive from the world are only a particular form – to do with the representation and categorization of persons – of the wider process by which any human society, and individuals within it, make sense if that society through generalities, patternings and 'typifications'.

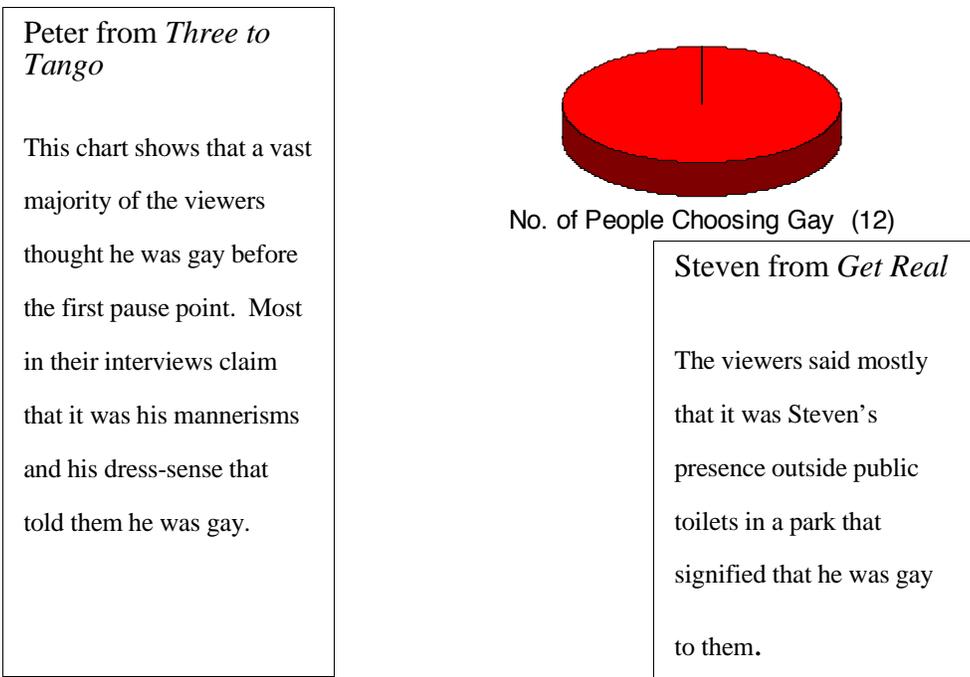
(Dyer 1993: 12)

It is because of a stereotype's ability to order of a mass of data that it is so useful to cinematic representation. A few choice character traits that form a stereotype can signal that a character is gay or straight, or works in an office or on a farm, comes from space or just the East End of London. Stereotypes are in action in all cinematic representations because they are an economic shorthand. The characters who are identified as gay from the very beginning of the film are portrayed using stereotypes so that their identity can be fixed. Steven from *Get Real* and Peter from *Three to Tango* are examples of these types of characters. The charts showing their selected sexualities from the first pause point illustrate that few audience members were unsure. The reason for the definitive response for this comes from the use of stereotypes. Steven is seen 'cottaging' (using parks as venues for sexual encounters) while it is Peter's mannerisms that gave him away to the viewers.

No. of Not Choosing (1)



No. of People Choosing Gay (11)



However, not all of the characters are so easily identified. The identity of some characters is withheld by not using stereotypical signs. If a character is not revealed as gay at the beginning of the narrative then the narrative disclosure must serve some purpose, and it will almost certainly have some effect on the reception of that character and what he or she represents.

Each film has their own version of the covert homosexual character but they operate with varying success. John, in *Get Real*, is one of these characters and by and large, the viewers were aware that he was gay before the character is revealed also using the stereotyped activity of cottaging.



John from *Get Real*

The majority of the viewers recognised that John was gay before the first pause point. The question is why was this character more identifiable than the others.

The reason that John was more easily identified than characters, such as Peter in *In and Out* and Kevin in *Three to Tango* is demonstrated in the replies to the questions about John in the interviews:

VIEWER TWO: Well / *Get Real* it was such a well made film [laugh] when we first saw him he was on the stairs and like all the girls are like ooh lovely / and he's looking all tall / and about thirty / and er // and err / he's just ignoring / er Steven and I think / well / he's / supposed to be looking like ooh he's sexy head boy / of the school / and we're all supposed to think he is straight.

This viewer understood the character to be gay precisely because the film tried to make him look straight. The adoration of the girls, his imposing size and attractiveness build an image that is on the surface the stereotype of a popular straight man. Yet the viewer's reception saw those signs and read them conversely. The viewer was aware that the film was using signs to make him think that the character was straight, but also that the coding was more than likely a deception. For now the focus will remain on the coding of the character's sexuality but this will be followed by a consideration of how the viewer understood John's 'straightness' to be a deception. Viewer eight also recognised the character as gay from the outset but for slightly different reasons:

**VIEWER EIGHT:** Erm / well it it / the way the film set him up / I think that was what what it was er, / the way they made a big thing of looking over at him.

The word “looking” is used to refer possibly to a specific shot in the film where Steven and Linda are talking about John and how popular and successful he is and we see John from afar talking to his friends. We cannot hear what he is saying but he towers above the group of other boys and girls around him. The use of this shot is potentially the “big thing” that this viewer recognised as a sign of the character’s sexuality. The shot does not reveal the sexuality of the character directly but carries with it the implication that the character has a more developed role to play in the narrative and this viewer presumed that role would be as a romantic interest.



### **The “big thing” about Looking**

Certain viewers identified John as gay from this shot. Steven is looking at John while he is talking to his friends. John’s position on frame makes him the only male character whose face can be seen. John is much taller than the other characters on screen as well. As Steven and Linda talked about John, those viewers apparently understood that this character’s role was to be developed and they presumed that it must through his coming out.

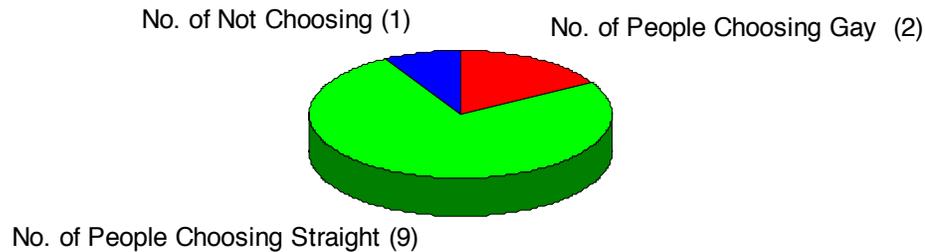
Finally, viewer ten considers the fact that the film is British and her expectations because of that:

**VIEWER TEN:** Er and you expect that he’s gonna come out / you hope / you know you hope there will be some romantic inclusion for your lead character / so / you kind of hope that this will be requited / erm but that said you don’t have any information at that point / you really don’t have any information and that’s separate from a Hollywood film because you know that this is a British film so / you expect there to be more people coming out and people to be more / erm // gay in a less Hollywood way / you know the fact that you don’t look like a Hollywood gay person doesn’t mean you can’t be gay

The fact that the film did not come from the Hollywood production factory suggested to this viewer that the film would be able to include characters who did not conform to stereotypes in the same way as Hollywood film. Again it is John’s apparent

straightness that codes him as gay but also the fact that this film is capable of representing outside of the boundaries of stereotypes.

Now that some of the methodologies that the viewers used to establish one the covert characters as gay have been analysed, there is the potential to understand why they did not recognise the sexuality of Kevin in *Three to Tango* and Peter in *In and Out*. The charts below show how the viewers had little idea of the homosexuality of the characters and the interviews revealed that most did not guess until the character came out to someone else.



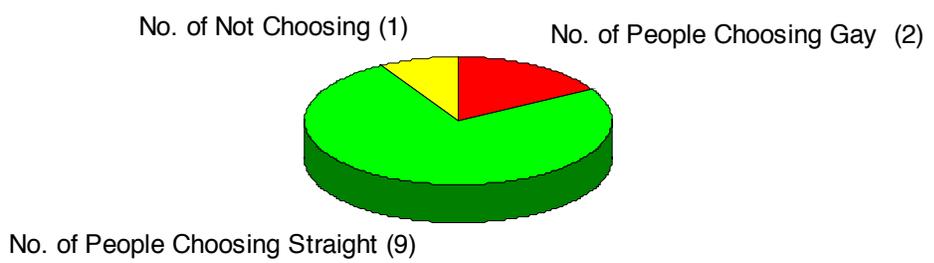
Kevin from *Three to Tango*

A high proportion of the sample did not recognise this character's sexuality until he actually admits to being gay.

Peter from *In and Out*

Again, the majority had little idea that this character is gay.

Rather coincidentally more than significant the same proportions made the same choices as with Kevin.



Firstly, concerning Viewer Eight's noticing of the camera shot that lingers on John and reveals that he has a developing role in the narrative, no such shot occurs for

these characters in their respective films. At the beginning of the films, they have very little screen time and they are usually sharing the screen with other important figures in the plot. In *In and Out*, Peter is introduced at the same time as Cameron, the man who outs the protagonist. In *Three to Tango*, Kevin is introduced as an ex-boyfriend of Amy and is on screen for seconds with both Amy and Charles. Secondly, the issue of a stereotyped masculinity as a sign of homosexuality does not feature in the representation of Peter. The actor who plays Kevin is very muscular, the character is a famous American football player, which would presume that the viewers would use the same reading as with John and code him as gay. Yet they do not. The answer may lie in the expectations of the genre, as viewer ten points out. This is Hollywood film, the expectation, according to viewer ten, is that if a character is coded as stereotypically straight then it is more than likely that they will be straight because of the traditional Hollywood frame of representation.

One of the viewers, who did recognise that Kevin was gay, reasoned her choice by announcing:

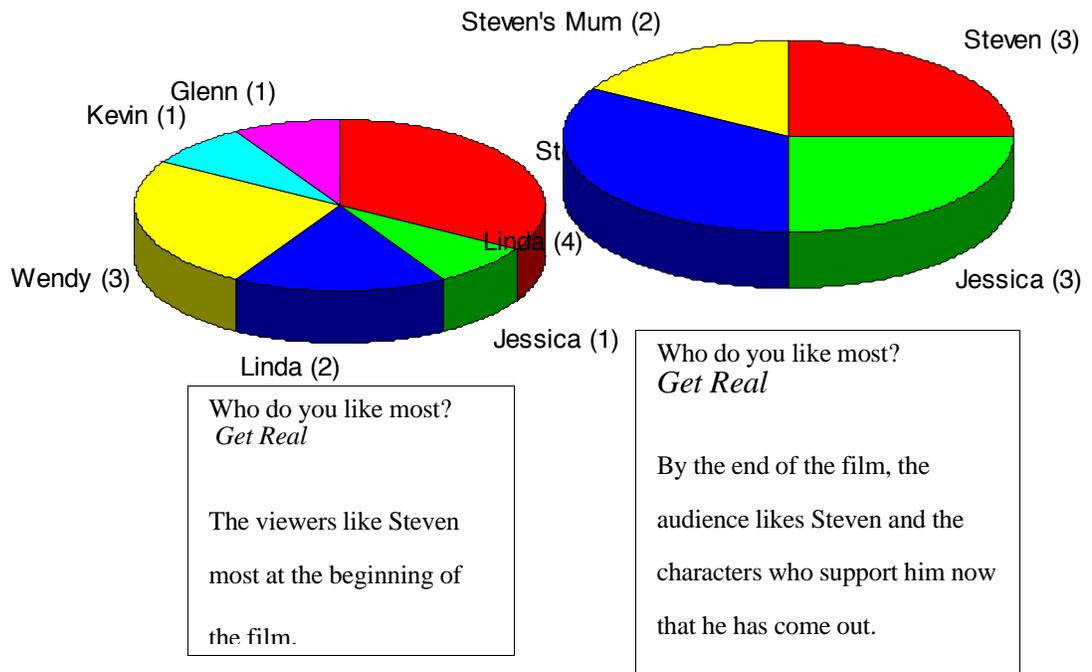
VIEWER THREE: Right err I I suspected he might have been gay to start off with because / er it seemed that this film would like to play with / the notion of being muscley gay man I don't know why just smiley and it just seemed the sort of film that would.

This viewer's expectations of the film were changed because she did not see it as part of the Hollywood tradition of representation, but rather a playful film that would be of the sort to blur the lines of representation of the gay characters. Through the understanding that the covert characters are coded through the use of signs that are

not those associated with gay representation, it is possible to determine how the use of narrative disclosure can represent homosexuals, the closet and coming out. If a film plays with the representation, as all the films tried to varying success, then the stereotype of gay behaviour and image is subverted. Characters are portrayed using stereotypes in order to indicate clearly that the character is gay and also to suggest that the film will be using stereotypes in all of its representation. Then through the introduction of a character, whose signs are free from stereotypes, the notion of the stereotype is problematised. Stereotypes will no longer do, because they simply do not code for every gay character. If the films do not “use a certain set of visual and aural signs which immediately bespeak homosexuality and connote the qualities associated, stereotypically, with it” then the system of representation of homosexuality is freed from its boundaries (Dyer 1977, 31). The coming-out narrative suddenly changes from the idea of a straight person becoming gay and turning in a set of monstrous stereotypes into a gay man simply telling the truth about his sexuality. The fact that Kevin and John are sportsmen, while Peter is a famous and recognisable face on television help to subvert the power of the stereotype from casting all gay men in the role of the abject effete. However, that is not to say that no character will ever be portrayed as such, because stereotypes are not problematic because they inherently miscast a social group, but rather they cast only in one way that exemplifies the lack in comparison to the hegemonic (Dyer 1977, 31).

## Representation of the Closet

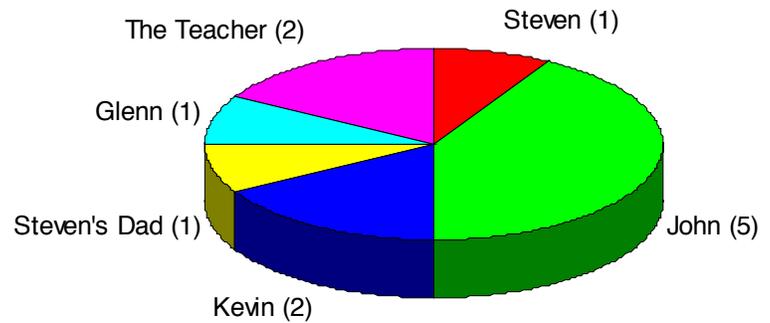
The last chapter focused exclusively on the inclusion of signs in the coding of gay representation and this chapter will deal more with the organisation of those signs through the narrative point-of-view. In terms of organisation of the narratives, these films take one character who has yet to come out for various reasons. The narrative then follows that character as they deal with the particular concerns they face from their experience of the closet. By the end of the film, the protagonists have come out to their family, friends and co-workers. The point-of-view used by the three films is an alignment of audience knowledge and central character knowledge. The first task is to track the point-of-view of the audience and understand what implications that has for their reading of the films. The basis behind tracking the audience empathy for a character comes from the data collected about which characters they liked, disliked, wanted to be most like, saw most like someone they knew and sympathised most with.



The character most liked at the beginning of *Get Real* is Steven, who as the protagonist is featured much in the opening sequences. The audience is all aware of Steven's sexuality and that he is currently in the closet. By the end of the film, the audience only likes those characters who have accepted Steven, and Steven himself. These results indicate that the film positions the closet as negative and the process of coming-out as positive. If the audience likes Steven because he has come out, then their reaction to John who has not come out is also of importance. The chart shows that the audience dislikes John, but not necessarily for just staying in the closet but also because he attacks Steven in an effort to secure his image as the masculine and straight head boy in front of his friends.

Who do you dislike most?  
*Get Real*

By the end of the film, the audience dislikes John, who has not come out and because of being scared of being found out attacks Steven.



Again the position of the coming-out process is made positive because of the representation of the characters who are in the closet. This view is supported by the comments of some of the viewers one of whom states:

**VIEWER SIX:** Steven / came out / again in front of the audience / a real nerve-wrecking thing to do that and again he got the sort of applause / erm so again the film was sort of saying / that you know if you come out you'll get support / and you know / you can do it you know this guy's done it in front of an audience of people who clearly don't like / homosexuals / um and yet he does it and he gets the applause and and he can you know you can win you can do it like this / and I really really thought / that the way that John that way John dealt with it / at the end / was saying / well this is what can also happen / if you don't come-out / and really I disliked him immensely by the end.

The first detail from this response is that Steven's act of coming-out is seen as extremely brave because not only does he just come out but he also does it in front of an extremely large audience. The reaction that Steven receives from that audience also valorises the action of coming-out because it provokes applause rather than

jeering and stoning. This viewer also recognised that John's act of staying in the closet made that character disliked. The viewer comments also that this shows two sides of the experience of the closet: the position after one has come-out, which is a vast improvement on the situation in the closet; and the closeted individual who is not brave enough to come out. Further, as Viewer One comments, "if you don't / tell the world you're gay / then / you're not gonna be / as happy /...". It is clear from this situation in *Get Real* that coming-out is represented as the only option for a gay person if they want to be happy.

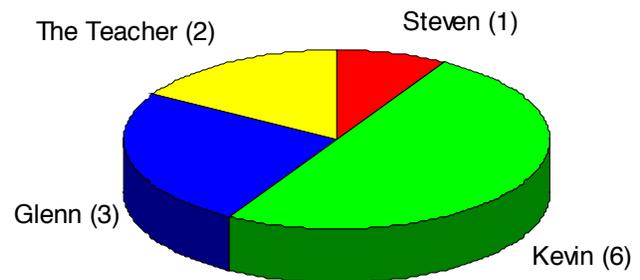
Part of the reason for the dislike that is focused on the gay characters in the closet seems to stem from the fact that they are deceiving people in their lives and this has the potential to ruin the lives of the other characters. Viewer one expresses this idea in his consideration of Howard in *In and Out*:

VIEWER ONE:       .../ in a way it made me think that the Kevin Klein character is a bastard and / if you stay in the closet and / you wreck other people's lives / by / getting married to somebody you / obviously aren't attracted to / because you're gay.

Characters in the closet are repeatedly cast as people who are not facing up to the responsibilities that being gay brings. For a viewer who is in the closet, the film narrative will seem target them for abuse and construct the process of coming out as the only thing to do. Stepping back for one moment to *Get Real*, the character Glenn is first seen and identified as gay at the very beginning of the film. Just before the second pause, the audience discovers that Glenn is married with a child and this prompted a response in their consideration of which characters they dislike.

Who do you dislike most?  
*Get Real*

After it is revealed that Glenn is married the audience begin to dislike him, though not as much as the homophobic Kevin.



Glenn becomes the second most disliked character because of his status as a closeted, presumably bisexual, man. The audience is quite clear in their feelings towards characters who are closeted. The representation gives an image of a timid man or woman who will lie or, in the case of John, join in with physical homophobic abuse in order to maintain their image of straightness. However, the central characters are, for the most part of these films, in the closet, yet the audience is capable of sympathising with that position. This sympathy is created by the narrative point-of-view, which gives the audience the ability to see the investments that the closet has for the particular characters. In the case of Steven in *Get Real*, that is the protection against the homophobic attitudes of his father and peers. Oscar, the straight man who is forced to pretend to be gay, in *Three to Tango*, is in the closet through no fault of his own and, when he protests to his straightness, no one believes him. Finally, Howard, in *In and Out*, has no awareness of his sexuality until moments before he is to be married. The alignment of knowledge with Howard means that the audience too has little idea of the definite nature of Howard's sexuality except from a collection of stereotyped signs.

A further narrative move that positions the coming-out process lies in the notion of the investment in the closet. In *Three to Tango*, the main reason that Oscar wishes to come out as straight is that he is in love with Amy. In explaining her thoughts and feelings about the ending of *Three to Tango*, Viewer Three says:

VIEWER THREE: Yeah it did seem like the natural conclusion for this particular film / erm I don't think / this particular film would have had him any other way / really / other than with Amy / at the end / um / the // yeah it's just like / big public resolving of his problems you know facing up to / what he had to face up to / and of course getting rewarded for that

The “natural conclusion” for this film, in this viewer’s eyes, was the resolution of the narrative problem of being in the closet through coming out. By coming out, the lead character will then “rewarded” by his romantic attachment. The narrative builds to the point when the deception can no longer continue and a move is made to all at once destroy the lie. In all three films, the revelation scene that occurs is in front of a large audience, in order to tell the truth to as many people as possible. What this suggests about the narrative organisation of the fictional coming-out narrative is that the act of coming out is a public event. Coming out cannot be private, it is inherently a part of a wider move for honesty and as such is conducted under scrutiny.



### Oscar and Steven Come Out

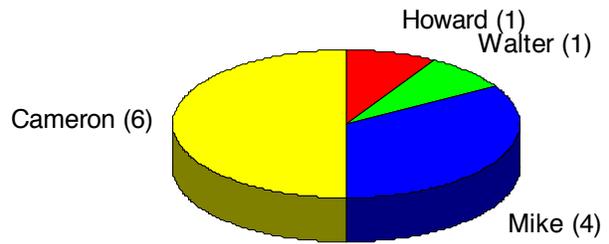
The scale of the coming out of the characters seems to include in all three films a large audience. Here Oscar must come out as straight to a large gay audience at an awards ceremony for gay business professionals. Steven must come out to an audience at his school that includes everyone that he knows. The size of the audience suggests that the fictional narrative counterpart of the coming-out narrative requires a massive gesture of honesty that will reveal the sexuality of that character to all other members of the diegetic world. This maneuver is based partly in economy, since it would be difficult to film the more realistic process of coming out to one person at a time and continually with every person that you meet

Moreover, the benefit of coming out is receiving a reward for being honest (something that the characters who remain in the closet do not receive). Oscar and Amy become lovers in *Three to Tango*, Steven is free from bullying because his mother stops Kevin in *Get Real*, Howard and Peter begin a relationship in *In and Out*. Again, coming out is privileged by the fictional narrative, while staying in the closet is not.

Finally, coming out is also privileged by the representation of homophobia. This is clearly demonstrated by the ending of *In and Out*. This section of the dissertation was originally intended to be an entire chapter in its own right, but it would seem that part of the point behind writing it was too successful. Originally, the intention was to show how the representation of the homophobia as weak would position the coming-out narrative further. Unfortunately, the representation of homophobia was barely mentioned by most of the interviewees when they were asked about it. The presence within the films of themes of homophobia was missed by some and declared mostly as idealistic or naïve. However, this in itself shows to an extent that homophobia in the films is represented is marginal. Therefore, one of the investments in the closet, perhaps the most crucial, is devoid of meaning. In *In and Out* the homophobia comes at the end of the film, where Howard has been discharged from his position at the school because of his homosexuality. The mouthpiece of the homophobic attitudes of the community becomes Tom who desperately tries to deny any link between Howard's coming-out and newly unemployed status. The audience reaction to Tom shows how much they found his homophobic attitude displeasing. As the homophobia is expressed, the audience steadily begins to like the character less. By the end of the film, the vast majority of the audience does not like this character on the basis that he is homophobic.

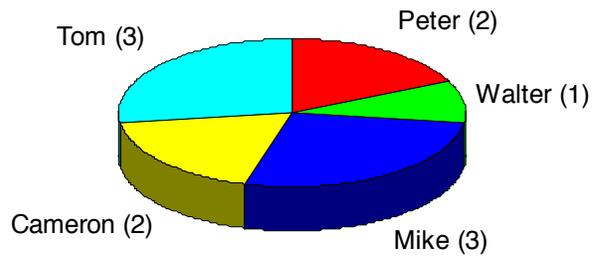
Who do you dislike most?  
*In and Out*

Tom is not disliked by any of the viewers at the beginning of the film.



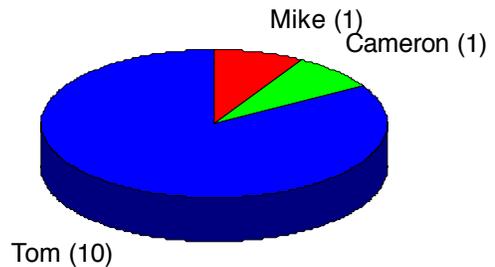
Who do you dislike most?  
*In and Out*

After mentioning that Howard will be fired if he is not married the audience start to dislike him.



Who do you dislike most?  
*In and Out*

The homophobic head teacher at Howard's school is by far disliked by the majority of viewers at the end



If the homophobic attitude of the characters is expressed and is faced with firstly the audience reaction that it is and secondly the reaction that it receives in the film from friends and family of Howard, then it is clear to see that homophobia is represented in a negative light. Further, that homophobia is vanquished by the support that Howard receives from his community. Again, the representation of the coming-out process is idealised by its fictional counterpart. The reaction that the characters receive is on the whole positive, with characters being rewarded for coming out and homophobia being outed in the process and nullified. The narrative point-of-view ensures that the

audience's goodwill towards the central character is constant, because they understand the ramifications of coming out. Finally, those who remain in the closet are vilified for their cowardice and irresponsibility (Keller 2002: 43).



### **The Picture of the Closet**

This shot occurs just after Steven discovers that Glenn is married with a child. This pose for a family photo signifies the closet in no uncertain terms. Mother and child are together, while Glenn sits slightly distant, looking uncomfortable in the family pose. This image summarises the construction of the closet as a form of betrayal and deception.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Keller contends that conversion fantasy films assert a notion that it is “better to be out of the closet” (Keller 2002: 43). This dissertation’s purpose was to analyse how the coming-out narrative used in cinema parallels the actual narrative of coming out. What is clear from the findings of the study is that audiences of the coming-out narrative use the signs and their knowledge of relevant codes within the film to make judgements about the characters and the experience of the closet. From the social constructionist position, the judgements that viewers make about the experience of the closet from the fictional narrative will have an effect on their construction of the closet, coming out and gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

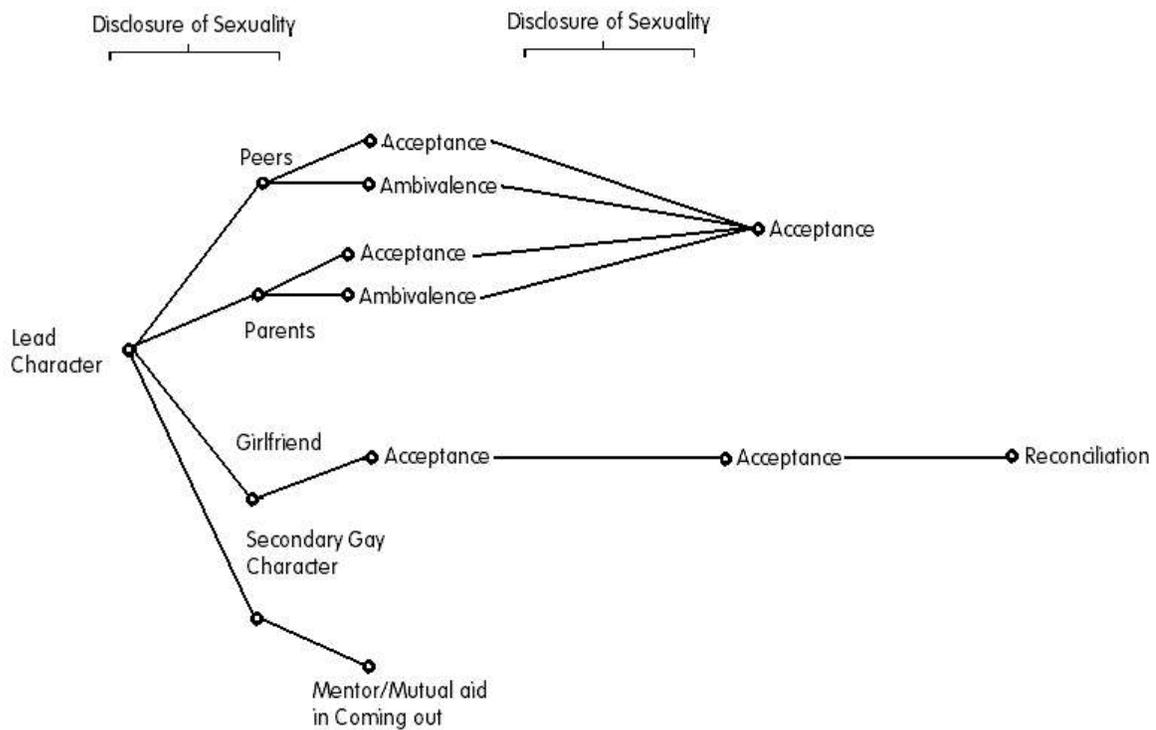
The first act of the narrative outlined in the study is the creation of constructed gay identities through the use of a number of encoded signs. These signs depend to an extent on the use of stereotypes that build easily recognisable gay characters. In the past, that would have been the extent of the representation. In contemporary cinema there seems to be an urge to press the notion that those stereotypes will not suffice in the representation of characters. This is where narrative disclosure takes its role in the representation of gay characters. The use of characters who are coded without using the stereotypes of gay identity means that often these characters are not easily identified by audience members. The narrative builds a character who is presumed to be straight until a point in the narrative comes when it is necessary for that character to reveal their sexuality. When that point comes, as in the case of this sample, that revelation of sexual identity will come as a surprise and challenge the construction of gay identity through stereotype. What this technique also functions to do is provide a narrative necessity to use stereotype in order to identify a character as gay so that the revelation of the character who is not coded as gay will be more of a deception. The construction of the gay character using non-stereotypical relies more on the need to come out and this places the phenomenon as more common within the narrative.

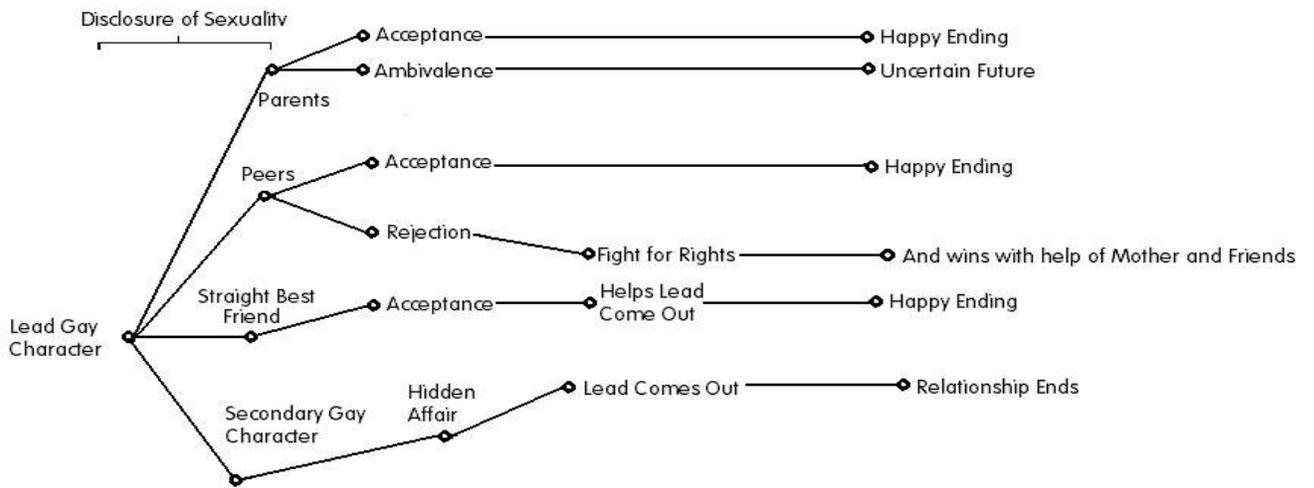
Once signs have been put in place, the organisation of those signs also becomes important. The narrative point-of-view organises the signs so that generally, in the coming-out narrative, audience knowledge and central character knowledge are aligned. With the knowledge of these two parties being the same (bearing in mind that certain audience members will make different readings and hence be ahead or behind the character's knowledge as well) the central character will receive much sympathy and be generally liked. Therefore, when the character comes-out to a positive reception, the coming-out experience is constructed as positive. Further,

characters who do not come out are cast differently from the characters who do. A character who is in the closet by the end of the film will be portrayed as unhappy and cowardly. As a result the position of the coming-out process is again valorised. Finally, the characters who come out are freed from the homophobia that may confront them by straight characters realising that homophobia is wrong and standing up for the gay characters.

From the results of this dissertation it is now possible to draw out the narrative pathways of the individual films. These pathways will show how the narrative pattern of the films is different from the template that attempted to cater for every possibility. There is a tendency to take the route of acceptance as will be noted and also there is also a tendency for straight characters to play a much larger role than was anticipated by the narrative template. These templates for the narratives of the three films provide clear example of the positive representation of the coming-out process by giving preference to the acceptance of the lead character by the other characters. These diagrams are the final demonstration of the construction of the coming-out narrative in cinema and the last word of the dissertation.

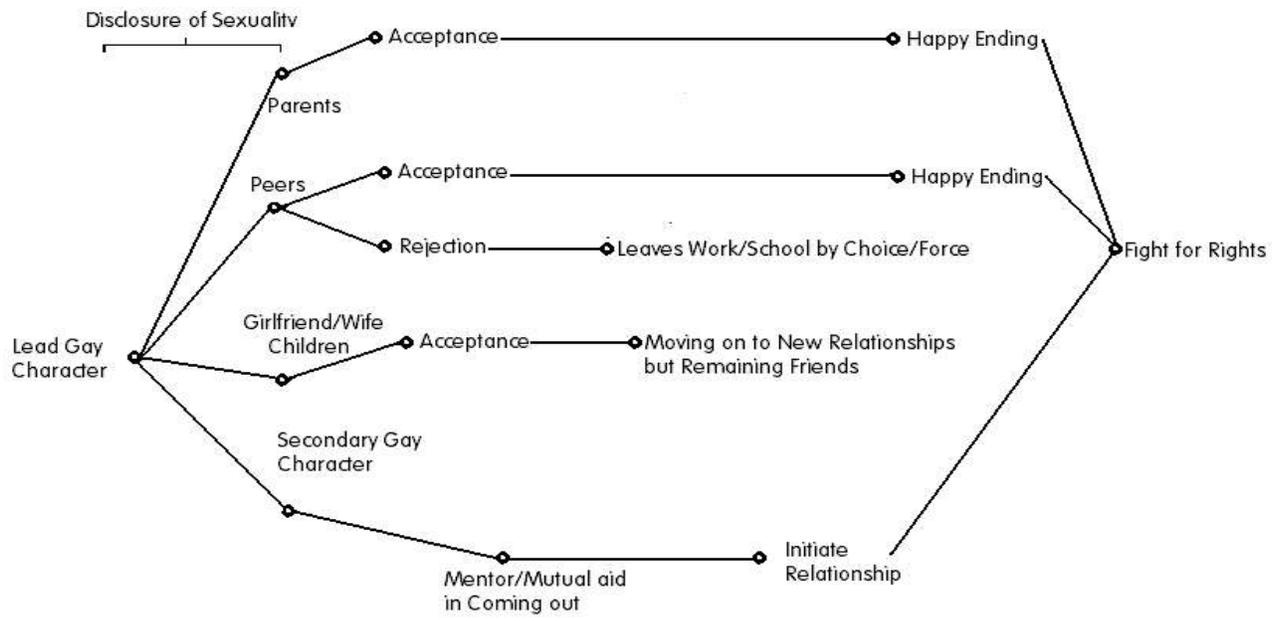
*Three to Tango* Narrative Template





*Get Real* Narrative Template

*In and Out* Narrative Template



## Appendices

### Interview Transcripts and Summaries

In order to provide relevant data for study without wasting time on transcribing whole interviews, the transcriptions will only be partial. The interviews will be summarised with pertinent sections transcribed fully. This will provide the necessary data for analyses without consuming too much time spent on needlessly transcribing every detail of the interview.

The interviews are broken into four sections. The first section requires the interviewee to explain their selections for the sexuality of a number of the characters from the films. These characters are: from *Three to Tango*, Amy, Peter and Kevin; from *Get Real*, John and Steven; and from *In and Out*, Peter, Howard and Jack. The remaining three sections are divided between the three films and general questions about the representation of the characters, homophobia and the coming-out narrative. These questions are:

What did you think about the representation of gay/lesbian/bisexual characters in the film?

Tell me about the thoughts and feelings you had about the endings of the film

What do you think this film says about coming-out?

In the film, what are the consequences of staying in the closet?

What do you think about the representation of homophobia?

However, the semi-structured interview technique means that the questions are phrased differently between the different interviews and further questions have been asked in order to elucidate further the views of the interviewee.

### Viewer One

SEX: Male  
AGE: 21  
SEXUALITY: Heterosexual

INTERVIEWER: OK / so the first film is *Three to Tango* and you've got Amy / who you said was straight all the way through.  
INTERVIEWEE: / Yeah it was fairly obvious she was straight / all the way through I thought because / she was obviously gonna be the pivotal character upon which the gay characters were developed.  
INTERVIEWER: Right.  
INTERVIEWEE: So / there was no need for her to be gay because there was already enough gay characters for a story / if that makes sense.  
INTERVIEWER: Right / OK  
INTERVIEWEE: & And er / there had to be a main attractive person for men to fancy as well // both men in the film and both / the audience / if that makes sense.

In response to a question about the sexuality of Peter, whom the interviewee selected gay identification at all three pause points, the reasons for this choice became clear as

being the character's mannerisms and dress-sense. On the subject of the character, Kevin, the interviewee says:

- INTERVIEWEE: He seemed like the kind of character that they would put in there just for him to be gay / he seemed like a filler.
- INTERVIEWER: Right.
- INTERVIEWEE: But then they wouldn't have the filler in there unless there was some kind of tease / the same as the Amy character / you're not gonna have them in there unless they have a pivotal role / which the other characters / fall back on / so there had to be that kind of structure in which to place him otherwise he was irrelevant I thought.

Talking about *Get Real*, the interviewee comments that his reason for choosing "gay" for John in the second pause place was the "developed role in the narrative." With Steven from the same film, the interviewee considered the character to be open with his sexuality and the character to express certain traits that suggested his homosexuality, such as his timidity and loneliness.

For the final film, *In and Out*, the interviewee considered his choices for the Peter character:

- INTERVIEWEE: Right / I was initially flummoxed by the fact that he said / that he was gay / I thought it was a ruse / for the / I thought it was a comment / well we'll come on to this in other questions / but I thought it was a comment on the use of / homosexuality.
- INTERVIEWER: Right.
- INTERVIEWEE: and / wheth whether the it was / the creators of the film knew it or not I though they were commenting in the fact that he was trying to get friendly with the main character / by saying he was gay and then he'd get a better story for his / paper / but then after after that / in the final section of the film / he's that didn't seem prudent to prove evident / so then I assumed that he must be gay / I'd kind of over read it.

On the subject of the main character, Howard, the interviewee explained that he believed the character to be straight because he had an expectation for the film to make a comment about the character being "outed" even though he was straight. For the final character, Jack, the interviewer decided the character was gay by end of the film because when he stands up in the graduation ceremony and says, "I'm gay," it was read as a statement of truth, rather than the symbolic gesture of support that the rest of the audience makes.

In consideration of the ending of *Three to Tango* the interviewee says:

- INTERVIEWEE: Erm / I mean obviously it's quite contrived it was a bit of a / an event / and all all of the films I thought put an emphasis on / er coming out or whatever AS an event so the ending was kind of er built up to that / and when they he came out as being straight / they made it into a huge moment a huge predictable moment but it was a huge moment none-the-less / and that was

supposed to be the / emotional climax / but then you had the second emotional climax with him / predictably getting back with the girl.

Commenting on the representation of the gay characters, the interviewee believed the representations to be functional but no more than any of the other characters and the Kevin character in particular to be “fluff.”

In reference to the theme of coming-out, the interviewee saw that it was portrayed as a positive event in the lives of the characters and that once they had come-out their dreams would come true. In this instance, Oscar comes out as straight and gets the girl. When asked about the consequences of staying in the closet the interviewee replied:

INTERVIEWEE: Well he wouldn't have got the girl and that was the point of the film / the whole it was a heterosexual movie it wasn't erm / compared to the other two which I thought were gay films well not [laugh].

The interviewee, when asked to consider the representation of homophobia in the film, believed there to be little evidence of any real homophobia.

For the ending of *Get Real*, the interviewee considers the ending to be like that of *Three to Tango* as being predictable and a large event within the narrative. Again coming out is portrayed positively and this is reflected in the answer to the question about the consequences of staying in the closet.

INTERVIEWEE: ...John's gonna be unhappy because he was in the closet he was standing in the corner / he was a bit upset / it was basically saying if you stay in the closet if you don't / tell the world you're gay / then / you're not gonna be / as happy /...

Again, the interviewee comments little on the representation of homophobia, except to note that Kevin, the character who bullies the protagonist is thuggish.

For *In and Out*, the interviewee says little about what he thought about the ending but that it was “ridiculous.” For the subject of representation of gay characters, the interviewee considered the Howard character to be unfairly treated with the campness of his behaviour. In response to a question about the theme of coming-out, the interviewee says:

INTERVIEWEE: / Erm I really didn't get how he was / gay / up until he said he was gay / because there was no inference whatsoever that he'd led any kind of homosexual life before he said he was gay.

For consequences of staying in the closet, the interviewee saw few but did mention that he took a dislike for Howard because for the potential to harm others through staying in the closet:

INTERVIEWEE: .../ in a way it made me think that the Kevin Klein character is a bastard and / if you stay in the closet and / you wreck other

people's lives / by / getting married to somebody you / obviously aren't attracted to / because you're gay.

The final question about the representation of homophobia drew the interviewee to comment on the use of a disease metaphor with reference to Howard's forced unemployment from the school. The interviewee believed the disease metaphor expressed a fear of heterosexual parents about the influence that a gay adult can have over children.

## Viewer Two

SEX: Male  
AGE: 20  
SEXUALITY: Heterosexual

For *Three to Tango* the interviewee made it clear that his selection for the sexualities of the characters was based on their own words. When Amy talks about a lesbian experience before the second pause point, the interviewee selects bisexual. In all cases the assumption is that the character is straight until they say otherwise.

John, in *Get Real*, prompted this response:

INTERVIEWER: Right / OK moving on to *Get Real* erm we'll go on to John first / John you said / actually you said we are supposed to think he is straight and then he comes out as gay / to you in the last two pause points / so /talk about the first section / we are supposed to think he is straight.

INTERVIEWEE: Well / *Get Real* it was such a well made film [laugh] When we first saw him he was on the stairs and like all the girls are like ooh lovely / and he's looking all tall / and about thirty / and er // and err / he's just ignoring / er Steven and I think / well / he's / supposed to be looking like ooh he's sexy head boy / of the school /and we're all supposed to think he is straight.

Steven's sexuality is revealed to this viewer by his cottaging in park and his subsequent conversation with Linda about Glenn (the man he picked up).

In *In and Out*, again the viewer does not presume a character to be gay until they announce their sexuality. With Jack, however, this viewer does not see any characteristics that make him gay and unlike Viewer One finds the statement of sexuality at the end of the film as part of the symbolic support for Howard.

This viewer's consideration of the ending of *Three to Tango* drew attention to the big event of coming out and the resolution of the heterosexual relationship between Oscar and Amy. For questions about the representation of gay characters, the interviewee had little to say beyond that the representations made the characters seem "odd." In consideration of the coming-out theme, the interviewee again mentions that the film makes it a huge event rather in front of a large audience. The question concerning the

consequences of staying in the closet provided a response that focused on Kevin, who the interviewer believed was closeted in order to protect his career as a sportsman. This viewer also sees little representation of homophobia within the film.

*Get Real* induces a similar response to the question about the ending of the film. The viewer notes that the lead comes out in a very public setting. The viewer found that the representation of the gay characters had troubling aspects:

INTERVIEWEE: Erm he / well Glenn's obviously / hinted as repressed / maybe he's just experimenting we don't really know (...) don't talk about him particularly / Steven / is represented / he says the thing /he discovered masturbation at eleven / but then / found out you could do it on your own when you're fourteen [laugh] / I don't know / it sort of represents them as er / going out / promiscuous / finding people in the woods etceteras / and it's not er (...) despite the fact I think it's a positive image of Steven generally / I don't think it is that positive.

This viewer had little to say on the theme of coming-out except that it showed that it could be quite difficult for the person coming-out. The consequences of staying in the closet were seen from the perspective of John being able to protect his image as the sportsman and head boy. The representation of homophobia was considered to present homophobic people as wholly stupid.

The ending of *In and Out*, again reflected the scale of the character's coming-out and the support from the community. The representation of Peter was considered to be good because the character had no issues with his sexuality and "just gets on with his life." However, Howard was considered to be a stereotype. The theme of coming-out was once again seen to have been about the en-masse coming-out, which reaches everyone in a character's life. The consequences of staying in the closet would have been according to this viewer the harming of his wife-to-be and their future together. The only evidence of homophobia that this viewer detected was the institutional homophobia of the school that was over-ridden by the voice of the community.

### Viewer Three

SEX: Female  
AGE: 21  
SEXUALITY Heterosexual

This viewer decided that Amy was straight throughout *Three to Tango* even though the character talks about a lesbian experience and this is because the interviewee considered it experimentation and little more. Her opinion that Peter was gay was actually based on her experience of the film from the first time she watched it and she could not say what it was that made her think that Peter was gay. For Kevin the interviewee says:

INTERVIEWEE: Right err I I suspected he might have been gay to start off with because / er it seemed that this film would like to play with / the notion of being muscley gay man I don't know why just smiley and it just seemed the sort of film that would.

This viewer also thought John, in *Get Real*, to be gay before it was ever revealed in the narrative:

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah I think I got what the film was going to do do with him er by making him well / supposedly good looking and popular with the girls.

Steven is identified as gay from the very beginning of the film again by his spending time around the public toilets in a park.

Peter in *In and Out* was only recognised as gay after he comes out to Howard. Howard himself was considered straight in the first pause place because the character kept denying he was gay but later identified as gay after the dancing scene involving the masculinity tape because of Howard's dancing. Jack was considered to be straight throughout the film because the viewer did not notice any characteristics that might have made him gay.

The ending of *Three to Tango* prompted this response:

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah it did seem like the natural conclusion for this particular film / erm I don't think / this particular film would have had him any other way / really / other than with Amy / at the end / um / the // yeah it's just like / big public resolving of his problems you know facing up to / what he had to face up to / and of course getting rewarded for that

The representation of gay characters was not considered to rely on stereotypes but rather play with them as was mentioned in her reply to questions about Kevin. The interviewer believed the theme of coming-out to support the process and in discussing the consequences of coming-out this answer is reflected with ideas of pretending to something you are not being prevalent. On the representation of homophobia this viewer says:

INTERVIEWEE: Erm / I think it was quite subtle there was that Lenore woman / who who just seemed to think that she could use / use it as er / information against them er / which backfired / I suppose.

In *Get Real*, the interviewee saw the ending as a bid for freedom by Steven and the representation of gay men to be bit stereotypical in reference to the scenes of cottaging. The viewer comments that the reception that Steven receives means that coming-out is portrayed positively. John is understood as a conformist when questions relating to staying in the closet are asked. Homophobia in this film is seen as only coming from Kevin in the form of bullying.

The ending of *In and Out* was considered to be quite unrealistic in the sense that she believed the teacher would never have been fired for being gay. The representations also provided little for this viewer to say, she said that they were "fair." Again the word "positive" is used to describe the portrayal of coming-out and staying in is seen

to cause problems through the breakdown of his marriage to Emily. The representation of homophobia is again considered unrealistic since this viewer does not believe that Howard's job would have been at stake.

#### Viewer Four

SEX: Male  
 AGE: 19  
 SEXUALITY: Bisexual

In *Three to Tango*, the viewer saw the lesbian experience that Amy talks about as an indication that she is bisexual. The viewer recognised that Peter was gay from certain markers about the character which he explains:

INTERVIEWEE: He wasn't / particularly camp or he didn't have any kind of camp elements / but they underplayed that / but by underplaying that / they had to kind of make it obvious that he was gay in some way so he had / definitive facial hair / and dressed smartly and / was a bit creative / I mean those kind of things.

It is Kevin's own admission to being gay that causes the viewer to identify him as gay.

In *Get Real*, the viewer notes that John is gay only after he is found cottaging by Steven and Steven is identified similarly.

Peter in *In and Out* is also recognised as gay after he comes-out to Howard. This viewer thought Howard was gay after he dances to the masculinity tape. Jack is seen as straight throughout the film because the viewer thought that Meredith was Jack's girlfriend.

The representation of gay characters in *Three to Tango* was considered to be fair since stereotypes were not the basis of the representation. The end of the film was remarkable because of the attainment of the heterosexual relationship while the gay relationship between Kevin and Peter is not seen. The theme of coming out suggest to the viewer that coming out was a necessary experience because it ended the complications enforced by lying. The consequences of staying in the closet were again recognised as the impossibility of the consummation of the heterosexual relationship. Homophobia in the film was seen to be hardly evident, which the viewer found deficient in the representation.

In *Get Real*, the representations were considered to be more realistic than in the Hollywood films and Steven was seen as a positive representation. The end of the film, for this viewer seemed to the viewer to be more realistic because Steven's father's feelings on his son's sexuality are not resolved. Coming-out in the film suggested that the process could be very difficult but it was important. The consequences of staying in the closet were that John and Steven's relationship could continue but only on John's terms. The representation of homophobia was considered to be realistic because of the effect that it had on Steven's behaviour and his work.

On the representation of gay characters in *In and Out*, the viewer says:

INTERVIEWEE: Erm / I thought it was interesting / the way that / people only noticed certain things about him when they said he was gay / and / that that was made incredibly obvious / even through the character's own / he suddenly became an incredibly reflexive character and a personality in the character when he started saying / about his wrists and / the way he walked and what he said / and his classmates / the people in his class were odd / they'd say things to him like oh do you remember when you did this and it's like oh he must be gay / why were we so stupid not to see it before / so I didn't think it was particularly fair on homosexuality / it was treating it as a very shallow thing.

The end of the film was considered to be a little idealistic because of the almost unwavering support that Howard receives from his community. Coming-out in the film suggested to the viewer that telling the truth and recognising one's own sexuality is better for everyone in your life. The consequence of staying in the closet was the harming of Emily whose marriage would have failed as a result of Howard's repressed sexuality. The representation of homophobia in the film was again seen as deficient because it was weakly enforced by very few characters.

### Viewer Five

SEX: Male  
AGE: 21  
SEXUALITY: Heterosexual

For *Three to Tango*, this viewer believed that Amy's conversation about her lesbian experience formed part of a Hollywood cliché of the gay experience during someone's youth and meant that as an adult the experimentation has little meaning to her sexuality. Peter was determined as gay because of his mannerisms and behaviour. Kevin presented no gay traits to begin with and the character's physical appearance suggested that he was straight to begin with.

John, in *Get Real*, was presumed to be straight until he was seen cottaging and Steven's mannerisms and appearance led the viewer to believe that he was gay.

In *In and Out*, Peter was selected as gay because the actor (Tom Selleck) is seen as an action star. Howard's stereotyped mannerisms, such as his limp wrists, identified him as gay. Jack's declaration as being gay during the graduation ceremony led this viewer to believe that the character was gay.

In *Three to Tango*, the end of the film led this viewer to say:

INTERVIEWEE: Well I actually felt that *Three to Tango* was the err // most accurate portrayal of / homosexuality / because it was the only film that didn't end / with a homosexual version of a heterosexual relationship.

The viewer found the representations to be adequate since there was little use of stereotyping. The theme of coming out to this viewer suggested that keeping secrets had a negative effect on people. This viewer saw the material world of the gay

characters as being maintained while they are in the closet. The homophobia was interpreted as comedic and this was emphasised by the fact that gay characters were homophobic themselves.

The end of *Get Real* was considered to be an idealistic view of coming-out. The representations were adequate although Steven was found to be annoying. The viewer found the theme of coming-out to be poorly expressed in the case Steven since there were very few people who did not assume he was gay and Steven himself was quite happy with his sexuality. The consequences of staying in the closet for this viewer were focused on John's ability to maintain his image within the school. The representation of homophobia was considered as more accurate and realistic.

The end of *In and Out* for this viewer exposed the ridiculousness of homophobia. The representations of gay characters were comedic and since this was the genre there was nothing found to be wrong with this. The theme of coming-out communicated to this viewer a sense that everything is better once a gay person has come out and that acceptance will be inevitable. The consequences of staying in the closet were that Howard could retain his career but he would not be true to his own nature. The representation of homophobia was seen as realistic.

### Viewer Six

SEX: Male  
 AGE: 23  
 SEXUALITY: Homosexual

Amy in *Three to Tango* was identified as bisexual because this viewer believed that while telling the story about her lesbian experience that Amy was relishing the experience. Peter was declared as obviously gay from his mannerisms and dress sense. In consideration of Kevin the viewer said:

INTERVIEWEE: Erm the straight there was no / real reason to think otherwise than we know he was an ex-boyfriend so / it would be wrong of me to assume he was bisexual or gay based on that knowledge.

In consideration of John in *Get Real*, the viewer believed him to be gay from the outset and announces:

INTERVIEWEE: Erm // I think it's the way he was sort of seen as the centre of attention erm / a lot of the boys were idolising him / he was clearly liked everyone really wanted to know him and get on with him he was / again he seemed it's hard to describe / the way his mannerisms again um / he he really stood out from everyone he was meant to be like friends with he just didn't seem to fit in he seemed/ to be / sort of / a part of it but also somewhere else as well.

Steven was recognised as being gay from the scene at the beginning of the film outside the park toilets.

In *In and Out*, Peter's sexuality was expressed in his flamboyance and finally by his kissing Howard. His clothes and the "effeminate" way that he talked and acted suggested Howard's sexuality. For Jack, this viewer was unsure of the reasons but was insistent that the character was gay throughout.

The viewer found the end of *Three to Tango* to overblown in scale and quite ridiculous. The representation of the gay characters was not found to be deficient. The theme of coming out was seen to express that coming out takes courage and that it was idealised with nothing but acceptance and the reward of a relationship. The consequences of staying in the closet for Oscar meant that he would be able to retain his job. This viewer noticed one instance of homophobia from the lead character in which he is concerned about a man finding him attractive.

The ending of *Get Real* led the viewer to comment:

INTERVIEWEE: Steven / came out / again in front of the audience / a real nerve-wrecking thing to do that and again he got the sort of applause / erm so again the film was sort of saying / that you know if you come out you'll get support / and you know / you can do it you know this guy's done it in front of an audience of people who clearly don't like / homosexuals / um and yet he does it and he gets the applause and and he can you know you can win you can do it like this / and I really really thought / that the way that John that way John dealt with it / at the end / was saying / well this is what can also happen / if you don't come-out / and really I disliked him immensely by the end.

This viewer liked the representation of Steven because the character was very sure of his sexuality but was less fond of John because of his uncertainty about his own sexuality. The transcription above covers the answers for this viewer's opinion of the theme of coming out and the consequences of staying in the closet. The representation of homophobia was considered grittier in the other films because of the aggressive actions of Kevin.

The viewer commented on the end of *In and Out* saying that everything was better for the character after he came out in front of everyone. The representation of Howard was considered as slightly offensive because it relied on stereotypes while Peter was seen as a good representation because he was proud of his sexuality. The theme of coming-out suggested that after someone has come-out that everything in their life will be better. The consequences of staying in the closet were seen as the marriage to Emily and the eventual breakdown of that marriage. The representation of homophobia was considered to be glossed over with only minimal reference to it.

### Viewer Seven

SEX: Male  
 AGE: 23  
 SEXUALITY: Homosexual

This viewer saw the lesbian experience that Amy talks about in *Three to Tango* as constituting her bisexual identity. The signs that suggested to the viewer that both Peter and Kevin were gay were their own admissions.

John in *Get Real* was selected to be gay before the first pause point and the viewer states:

INTERVIEWEE: There wasn't much to go on by the first pause point / but I just thought to myself yeah he looks gay / it might have been wishful thinking / erm most gay men's gaydar is wishful thinking / and nothing else / erm but ther was just something about that I kind of noticed.

Steven's sexuality was determined by his cottaging again.

It was Peter's admission, in *In and Out*, as being gay that prompted this viewer to see the character as gay. For Howard, the viewer selected bisexual because he saw no indication that point to him as being either gay or straight and decided that the character was more than likely both. Jack, like John in *Get Real*, was a character that the viewer "noticed" and that led him to believe the character was gay.

The representation of gay characters in *Three to Tango* apparently portrayed gay people as not normal. The ending confirmed for the viewer that this film had a heterosexual audience in mind because the romantic heterosexual relationship is the focus of the last sequence. The consequences of staying in the closet were, firstly, the ability to hold on to material things, such as Oscar's job and, secondly, the heterosexual relationship could not occur. This viewer's understanding of the representation of homophobia is outlined by this statement:

INTERVIEWEE: / Well there are two sides to this your representation of you're actual you're blatant / representation / of your conscious homophobia was that it's not a good thing / its terrible its nasty errr but / at the same time there was the unconscious homophobia of / it's fine to be gay / and we tolerate it that's what it was a TOLERANCE / of homophob sorry homosexuality.

In *Get Real*, the viewer was concerned about the promiscuity of Steven and the effect that this particular representation would have. This viewer also found the ending of the film not reach a proper conclusion and this proved unsatisfactory for his experience. The theme of coming out was not handled correctly for this viewer who found that the scale of the coming out did not reflect the true experience. The consequence of staying in the closet was noted as misery for the person who is closeted. Homophobia in this film was seen to stem from Kevin who as a character came across as extremely stupid.

The representation of gay characters, in *In and Out*, seemed to the viewer to let the audience and the characters get to know a gay person as a straight person first and then make their sexuality incidental. The end was only notable because it again was on a large scale. The theme of coming out was handled positively and the

consequence of staying in the closet was seen as the crumbling of his fake straight relationship. Again, this viewer recognised two levels to the homophobia, the most pernicious being a subconscious notion of the abnormality of homosexuality.

### Viewer Eight

SEX: Female  
AGE: 20  
SEXUALITY: Heterosexual

Amy in *Three to Tango* was seen as heterosexual throughout because the viewer did not place much importance to her experience in college if she now is exclusively attracted to men. Peter was seen to be gay throughout and the viewer cited his dress sense and mannerisms. Owing to the fact that she had seen the film before, the viewer knew that Kevin was gay before he tells Oscar.

This viewer recognised John, in *Get Real*, as being bisexual before the first pause point and says:

INTERVIEWEE: Erm / well it it / the way the film set him up / I think that was what what it was er, / the way they made a big thing of looking over at him.

Steven is recognised as gay because he and Glenn talk about how difficult it is being gay outside the toilets in the park.

Peter, in *In and Out*, is identified as gay after he comes out to Howard. Howard is recognised as being gay when he comes out at his wedding. Jack is seen as gay when he says that he is during the graduation ceremony.

The representation of the gay characters was seen as fair in *Three to Tango*, since the gay characters not portrayed as negatively as Charles, the straight man. The ending of the film was viewed as heterocentric, since the lesbian and gay awards ceremony is co-opted for the concerns of a straight man and his girlfriend. The theme of coming-out is considered to be poorly dealt with since the experience is that of a straight man. The consequence of coming-out is again seen to be the impossibility of the straight relationship. The representation of homophobia is described as realistic since much of the homophobia is portrayed through a whispering campaign that outs Oscar as gay even though he is straight.

*Get Real's* representation of gay characters is seen as realistic because John is very confused about his sexuality and that he is too afraid to admit to being gay. The end of the film was considered unsatisfying because of the failure of the relationship. The coming-out theme suggests to the viewer that coming-out is the only option that a gay person has if they want to be happy, because John was left absolutely alone. The consequences of staying in the closet are loneliness and misery. The representation of homophobia was thought to be very realistic.

In *In and Out*, the representation of Howard was thought to be very stereotypical. The end of the film was again recognised for its grand scale, which suggested to the viewer that it was more fantasy than reality. The coming-out theme was thought to be

mishandled because the character had only just seconds before realised his own sexuality before he had to tell everyone else. The consequence of staying in the closet was seen as the potential to hurt Emily. The representation of homophobia was thought to be fair because it was institutionalised in the school.

### Viewer Nine

SEX: Female  
 AGE: 19  
 SEXUALITY: Lesbian

Amy, in *Get Real*, was thought to be bisexual when she revealed her lesbian experience but by the end of the film, given that Amy was in love with Oscar, the viewer found her to be heterosexual. Peter was identified as gay throughout because of his own admission and his mannerisms. Kevin was only identified as gay when he admits it to Oscar.

John, in *Get Real*, was recognised as gay when he is found cottaging and the same is true of Steven.

Both Peter and Jack, in *In and Out*, are identified as gay when they say that they are to other people. Howard is selected as gay on the basis that he is trying to prove to himself that he is straight.

The representation of gay characters, in *Three to Tango*, was thought not to be based on stereotypes because of Kevin's demeanor. The ending of the film was thought to be problematic because of the focus that was placed on the heterosexual relationship rather than the gay relationship. The coming-out theme was interpreted as mishandled because it too focused on a straight version of the closet. The consequence of staying in the closet was also the failure of the heterosexual relationship. On the representation of homophobia, the interviewee said:

INTERVIEWEE: Erm / it was kind of praised as a / as a creative of a person / I wouldn't have thought that there was that much homophobia in there / it was almost as if there was more / praise put upon him apart from the rival architects.

In *Get Real*, the representation of the gay characters was thought to handle well in the case of Steven but John was thought to have been unrealistically troubled by his own sexuality. The ending of the film was thought to be good, because the viewer disliked John and wanted Steven to leave him all the way through the film. The coming-out theme was seen as mishandled because the scale of the revelations was too big compared to the viewer's own experience. The consequence of staying in the closet was seen to be the prolonging of the relationship between John and Steven which would have proven detrimental to Steven because of John's insecurity. The representation of homophobia in the film was thought to be of high quality because of the accuracy of the portrayal of the violent and aggressive dominance of Kevin.

*In and Out*'s representation of gay characters was thought to be stereotypical and therefore deficient. The ending of the film was considered idealistic as it was too easy for Howard's parents and friends to accept someone they had known for so long as gay. The theme of coming-out was similarly thought to be reductive in its insistence that support and acceptance are so easily attainable. The consequence of staying in the closet was seen as Howard's marriage to Emily. The representation of homophobia in the film was considered naïve because the people responsible for the homophobia received no support from anyone in the graduation ceremony.

### Viewer Ten

SEX: Female  
 AGE: 29  
 SEXUALITY: Lesbian

For *Three to Tango*, the viewer that this to say about Amy's sexuality:

INTERVIEWEE: Erm working from the frame / that this was er a Hollywood movie / I think actually that was probably more wishful thinking than anything else cos all the male characters you'd been introduced to as a sort of romantic movie / structure / were so irritating that you were hoping against hop that this poor woman wouldn't have to end with any of them by the end of the film [laugh] she'd realise they're all crap and go off and find a nice girl to live with.

Peter's sexuality was seen as more asexual than homosexual but the viewer saw that as part of a tradition of representation of gay characters in Hollywood film. Kevin's sexuality was revealed when he announces that he is gay.

In *Get Real*, the character John provided this response from the viewer:

INTERVIEWEE: Er and you expect that he's gonna come out / you hope / you know you hope there will be some romantic inclusion for your lead character / so / you kind of hope that this will be requited / erm but that said you don't have any information at that point / you really don't have any information and that's separate from a Hollywood film because you know that this is a British film so / you expect there to be more people coming out and people to be more / erm // gay in a less Hollywood way / you know the fact that you don't look like a Hollywood gay person doesn't mean you can't be gay

Steven is coded as gay when the viewer sees him outside the toilets in the park.

With both Peter and Howard in *In and Out*, the viewer could only tell that they were gay when the two of them kiss. Jack, on the other hand, was seen as gay all the way through the film:

INTERVIEWEE: This kid / I felt he was being shown as a in a Hollywood shorthand for gayness / which is sensitive / slightly

intellectual / that /terribly terribly tidy / not inclined to belch or fart as opposed to his friend.

The representation of gay characters in *Three to Tango* was seen as stereotyped but no more than the representation of the straight characters. This viewer focused on the heterosexual romance at the end of the film and believed the entire gay story line to act as an obstacle in the attainment of the heterosexual goal. The theme of coming out reflected the notion that coming-out is a good thing and the reward for it is the romantic attachment. The consequence of staying in the closet is that Oscar and Amy would not be able to initiate their relationship. The representation of homophobia was considered to be ineffective because it was sanitised.

The representations in *Get Real* in the viewer's opinion were more realistic and recognisable but she admitted that this might just be because it is set in an English school (an environment she is familiar with). The ending of *Get Real* produced this reply:

INTERVIEWEE: It was a very predictable ending / as / coming-out coming of age stories should be because / unless they get squashed by cars before the ending comes you kind of expect them to come of age and know more than they did at the start of the film.

Coming-out is portrayed as necessary and better than staying in the closet. On the subject of the consequences of staying in the closet, the viewer says:

INTERVIEWEE: Well erm the ultimate / visual representation of that is when the guy he meets at the beginning Glenn comes to the studio and you see this photo / shoot of / this illusion / this photo of a family image / that / you know we have other information about / that this is / that you will have to lead a double life that you will never be able to be completely honest.

The subject of homophobia in *Get Real* led the viewer to comment:

INTERVIEWEE: Er I thought um / the one thing I really liked about the representation of homophobia was that they raised a point that's very very rarely raised in T.V. stuff / is that that when the bullies discover that he is gay / they're surprised / they are genuinely surprised / because the kind of homophobic abuse that people get in school has absolutely nothing to do with your sexual orientation / it's about performance of gender.

*In and Out's* representations of gay men proved problematic for the viewer who was concerned that the two gay characters were put together in a couple by the end of the film in what she saw as putting them into a heterosexual mould. The end of the film prompted this response:

INTERVIEWEE: In terms of the revelation / he's not allowed to be gay until he's given to be gay / permission to be gay by his entire community.

This film was not liked because of this representation and the viewer felt that the film made no comment of coming-out except that straight people decide sexuality for gay people. The consequence of staying in the closet is an “arrested sexuality.” The homophobia was perceived as sanitised again.

### Viewer Eleven

SEX: Female  
 AGE: 19  
 SEXUALITY: Bisexual

Amy in *Three to Tango* was seen as bisexual as a result of her admission that she had a lesbian experience when she was in college. Peter was recognised as gay throughout because Lenore said it. Kevin was again only seen as gay after he tells Oscar.

John, in *Get Real*, is identified as gay when he is seen cottaging and this method of identification applies for Steven as well.

This viewer had seen *In and Out* before and so they knew the sexualities of the characters before this particular viewing. However, in consideration of the character Jack the viewer said:

INTERVIEWEE: I think his character was sufficiently quiet / and he was intelligent but he was nice and he was sweet and he wasn't as loud as the other person / and er he was the kind of character that you / at the end of the film you went oh gay you wouldn't go oh how shocking / you'd go oh I can see it now / it had that same kind of feel to it.

The representation of gay characters in *Three to Tango* was considered to be quite fair except for the fact that Amy's lesbian experience is never considered more by the character than experimentation. The ending of the film was again seen as deficient because of the focus on the heterosexual relationship for the last sequence. The coming-out theme suggests that acceptance is quite easy to attain and therefore the concept is idealised. The consequences of staying in the closet focused on the inability of Oscar to achieve his relationship with Amy. The representation of homophobia was also seen as idealised because there was little to note.

The representation of gay characters in *Get Real* was considered to be quite realistic because Steven was happy with his sexuality just not with the situation he was in, while John had problems accepting his own sexuality. The ending of the film suggested to the viewer that Steven had managed to escape the homophobia he was subjected to by coming-out. Coming-out as theme seemed, to the viewer, to simplify the process by allowing the character to come-out to all his friends and family at the same time. The consequences of staying in the closet were that Steven would have to face the same daily homophobia while John would have to lie to a new group of people when he went away to university.

In *In and Out*, the representation of gay characters was seen as stereotypical but only to make it clear that the character was gay even though he was denying his homosexuality. The ending of the film was seen to portray the gay experience as socially accepted, which the viewer felt, particularly in the school environment. The theme of coming-out was seen in a similar way because the viewer thought that coming-out to overwhelming support was fantastical. The consequences of staying in the closet for this viewer were that Howard would have eventually realised his sexuality and have to divorce Emily and then he would probably not receive so much support after that. The representation of homophobia was understood to be deficient because the consensus of the community changed when Howard was present, because presumably some of the people in the hall were the same people who complained about having a gay teacher.

### Viewer Twelve

SEX: Male  
 AGE: 21  
 SEXUALITY: Homosexual

In this viewer's discussion of Amy in *Three to Tango*, he considered the lesbian experience she had to be experimentation and therefore had no impact on her straight sexuality. The reason that the viewer gave for selecting gay for Peter was based on the character's behaviour. Kevin was revealed to be gay by his admission to Oscar.

In *Get Real*, John was identified as being gay when he is seen cottaging but this viewer agrees that there was point made of looking at John before he entered the narrative. Steven's sexuality was determined by his cottaging.

Peter in *In and Out* was seen as gay only after he admits it and Howard's sexuality became clear from his denials and attempts to prove to himself that he was straight.

INTERVIEWEE: With Jack erm I really did just want him to be gay / cos erm / he's lovely / and erm he's got a few of the stereotype in the same that Steven does / he's er quiet and sort of / conscientiously clever person / and er rather nice looking.

In *Three to Tango* the representations were considered to be unfair because of the "slimy" portrayal of some of the gay characters. The viewer did not like the ending:

INTERVIEWEE: I really don't like the ending of the film / to be honest it's the erm / it's the coming out as straight / at a lesbian and gay awards ceremony / erm / what they are trying to do I think is set up this role reversal / which can't possibly work / because / Oscar is straight / he's from the majority you know.

The theme of coming out was understood as being handled badly because of the role reversal since a straight person could never know what being in the closet was like and this viewer saw the representation as disrespectful. The consequence of staying in the closet was the rendering impossible of the straight relationship between Oscar

and Amy. The representation of homophobia was also handled badly in the opinion of this viewer because of its naivety.

The representation of gay characters in *Get Real* was considered quite realistic with the viewer having a particular identification with Steven but finding John to be too weak and “pathetic.” The end was considered a disappointment because the gay relationship had to end. The theme of coming-out provided this response:

INTERVIEWEE: It’s probably the best / film of the three about coming out / because / some people actually get hurt during it / you know its not all pure acceptance / there’s no real resolution to how his dad’s feeling his dad is really just in the hall but they don’t speak and he doesn’t see Steven after he’s come out / and obviously by coming out it doesn’t stop Kevin being / homophobia towards him in that aggressive manner.

The consequences for Steven if he stayed in the closet were seen to be minuscule because he was all ready being bullied when he was just suspected of being gay. John on the other hand was seen as having a lot to lose but as pathetic for not being able to come out. The representation of homophobia was seen as inaccurate but enjoyable because the viewer saw Kevin as being an embodiment of stupidity and so homophobia became an expression of stupidity.

The representation of gay characters in *In and Out* led to this reply:

INTERVIEWEE: It was just that erm / his campness was a sign for people to say he was gay / and because people said he was gay / he realised he was gay in that order.

The end of the film was, in the viewers eyes, pure fantasy since he doubted the level of support that Howard received would ever be true. The theme of coming out led to this statement:

INTERVIEWEE: I’m not really sure what this message is but I’m not sure it’s good / it’s kind of remarking that / you can’t come out unless straight people tell you it’s OK / it’s obviously got to be on a gay person’s terms that they come out / obviously we have to come out into a straight world but / we have to deal with that on our own we can’t expect straight people to validate us at every opportunity.

The consequences of staying in would have been the break down of the marriage to Emily and that would have harmed others. The representation of homophobia was considered to be poor for the same reason as the theme of coming out. The straight people sprung to the defence of the gay person. Firstly, the viewer doubts that would ever happen and secondly, the viewer did not see anything positive in the need for gay people to rely on straight people to protect them.

## Semi-Structured Interview Guide

### **Using the questionnaire:**

What made you think that these characters were gay/straight/bisexual/lesbian/other?

### **Ask for the reasons for the selection of sexualities of:**

*Three to Tango*

Amy  
Peter  
Kevin

*Get Real*

John  
Steven

*In and Out*

Peter  
Howard  
Jack

### Questions

*Three to Tango, Get Real and In and Out*

What did you think about the representation of gay/lesbian/bisexual characters in the film?

Tell me about the thoughts and feelings you had about the endings of the film

What do you think this film says about coming-out?

In the film, what are the consequences of staying in the closet?

What do you think about the representation of homophobia?

### *Get Real* Analytic Description

A voice over tells us about Steven's first knowledge of sex. Two boys sit on a swing talking about one of their dad's videos. Steven is under the misconception that sex occurs when two women cover a man's "willy" with ice-cream.

Steven is more grown up and at school now. He learns about sex from a video showing two hedgehogs mating.

Steven is now an older teenager. Steven sits on a bench outside a public toilet. An older man (Glenn) sits down next to him. They exchange a short conversation including mutual complements.

Steven is talking to his best friend, Linda, about Glenn. Linda thinks that Steven's behaviour is dangerous. Linda is called in for tea and Steven goes into his house. Steven's dad is making a Dalek model. He asks Steven about the park – someone had seen him there. Luckily for Steven, his dad only thinks he has been wasting time in the park when he should have been working.

A short montage of school life – kids smoking, playing football. Steven walks into school and is stopped by some older boys who take his bag and throw it onto the roof of the building.

An English lesson. The pupils are discussing Romeo and Juliet. Steven walks into the classroom late and he is threatened with special studies groups unless he bucks up his ideas.

Linda and Steven are sitting down outside. A ball lands in Steven's lap. Kevin (a bully) tells Steven to "stick to [his] own balls" as Kevin grabs the ball. Linda worries that Steven has told them that he is gay. Kevin stops to talk to John Dixon (the head boy) – he is an object of desire for all the girls.

At school, Wendy (a pupil) is putting up a poster. John recommends that she move it to a better location. Steven and Mark (Steven's straight friend) walk down the stairs. Mark looks at Wendy. Steven looks at John. Mark tries to talk to Wendy but fails.

Steve and Linda are in the park waiting for Glenn. He is late. An older man walks by looking intently at Steven. Linda puts her arms around him to send the man away. Linda decides to leave because she has a driving lesson. Steven goes into the toilets and into a stall. A note comes through a small hole between the cubicles. Steven and the mystery man arrange to meet on the bench outside. Steven goes outside first and waits. John Dixon walks out of the toilet. He was the man in the stall. An awkward conversation takes place. John cannot admit what he was doing but decides to Steven's house.

In Steven's house, the boys talk about Steven's sexuality. John is still maintaining he is completely straight. When John spots a Teddy bear he begins to mock Steven. The boys fight over the Teddy bear and suddenly an attraction sparks between them and they almost kiss. But John feels uncomfortable and leaves quickly, insisting he is not gay.

At school, John ignores Steven in the corridor.

Steven and his dad are in Steven's bedroom. They discuss an article that Steven has written but is not sending into a magazine to win a competition. Steven's dad is displeased that Steven never seems to see anything through.

Another English Lesson. The students discuss the covert relationship between Romeo and Juliet. Steven is looking out of the window at John. The teacher asks Steven a question but Steven does not know what to say. The bell rings. Mark asks Steven if he can borrow one of Steven's dad's cameras for the school magazine. Steven does not want to broach the subject with his dad. The teacher calls Steven aside to ask him why he is so distant and makes a reference to "girl trouble". The teacher also asks if it is possible to use the camera. He mentions that the photos will be of the track team - of which John is the star.

Steven goes to his father's shop to borrow a camera. Glenn walks into the shop. Glenn is extremely nervous, because his wife and child are there to have their family portrait taken.

The magazine team are watching the athletics and talking about John. Steven is taken to the field to photograph John. Awkward glances are exchanged.

The magazine team are talking about a man who was arrested in the park for having sex in a public place. Kevin walks in to talk to Jessica (his ex-girlfriend) but she tells him to go away. When Jessica tells a joke about Kevin, Steven laughs which brings the force of Kevin's anger down on Steven. John shouts to Kevin to leave the "girlies" alone. Jessica is concerned for Steven.

Outside, Steven and Jessica talk about Kevin as well as John and his girlfriend – who is a model for catalogues.

Steven's dad is looking at the athletics photos in Steven's room. He finds the article for the magazine in Steven's bin.

Mark is talking about Wendy, but Steven is angry about his constant wittering. Mark suggests that they go to the cinema on Sunday.

Steven walks into the toilet. John is there. There is another awkward exchange between them.

At the school disco, John is dancing with Christina (his girlfriend). Steven is watching John but Mark mistakes his gazing at John for an infatuation with Christina. Linda tells Steven to stop pining but as she does Steven sees Jessica and Kevin having a fight and Jessica runs away.

Outside, Steven finds Jessica. They talk about Kevin and Jessica's relationship. She asks Steven who he like but he is very evasive.

Kevin decides to try and make a pass at Linda. Linda tells him that she wants nothing to do with him in no uncertain terms. Steven is still staring at John but Linda makes him dance. As they dance John and Steven lock gazes.

On the way home Linda and Steven plan to extend the night by getting drunk and watching Mel Gibson movies. Linda goes to collect the films and Steven leaves the door on the latch to let her in. In his room, Steven is taking off his clothes when he hears someone come in. He presumes it to be Linda so he shouts down to her. However, when he turns around he sees that John has come to see him. John says that he needs to use the toilet. Steven sets about making himself look and smell attractive while John is in the toilet. Steven also shouts out of the window to Linda to tell her that he is feeling ill and that he is going to bed. When John comes back they kiss.

John becomes upset, saying that he is confused. John talks about his first experience with a man on a school trip to Cornwall. He says that he is very attracted to Steven. John asks what is wrong with him before crying. They kiss again.

Linda is on a driving lesson and drives over the pavement whilst trying to reverse around a corner. The instructor and her begin to flirt.

John wakes up in Steven's room. He makes a phone call to explain his absence last night. John and Steven decide to go out for the day. They talk about coming out. Steven says jokingly, "let's tell everyone." John grabs his hand and they decide to keep their relationship a secret.

Linda and Steven are talking about her driving instructor. Suddenly, Steven jumps up. He has just remembered that he is supposed to be at the cinema with Mark. At the cinema, Wendy and Jessica are with Mark. After the film has finished, Steven and Jessica walk home together. Jessica kisses Steven and walks into her house before Steven has time to explain.

At school, Steven attempts to talk to John but John tells him that must never talk or be seen together at school. They arrange to meet at the weekend but Steven remembers that he has to go to wedding.

The English teacher congratulates Steven for his article. Steven is confused but he realises that his dad must have sent it in to the competition without his permission.

At home, Steven is angry at his father and storms out of the house.

Steven is at the wedding. He is upset that he could not bring John. Steven reveals to Linda that he has been having an affair with John and Linda helps Steven to get away by pretending to faint.

Steven meets John in the park. They spend the rest of the day together. They talk about their future as a couple when John leaves school. They hear a sound and decide to split up to get away. John manages to escape the park without being caught, but Steven is found by some policemen who take him home. Steven's dad wants to know why Steven was in the park so late at night and worries that he might have been "molested by some dirty old queer." Steven goes up to his room and his father considers the possibility that Steven might be taking drugs.

Steven's mum goes into his room to find Steven asleep and the pictures of John on the floor. She suddenly realises that Steven is gay. She goes downstairs to tell Steven's dad but fails to do so, only saying that she "doesn't think it's drugs."

Steven is wake in his room and typing an article called "Get Real."

At school, Steven loads the article into the magazine. Jessica walks into the room wanting to know why Steven is not interested in her. He cannot answer and she leaves upset. John walks in. He is worried about Steven because he hasn't seen him since the park. They arrange to meet again.

Steven pretends to go to Linda's house but grabs a bottle of wine on the way out to drink with John.

John gets into Christina's car and they drive away.

Steven phones John, who is with Christina. John lies to Steven, pretending that he is training before hanging up on Steven. Steven is upset and begins to drink the wine.

John climbs out of Christine's car to find Steven drunk and waiting for him. Steven accuses John of lying but John maintains that Christina is only cover for his real love for Steven. They agree to continue the relationship.

Mark finds the article that Steven put on the computer. It is about a gay teenager who feels lonely and oppressed because of his sexuality but it is anonymous. The magazine team decide to put it in the magazine but the teacher wants to ask for approval from the headmaster first. Jessica realises that Steven is the only person who could have written the article and claims that she put it on the magazine after she received it anonymously. Steven and Jessica discuss the misunderstanding between them and remain friends. Wendy walks by and announces that the teachers have decided to not include the article. In response the team decide to print a blank page with "censored" written across it.

John and Steven spend the weekend alone together at John's house. They discuss their relationship but only in terms of them being alone and no one else knowing.

It is sports day and John is winning as usual. John approaches Steven to question him about the censored page in the magazine and is worried because everyone is saying that it was an article about a gay student. If people know that John and Steven are friends then there is a chance that people might find out that John is gay. An awkward moment occurs when John and Steven's parents meet and some of the lies that they have told have been exposed. Both sets of parents assume that their own child is lying. John prepares for another race but is distracted by his father talking to Steven and he loses the race.

In their car, Steven's mum tells her husband about Steven's sexuality.

John is angry at Steven for taking so many chances in revealing their relationship and John walks away from Steven. In rage, Steven tears up the jersey that John wears when he is running. But Kevin and another bully are watching. They suddenly realise for the first time that Steven really is gay and they throw him up against the

lockers. John walks back into the room to see Kevin about to hit Steven. Kevin explains what he saw. John tells Kevin and the other bully to wait outside. From outside we can hear the sound of Steven being hit. In reality, Steven and John are pretending as John hits his bag while Steven shouts in feigned pain. Unfortunately, a teacher approaches the locker room and Kevin barges in to see John and Steven in each other's arms about to kiss. In reaction, John pushes Steven to the floor, kicks him and calls him a "queer bastard."

In the awards ceremony for the end of year, Steven is called to stage but he arrives late. Once on stage, he begins to tell people the truth. Steven comes out to the audience. Steven's dad then walks into the room and sits down. Steven asks for other gay and lesbian pupils to make themselves known but nobody does. As Steven leaves the stage, the audience begins to clap. Outside, Jessica and Linda are congratulating Steven. Kevin comes over and spouts more homophobia but Steven's mum comes to his defence. She is willing to stick by him, but his father is nowhere to be seen.

Steven finds John outside by the athletics field. John is worried that Steven might have been followed because now there is no way that they can have a relationship. John says that he loves Steven but he still cannot come out. Steven walks away from John. Linda drives up in her car (she has passed her test). Linda and Steven drive into the countryside.

### *In and Out Analytic Description*

Quiet scenes of small town American life are seen as the credits roll. Howard is teaching his students but they are more interested in a former pupil called Cameron Drake.

Howard is approached by a student (Jack) who wants Howard to open his letter from Indiana State University, worried that it might be a rejection. Jack has won his place at university. The two hug.

Howard's basketball team then celebrate his forthcoming wedding in the locker-room by showering him with beer. Howard is deeply appreciated by all his students.

Howard's fiancé (Emily) is trying on her wedding dress, with Howard and his mother (Bernice) present. Emily reveals that she has lost a lot of weight in order to get married.

Howard's father, Frank, and brother, Walter, are trying on suits. Walter has a vulgar blue tuxedo on and this concerns Howard's apparent taste.

At a celebratory dinner for the couple, Howard reveals that he has been engaged for three years. Jokingly, Howard says that he made a vow never to married until Cameron Drake won an Oscar and that he thought he was safe.

Emily and Howard are at home discussing Cameron's nomination. Emily mentions that she spent many hours alone with Cameron when she was tutoring him on Shakespeare.

We see various groups discussing the nominations for the Oscars while sitting in front of their televisions.

Peter Malloy (a television reporter) introduces the television show. Peter has a short discussion about the nominations with Cameron Drake. Cameron is presented as perhaps a little slow. Glenn Close introduces the best actor nominations. She reviews Cameron's nominated role as a gay soldier. Three short clips of the film follow. The film is shown as twee and ironic as two soldiers declare their love for each other in battle and Cameron's character is court-martialled and dishonourably discharged for owning a signed copy of *Beaches*. Walter, watching the clip, remarks, "They're kicking him out – that's not fair – I mean he killed people." The final scene of the film shows a triumphant Cameron marching away from his paraplegic boyfriend who he has accidentally left at the top of the stairs of the Washington memorial. This film is clearly presented as comment on the melodrama of Hollywood.

Cameron wins the award and dedicates it to gay and lesbian servicemen and also Howard, who Cameron outs. All of the groups of people in town are silent and looked shocked. Emily is concerned but Howard maintains that he has no idea about what Cameron was talking. The doorbell rings and it is Howard's parents. Howard denies being gay and considers suing. Howard's mother sits down and says:

BERNICE: "Howard, we want you to know, you're our son and we'll always love you. Gay, straight, red, green, you rob a bank, if you kill someone...  
FRANK: If you get drunk, climb a clock tower and take out the whole town...  
BERNICE: As long as you get married. I need that wedding. I need some beauty and some music and some place cards before I die. It's like heroine.

Howard's parents leave and Emily goes with them. The phone rings. It is someone else wondering if he is gay. He replies that he is not before smashing the phone to pieces.

Howard wakes up to *Macho Man* by the Village People. He cycles to school and sees news vans parked outside. Suddenly a reporter sees him and a large group of news-people all charge. Peter Malloy is among the reporters. Howard manages to escape inside the school.

Howard tries to continue teaching his students but one of them throws a paper plane at him. Unfolding the paper, Howard sees that the message inside says, “BEST ACTRESS – MR BRACKETT.” One of the students asks if the rumours are true. Howard denies being gay once again. Mike, a loud and brash student, announces that he knows why the rumours have started and why Cameron Drake thinks Howard is gay:

MIKE: All this poetry and odes and bonnets.  
 HOWARD: Sonnets?  
 MIKE: And your find of prissy.  
 HOWARD: Prissy?  
 MIKE: Well not in a bad way – you’re smart.  
 MEREDITH: And well dressed.  
 JACK: And really clean.  
 MIKE: It doesn’t look good. Plus, you got that drama club and you ride that bicycle. You’ve been engaged to Miss Montgomery for three years  
 HOWARD: What does that have to do...  
 MIKE: Think about it. When you add it up, of course the guy thinks you’re gay.

The principle (Tom) walks into the classroom to talk to Howard about the number of reporters in the school. Howard leaves the classroom to confront them.

In the Staff room, the teachers are all talking about Howard’s sexuality. They consider the outing of Howard as a “blow for freedom.” When Emily walks into the room, the teachers all suddenly become quiet and smile politely at her.

The boys in the locker room are talking about the only two occasions when gay sex is permissible: in prison, and in space when two men accidentally float into one another. It is considered that gay sex is not natural because it goes against the natural “plumbing.” Howard walks into the room and the boys all move to cover themselves up. They make it clear that they feel uncomfortable around Howard now that he might be gay.

Later that night, Howard is eating in a small diner. Peter approaches Howard, who is annoyed because he has been hounded all day. Howard leaves the diner followed by Peter, who informs Howard that he will be in town for a week in order to get the whole story. Howard is not pleased.

At Howard’s stag party, the men assembled all agree not to mention Howard’s sexuality. When Howard enters he is acting as straight as he possible can but it comes across as comic. The act is ruined when the men present their gift to Howard: a copy of *Funny Girl*. Howard pretends not to like it, but the men talk about the season of Barbara Streisand films he screened. When one man insults Barbara in *Yentl*, Howard lunges at him in anger. Later on Howard is in bed watching television. Jay Leno tells a joke about him on national television.

Tom calls Howard into his office. Tom reveals that some of the parents of the students are concerned about Howard's sexuality and it is stated that if Howard does not get married that he will lose his job.

Howard goes to confession, even though he is not Catholic. When Howard mentions that he has not had sex with Emily for the three years they have been together, the priest decides that Howard is gay. The priest goes on to suggest that if Howard wants to find out if he is gay or not he should try and sleep with Emily.

Emily is exercising to a Richard Simmons tape. Howard enters and begins to ravish Emily, but when he sees Richard Simmons he leaps back in terror. Emily explains that Howard does not have to prove that he is straight to her, but she also mentions that if they were ever to break up that she would start eating again.

Howard is cycling away from Emily's when he almost cycles into Peter's car. They have an argument about the problems that Peter is causing Howard. Peter reveals that he is gay and that the best thing for Howard to do is come out. When Howard denies being gay again, Peter kisses him. Howard evidently enjoys it but he does not admit it. Howard's parents drive by. Howard leaves quickly.

Howard goes home and opens up a package that he has kept under his bed. In the package is a tape that Howard puts into his stereo. The tape contains lessons on how to be masculine. The first lesson is how to stand. Howard has problems with every aspect of his stance and behaviour. In the final lesson, Howard is supposed to resist the temptation to dance since real men don't dance. Howard cannot stop himself from dancing and fails utterly.

It is the wedding day. Emily and Howard's mother are preparing. Howard and his father are getting ready as well. The ceremony runs smoothly until it is time for Howard to say I do. Howard says "I'm gay" instead. Howard turns to audience and repeats himself. Then he looks at his parents and says it again. Emily looks crushed. She runs down the aisle to a back room. Howard follows her. In the room, Howard is apologising to Emily. She is desperately upset. They leave the room while fighting and emerge into the church where Emily punches Howard in front of the audience. Emily gets into a car and drives away.

Peter runs to Howard outside the church to congratulate him. Howard punches Peter while shouting into the camera that Peter is recording the ceremony with.

Cameron and Sonya, his girlfriend, are watching television and see the Howard. Cameron decides that he has to help Howard.

Jack, Meredith, Mike and Vicky are discussing Howard. The boys express slightly homophobic attitudes that the girls call them up on. It becomes clear that Howard is central to their lives.

Howard's mother and her friends are all sitting in the reception room. One woman declares that Howard's actions were a good because he told the truth and there is nothing wrong with that. The women set about telling their own secrets and erupt into laughter.

Howard's father arrives at Howard's house. He asks Howard some questions about his sexuality but it is clear that Howard's revelation will have no effect on their relationship. Howard tells his father that the school has fired him.

Cameron and his girlfriend are at a motel. Sonya is having difficulty understanding why they are there. She seems very spoilt and Cameron leaves her to find Howard.

Emily walks into a bar and orders a drink and some food. Peter sits down next to her. Emily is feeling very depressed and she comes on to Peter to try and make herself better. But Peter has to tell her that he gay. Emily runs from the bar into the road and stops a car. It is Cameron. They recognise each other and after a short conversation they start dancing in the light from Cameron's headlights.

It is graduation day at the school. Howard is looking round his classroom for the last time. In the corridor, Howard sees Jack and the two of them exchange a short uncomfortable conversation.

The graduation ceremony starts and shortly afterwards Howard quietly takes a seat on stage entering from the wings. The teacher of the year is announced and an annoying teacher wins. As the teacher is about to start his acceptance speech, Cameron walks into the room and the entire audience begins to cheer. Cameron is curious as to why Howard has not won teacher of the year. It is revealed to the assembled audience that Howard was not eligible because he no longer works at the school. Tom talks about the question of "influence" on the students. Cameron asks the students if any of them have been turned gay. Jack shouts that he is gay and a number of the students follow to support Howard. Tom points out that it is the community that has rejected Howard and so the students cannot change the decision. This sparks the whole audience to declare themselves gay in order to retain Howard's position. The audience cheer and clap for Howard who is given Cameron's Oscar as an honorary teaching award.

Howard and Peter are preparing for a wedding some time later. The wedding is for Frank and Bernice, who are renewing their wedding vows to give Bernice her dream of a wedding. In the reception, everyone is dancing to "Macho Man."

### *Three to Tango* Analytic Description

The title sequence shows three dancers in silhouette. Two male dancers are competing for a female dancer. At one point in the competition, the two men end up dancing together but push each other away aggressively. In the end, one man dancer wins the woman dancer and they kiss.

The city streets, as Oscar and Peter are nervously talking about the meeting that they are about to attend.

We see a copy of *Forbes Magazine* the picture of a distinguished man on the front. As the magazine lowers we see the face of the reader is the same as the face on the magazine. Charles and Amy are in bed talking about the photo. Amy leaps out of bed to change the music and when she returns to the bedside she is nuzzling Charles belly and making farting noises. Charles' secretary (Lenore) enters the bedroom and tells him that his four o' clock meeting is in five minutes and that Charles' wife has called. Amy leaves. Lenore walks into Charles office.

Oscar and Peter are in the hallway. Oscar is thanking Peter for being his "partner" as the secretary is walking by. She misreads the signs and presumes that both Peter and Oscar are gay. Rival architects are waiting to see Charles as well. The two groups of architects briefly exchange insults before the rival team are called into the office by Lenore. As they walk into the office an entourage carrying many boxes and wheeling in computers follows them. Oscar and Peter lose hope. We see a vast complex – a computer generated three-dimensional model of the rival team's architectural plans being viewed by Charles. Oscar and Peter are called into the office as the rivals leave. Lenore asks the rivals if Oscar and Peter are "y' know." The rivals out Peter and shortly afterwards out Oscar, even though he is straight, in order to discredit their proposal:

RIVAL 1: They hang out at...y' know...bars. They march in the...y' know...parade.

RIVAL 2: They have...y' know...sex with...y' know...men.

Peter and Oscar introduce themselves to Charles but Oscar begins to babble as Peter desperately tries to silence him. They show their plans in an unsophisticated optical device comprising cardboard cut outs to show perspective. Charles calls both teams into the office and suggests they both build models and announce to the press who wins the contract in the Telford building (the site that is being redeveloped). As the four leave, the rivals mock Peter and Oscar. Outside the office, Peter and Oscar discuss the money required to build the model. Peter will have to re-mortgage his apartment to pay for the model. Oscar's thanks is exuberant as he kisses Peter on both cheeks and declares, "I love you," repeatedly. Charles and Lenore are watching. Oscar and Peter leave, a little embarrassed to have been seen. Lenore infers that Oscar and Peter are a couple:

CHARLES: They seem like a close partnership.

LENOR: Hm...very close.

CHARLES: Whadya mean?

Charles pulls up outside Amy's workshop. Inside, he explains that he cannot attend her show at the gallery. In a jealous manoeuvre, he asks who else will be going to the gallery. He begins talking about someone named Kevin who has "grotesque muscles" and a "nice guy act." Kevin walks up behind Charles, picks up a box and talks about his "grotesque muscles" to let Charles know that he heard. Amy gives Kevin a peck

on the cheek and as Kevin leaves he comments on how good Charles is looking. Charles is not happy.

At the Telford building, Charles, Peter and Oscar discuss their plans. Charles takes Oscar aside:

CHARLES: Y' know, you're quite a guy Oscar Novak.  
 OSCAR: Thankyou.  
 CHARLES: Novak. That's Hungarian, right?  
 OSCAR: Yeah.  
 CHARLES: Great. Y' know, Lenore told me about...heh...anyways, I told her I think it's great having people of your...background...working for me. You, Peter...  
 OSCAR: Oh, Peter isn't.  
 CHARLES: He isn't?  
 OSCAR: I am though...100%.  
 CHARLES: I see.  
 OSCAR: You'd be surprised how many of us there are.  
 CHARLES: Well...doesn't bother me...

He asks Oscar to watch Amy at the gallery to ensure she does not cheat with Kevin. He thinks Oscar is gay and, therefore, the safest person to watch Amy.

Oscar's apartment. Peter is extremely nervous about the arrangement between Oscar and Charles. Oscar's three straight friends are all watching American football on the television. They cannot see a problem as long as Amy is attractive. Oscar explains that he knows nothing about her except she used to date Kevin, who is a famous American football player. The discussion switches to rumours about the size of Kevin's penis (apparently, very impressive). Peter interrupts explaining his worries about Oscar, who has a terrible track record with women and there is a chance that Oscar could lose them the contract. After Oscar leaves the three straight friends admit that Oscar is likely to jeopardise the contract.

At the gallery, Oscar is looking at the displays when a woman knocks over a large glass installation. Oscar rushes to catch it and although he saves it he is trapped underneath it. Amy runs over – it is her work. She frees Oscar and thanks him. Oscar and Kevin are talking. Oscar admires Kevin greatly and in a nervous burst of information accidentally comments on Kevin's penis size. Kevin leaves to talk to woman who has waved at him.

Outside, Amy approaches Oscar and thanks him by inviting him to party. In a taxi, they have a conversation in which Amy discovers Oscar is part of the architectural team working for Charles. The taxi suddenly breaks down. Oscar gets out to look at the engine, but as he opens the bonnet the engine explodes. Oscar and Amy run from the angry taxi driver. It has started to rain. Amy and Oscar's romance is initiated by silly small talk and accidental injury. They shelter in a restaurant where they order the tuna melt. They talk trying to figure each other out. The food arrives – it looks poisonous. Outside, Oscar vomits. Amy vomits too. They get a taxi but as Amy opens the door the handle comes off and hits Oscar in the groin. They decide to skip the party. They get out of the taxi outside Amy's building. Amy admits to enjoying herself and invites Oscar to visit her at her workshop sometime.

At Oscar's apartment, Peter is still there and has been up all night. Peter is curious as to what has occurred and as Oscar explains all of the events he realises that Oscar loves Amy. Peter persuades Oscar that it is better for their careers if Oscar does not see her again.

In Oscar and Peter's office there is chaos as interns fail to do their jobs. Charles phones asking about Amy's night. Oscar mollifies Charles and Charles asks Oscar to continue watching Amy. Oscar begins to say no but Charles swats a fly on his desk and the sound make Oscar and Peter believe that Charles is angry. Oscar hastily agrees to continue looking after Amy.

Amy's apartment. Charles gives Amy a gift. But she is waiting for Charles' questions about her night. He pretends not to know anything and that he is trying to be less possessive. Amy mentions Oscar. Charles talks about Oscar and Peter's aesthetic sense and goes on to comment that most people like Oscar do have taste. Confused, Amy asks most who. Charles outs Oscar to Amy. Amy pretends to have known but she looks disappointed.

Oscar is in Amy's workshop. She says that she almost had a crush on Oscar. She then talks about Charles and admits to having an affair with him. She then also works out that Oscar has been sent by Charles to keep an eye on her. Oscar admits that that was the reason he met her but that now he wants to be her friend. She likes the idea of them being friends but makes Oscar promise never to lie to her again.

Amy's Apartment. Amy and Oscar's romance advances platonically as Amy announces that she feels like she has known Oscar all her life. She has a shower. Oscar dims the lights, puts on some music and pours some champagne. When Amy comes out of the shower they are about to propose a toast when Charles walks through the door. He looks jealous but when he thinks he says, "Champagne, music, Amy in a Kimono. God - I swear if you weren't gay Oscar - I'd have to kill you." When Oscar denies being gay, Charles and Amy think he is worried about their reaction and so do not believe him replying, "What people do in the privacy of their own bedroom makes no difference to us." Oscar runs down the street screaming in despair of being declared gay.

Peter's apartment. Oscar arrives irate and in the middle of an elegant dinner party. Oscar tells Peter that Amy and Charles think he is gay. Oscar is very worried:

OSCAR: ...How could they think that...Me gay...I mean it's just so embarrassing, so mortifying  
 PETER: Humiliating  
 OSCAR: Yes...I mean, I don't get it. I don't see it. I'm just a regular, normal...insensitive asshole. Aw come on...you know what I mean, right?  
 PETER: Oh sure...I know that when you say you're humiliated that you actually mean you're proud an unashamed.  
 OSCAR: No no it's not that...it's just that...  
 PETER: Being gay's not normal

OSCAR: You know I don't think that. I have no problem with people being gay. In fact I'm all for homosexuality. Especially when it's between two gorgeous women or three. But I'm not gay.

Peter is angry about Oscar's attitude to the way that people perceive him. Peter decides that there is nothing to be done and returns to his dinner party.

Oscar's apartment. Oscar is baking. He takes off his oven glove to be manlier and take the pain of the baking tray. He screams like a girl when he touches the tray. One of his friends sees him and hears the scream. Oscar is embarrassed. Oscar remarks to his friends that they will not see him with any girls for a while just as Amy rings the doorbell to ask to stay the night. Amy also asks if Oscar's "balls" are injured since she is worried that she might have damaged them when she hit them with the door handle to the taxi. Oscar's friends misread this concern for some bizarre sexual practice and promptly leave. Amy asks to move in because she cannot afford her rental on her apartment. Oscar agrees. Charles comes to the apartment. A little uncomfortable, Oscar goes to bed but hears Amy and Charles having sex. Oscar wakes up to find Charles standing on his head practising naked yoga. Both the men leave for work but not before Amy gives Charles a sensuous kiss in front of Oscar.

Outside the Telford Centre, a journalist is interviewing Oscar and Peter. She asks about their status as an openly gay firm and the effect that this will have on the competition. Oscar replies:

OSCAR: I don't think it's important what other people think of us personally.  
 REPORTER: Yes but don't you feel that you have a responsibility...as a gay man?  
 OSCAR: No. If we're talented we shouldn't have to back that up by pretending to be something we're not. People have to understand that we are individuals. Who cares if we're gay or straight? Why can't people just accept us for who we are?

In a bar, Amy and Oscar are sitting and having a drink. Amy says that she has a surprise for Oscar. Kevin is sitting across the bar: he is the surprise. Oscar is excitedly talking about Kevin's sporting achievements when Amy feigning boredom leaves them to go home.

Outside, Oscar and Kevin are playing American football. The men fall over and Kevin lands on top of Oscar. Kevin declares his attraction to Oscar and Oscar has to carry on with the charade but still stop Kevin from continuing. Oscar says that he is in love with "someone" else. Kevin accepts this and hugs Oscar.

Oscar's Apartment. Oscar angrily knocks on the bathroom door. Amy asks him to come in. She is in the bath – naked except for the bubbles. Oscar asks her never to set him up a date again. Amy starts to reveal intimate secrets about her sex life: including the fact that she has had a lesbian experience. Oscar listens avidly. Oscar is told to turn around as Amy gets out of the bath but he rubs a small circle of condensation away from the mirror and watches her as she dries her stomach.

We see the city streets. A radio broadcast can be heard. A shock-jock is complaining about a whiny gay man on the front page of the newspaper. It is Oscar. A short montage sequence begins.

In his apartment, Oscar runs to check the paper when he hears his name on the radio. He is indeed front-page news.

One of Oscar's friends (Bill) is in a gym and drops a weight on someone when he catches a glimpse of Oscar and the headline on a newspaper.

The rival architects (Decker and Strauss) comment on the paper considering the fact that their lie turned out to be true.

Lenore shows the paper to Charles in his office.

Oscar's parents receive a copy of the paper in their mailbox. Oscar's father faints and falls into a flowerbed.

The second of Oscar's friends (Zack) is in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. He says, "Hi, I'm Zack and I'm," he looks down to see the paper in the lap of the man in front, "gay?" The assembled audience all claps.

The final friend (Rick) electrocutes himself in the bath when he reads the paper by jumping up and knocking a radio into the water.

Oscar is on a bus. He smiles a woman, who smiles back but then reads the newspaper and looks back in disgust. Oscar is then propositioned by a man who looks intently at his crotch and rear.

Oscar and his three friends are watching American football. Oscar sees how uncomfortable they are and denies being gay. They don't believe him. Zack says he doesn't mind. Bill says that he always knew. Rick thinks that Oscar tried to hit on him once. In anger, Oscar sarcastically pretends to be gay and approaches the men. They are afraid of him. Oscar lunges at Rick to strangle him.

Oscar is on the phone to his parents as he walks around the Telford building. They too do not believe him when he denies being gay and maintains his heterosexuality.

Oscar returns to his apartment to find a group of girls having a party. After being persuaded to join in, Oscar becomes the centre of attention. Oscar tirades about the insensitivity of men – the girls laugh and agree with him.

Oscar and Amy are watching a film about a relationship that can never work because of the relative social positions of the protagonists. They chatter romantically about film dialogue before falling asleep in each other's arms

It is the day of the unveiling of the designs for the Telford Centre. Charles is talking with Peter under the misconception that Peter is straight. Oscar sees his parents and his father does not speak but goes to the bar to load up on alcohol. The models are revealed. Oscar is approached by two people. They represent the Chicago Chapter of the National Association of Gay and Lesbian Business Professionals. They are awarding Oscar with the award for gay professional of the year. Charles accepts the award before Oscar has time to reply. Charles then spots Amy – she is talking to his wife. The men move to intercept the conversation. Oscar pretends to be Amy's boyfriend but Charles' wife is aware that Oscar is apparently gay. Peter quickly says that Oscar is "omnisexual". Amy leaves the party, upset at the arrival of Charles' wife.

Amy and Oscar go to a bar to get really drunk. When they are dancing, Amy goes to kiss him but runs out of the bar before their lips touch. Oscar pursues her. Outside Amy reveals that she is falling in love with Oscar and that she can't possibly do that because he is gay. Oscar begins to get angry at Amy's "tough girl routine" and begins to comment on her relationship with Charles. They have a fight about what their relationship can come to. They part company.

A short montage follows of Oscar looking depressed in various locations from the night he and Amy met.

Oscar goes to see Charles to find out where Amy has been. Charles accuses Oscar of letting Amy get hurt. Oscar becomes angry and accuses Charles of being at fault. Charles threatens the Telford contract and Oscar backs down.

At the gay and Lesbian awards ceremony, Oscar and Peter are backstage preparing the speech. Oscar is trying to be strong about losing Amy and his life as a closeted straight man. Peter tells Oscar that there will be other girls but Oscar is not convinced. Oscar is called on stage. As he begins his speech, Amy walks into the auditorium. Oscar sees her and pauses. He begins improvising his speech. He looks for approval from Peter who nods to signal Oscar to tell the truth:

OSCAR: I guess what I'm trying to say is that a lot of you know what it's like to be in the closet. So you know what it's like to have a secret. Constantly worrying about slipping up. Having to hide your feelings from the people who are supposed to mean the most to you. And what I admire about all the people here tonight is that you are not afraid to be honest about who you are. You are strong enough to stand up for the simple dignity of telling the people that you love – how you feel. Now I now a little bit about this, because for the last three weeks – I've had a secret. And I think it's time for me to come out of the closet. I'm not gay.

The audience is shocked. Oscar tells Amy that he loves her. Kevin stands up to clap and is closely followed by everyone else. But Amy leaves the auditorium. Oscar runs after her, followed by Charles.

A news broadcast describes the events that occurred after the awards ceremony. Amy punches Oscar and Oscar's friends see his on a television in a bar. Amy then punches Charles and Charles' wife watches on her television. Amy then leaves the foyer. Decker and Strauss are watching too from their bedroom – they are a couple! Charles tells Oscar that he has lost the contract. Oscar leaves. Kevin and Peter arrange a date.

A short montage follows of a sad Oscar and Amy.

Oscar goes to the diner where the two of them were sick. He orders the tuna melt. Amy enters the diner and stops Oscar from eating it. They reconcile and kiss on the street. The credits roll. As the credits roll Charles returns home to find his wife on the bed. We discover that she is the dominant member of the relationship. She secures the contract for Oscar and Peter before ordering the emasculated Charles to put on his red bikini briefs.

## Identification of Character's Sexuality Data

### *In and Out*

#### Howard

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
No. of People Choosing Gay	4	8	12

No. of People Choosing Straight	7	3	0
No. of People Choosing Bisexual	1	1	0
No. of Not Choosing	0	0	0

**Peter**

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
No. of People Choosing Gay	2	11	12
No. of People Choosing Straight	9	1	0
No. of People Choosing Bisexual	0	0	0
No. of Not Choosing	1	0	0

**Jack**

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
No. of People Choosing Gay	5	4	7
No. of People Choosing Straight	7	8	5
No. of People Choosing Bisexual	0	0	0
No. of Not Choosing	0	0	0

*Get Real*

## Steven

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
No. of People Choosing Gay	12	12	12
No. of People Choosing Straight	0	0	0
No. of People Choosing Bisexual	0	0	0
No. of Not Choosing	0	0	0

## John

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
No. of People Choosing Gay	7	11	11

No. of People Choosing Straight	4	0	0
No. of People Choosing Bisexual	0	1	1
No. of Not Choosing	1	0	0

### *Three to Tango*

#### Peter

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
No. of People Choosing Gay	11	12	12
No. of People Choosing Straight	0	0	0
No. of People Choosing Bisexual	0	0	0
No. of Not Choosing	1	0	0

#### Kevin

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
No. of People Choosing Gay	2	12	12
No. of People Choosing Straight	9	0	0
No. of People Choosing Bisexual	0	0	0
No. of Not Choosing	1	0	0

## Amy

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
No. of People Choosing Lesbian	0	0	0
No. of People Choosing Straight	11	7	8
No. of People Choosing Bisexual	1	5	4
No. of Not Choosing	0	0	0

*In and Out*

Who do you like?

<b>Character</b>	<b>Pause Place One</b>	<b>Pause Place Two</b>	<b>Pause Place Three</b>
Howard	3	1	1
Emily	3	3	0
Peter	0	2	3
Frank	0	0	0
Bernice	0	0	0
Walter	1	0	1
Jack	4	5	5
Mike	0	0	0
Meredith	0	0	0
Vicky	0	1	0
Cameron	0	0	1
Sonya	1	0	1
Tom	0	0	0

Who do you dislike?

<b>Character</b>	<b>Pause Place One</b>	<b>Pause Place Two</b>	<b>Pause Place Three</b>
Howard	1	0	0
Emily	0	0	0
Peter	0	2	0
Frank	0	0	0
Bernice	0	0	0
Walter	1	1	0
Jack	0	0	0
Mike	4	3	1
Meredith	0	0	0
Vicky	0	0	0
Cameron	6	2	1
Sonya	0	0	0
Tom	0	3	10

Who do you want to be most like?

<b>Character</b>	<b>Pause Place One</b>	<b>Pause Place Two</b>	<b>Pause Place Three</b>
------------------	------------------------	------------------------	--------------------------

Howard	0	1	1
Emily	0	0	0
Peter	2	4	4
Frank	1	0	0
Bernice	1	0	0
Walter	0	0	1
Jack	4	5	3
Mike	0	0	0
Meredith	0	1	1
Vicky	0	0	0
Cameron	3	1	1
Sonya	1	1	1
Tom	0	0	0

Who is most like someone you know?

Character	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Howard	1	3	3
Emily	0	0	0
Peter	0	1	1
Frank	1	0	1
Bernice	1	1	0
Walter	2	1	2
Jack	3	1	0
Mike	3	3	4
Meredith	0	0	0
Vicky	0	0	0
Cameron	1	0	0
Sonya	0	0	0
Tom	0	1	1

With whom do you sympathise?

Character	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Howard	4	6	5
Emily	3	3	5
Peter	0	0	0
Frank	0	0	0
Bernice	0	0	0
Walter	0	0	0
Jack	2	1	2
Mike	0	0	0
Meredith	0	0	0

Vicky	0	0	0
Cameron	0	1	0
Sonya	3	1	0
Tom	0	0	0

*Three to Tango*

Who do you like?

<b>Character</b>	<b>Pause Place One</b>	<b>Pause Place Two</b>	<b>Pause Place Three</b>
Peter	5	4	6
Oscar	1	1	1
Amy	3	4	4
Charles	1	0	0
Kevin	0	2	1
Lenore	1	0	0
Zack	0	0	0
Bill	0	0	0
Rick	1	1	0
Strauss	0	0	0
Decker	0	0	0

## Who do you dislike?

Character	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Peter	0	0	0
Oscar	1	1	0
Amy	0	0	0
Charles	7	9	9
Kevin	0	0	0
Lenore	2	1	3
Zack	0	0	0
Bill	0	0	0
Rick	0	0	0
Strauss	2	1	0
Decker			

## Who do you want to be most like?

Character	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Peter	5	4	5
Oscar	1	1	1
Amy	2	4	3
Charles	2	1	0
Kevin	2	2	3
Lenore	0	0	0
Zack	0	0	0
Bill	0	0	0
Rick	0	0	0
Strauss	0	0	0
Decker	0	0	0

## Who is most like someone you know?

Character	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Peter	3	3	3
Oscar	3	3	3
Amy	1	1	0
Charles	0	0	0
Kevin	0	0	0
Lenore	1	1	1
Zack	0	0	0
Bill	2	2	2
Rick	2	2	3

Strauss	0	0	0
Decker	0	0	0

With whom do you sympathise?

<b>Character</b>	<b>Pause Place One</b>	<b>Pause Place Two</b>	<b>Pause Place Three</b>
Peter	4	3	2
Oscar	7	4	5
Amy	0	2	4
Charles	0	0	1
Kevin	0	2	0
Lenore	1	0	0
Zack	0	0	0
Bill	0	0	0
Rick	0	1	0
Strauss	0	0	0
Decker	0	0	0

*Get Real*

Who do you like?

<b>Character</b>	<b>Pause Place One</b>	<b>Pause Place Two</b>	<b>Pause Place Three</b>
Steven	4	2	3
Mark	0	0	0
Jessica	1	4	3
John	0	1	0
Linda	2	2	4
Wendy	3	1	0
Kevin	1	1	0
Steven's Mum	0	0	2
Steven's Dad	0	0	0
Glenn	1	0	0
The Teacher	0	0	0

Who do you dislike?

<b>Character</b>	<b>Pause Place One</b>	<b>Pause Place Two</b>	<b>Pause Place Three</b>
Steven	1	1	1
Mark	0	0	0
Jessica	0	0	0
John	2	0	5
Linda	0	0	0
Wendy	0	0	0
Kevin	8	6	2
Steven's Mum	0	0	0
Steven's Dad	1	0	1
Glenn	0	3	1
The Teacher	0	2	2

Who do you want to be most like?

Character	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Steven	3	3	4
Mark	2	1	1
Jessica	1	3	3
John	1	2	0
Linda	2	2	4
Wendy	1	0	0
Kevin	0	0	0
Steven's Mum	0	0	0
Steven's Dad	0	0	0
Glenn	0	0	0
The Teacher	2	1	0

Who is most like someone you know?

Character	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Steven	5	4	4
Mark	1	2	1
Jessica	0	0	1
John	0	1	1
Linda	3	2	2
Wendy	1	1	1
Kevin	1	1	1
Steven's Mum	1	1	1
Steven's Dad	0	0	0
Glenn	0	0	0
The Teacher	0	0	0

With whom do you sympathise?

Character	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Steven	8	6	6
Mark	3	1	0
Jessica	0	2	1
John	0	1	1
Linda	1	1	1

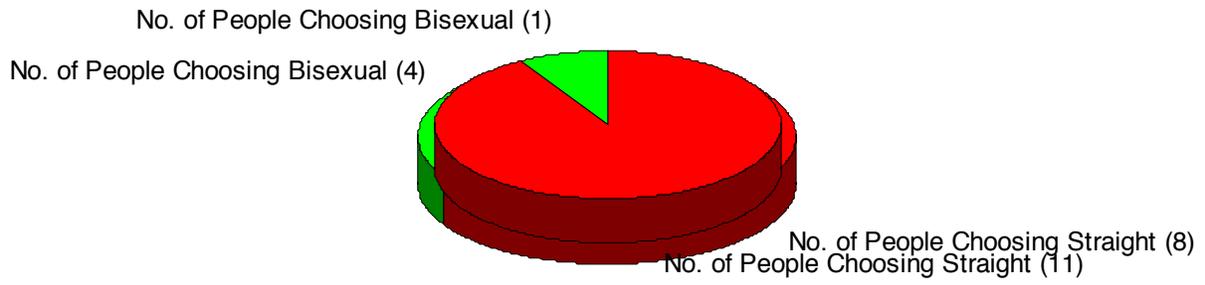
Wendy	0	0	0
Kevin	0	1	0
Steven's Mum	0	0	2
Steven's Dad	0	0	1
Glenn	0	0	0
The Teacher	0	0	0

## Data Representation

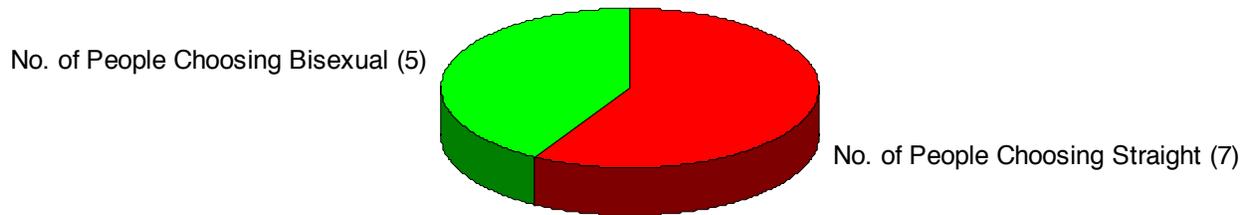
*Three to Tango*

Identification of Amy's Sexuality

Pause Place One  
 Pause Place Two

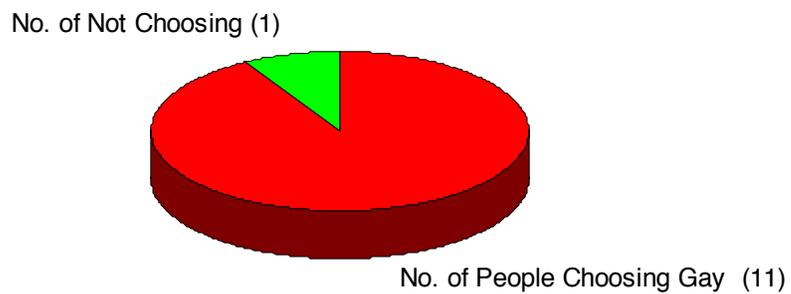


Pause Place Three

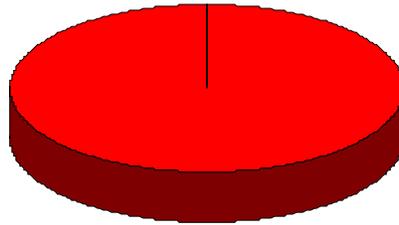


Identification of Peter's Sexuality

Pause Place One

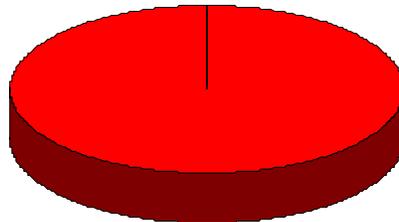


Pause Place Two



No. of People Choosing Gay (12)

Pause Place Three



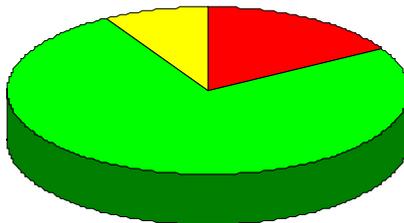
No. of People Choosing Gay (12)

Identification of Kevin's Sexuality

Pause Place One

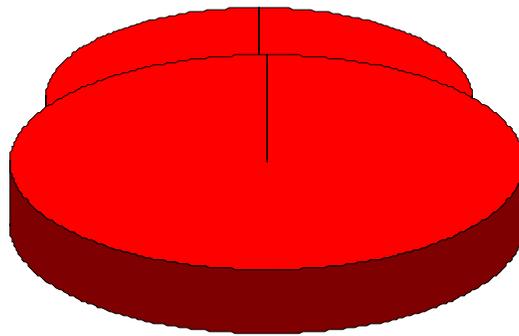
No. of Not Choosing (1)

No. of People Choosing Gay (2)



No. of People Choosing Straight (9)

Pause Place Two  
Pause Place Three



No. of People Choosing Gay (12)

*Get Real*

Identification of John's Sexuality

Pause Place One



No. of Not Choosing (1)

No. of People Choosing Straight (4)

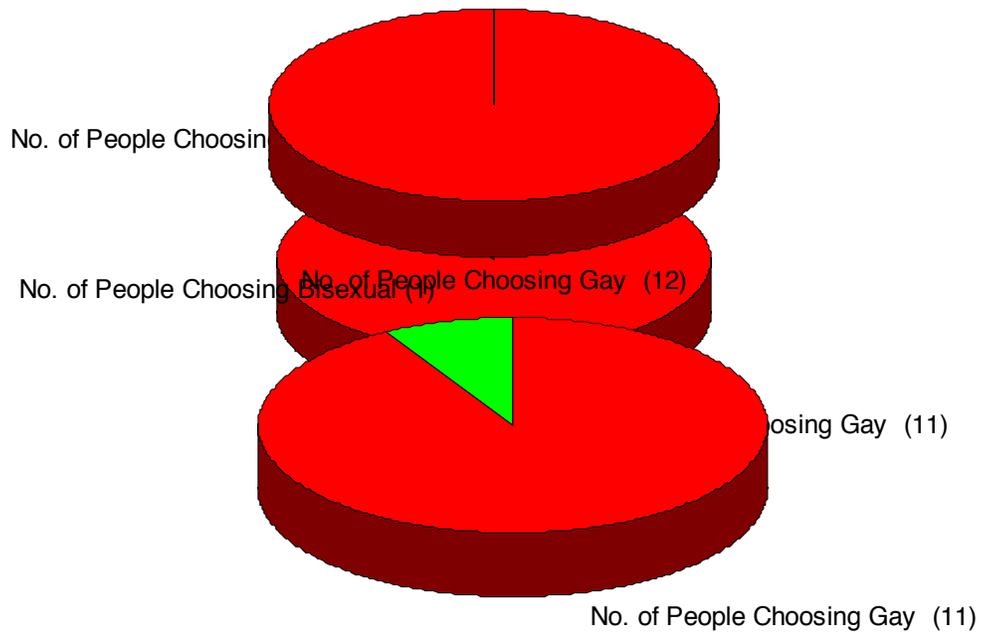
No. of People Choosing Gay (7)

Pause Place Two

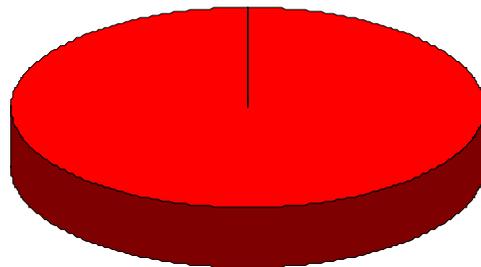
Pause Place Three

### Identification of Steven's Sexuality

Pause Place One

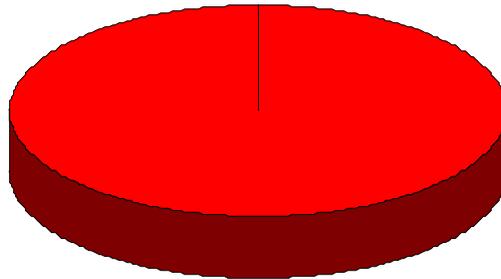


Pause Place Two



No. of People Choosing Gay (12)

Pause Place Three



No. of People Choosing Gay (12)

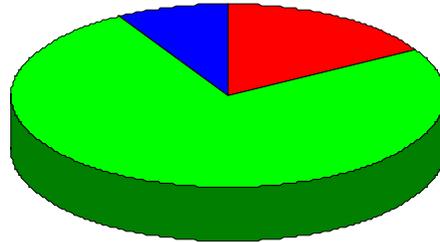
*In and Out*

Identification of Peter's Sexuality

Pause Place One

No. of Not Choosing (1)

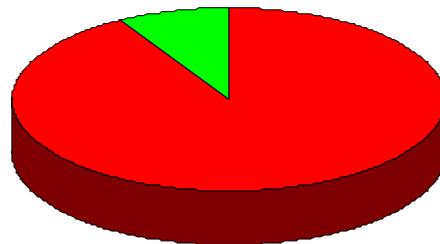
No. of People Choosing Gay (2)



No. of People Choosing Straight (9)

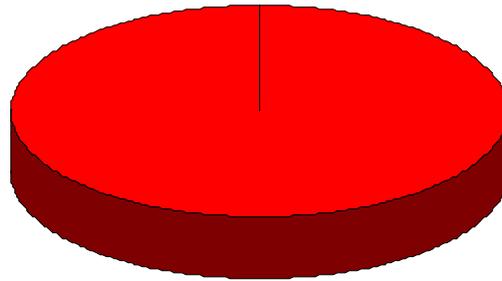
Pause Place Two

No. of People Choosing Straight (1)



No. of People Choosing Gay (11)

Pause Place Three

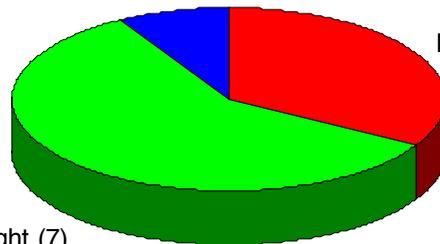


No. of People Choosing Gay (12)

### Identification of Howard's Sexuality

#### Pause Place One

No. of People Choosing Bisexual (1)

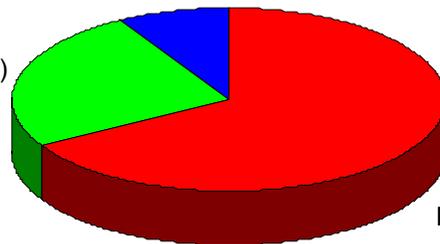


No. of People Choosing Gay (4)

No. of People Choosing Straight (7)

#### Pause Place Two

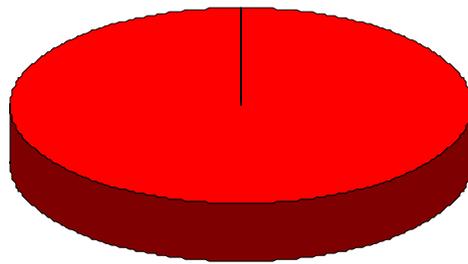
No. of People Choosing Bisexual (1)



No. of People Choosing Gay (8)

No. of People Choosing Straight (3)

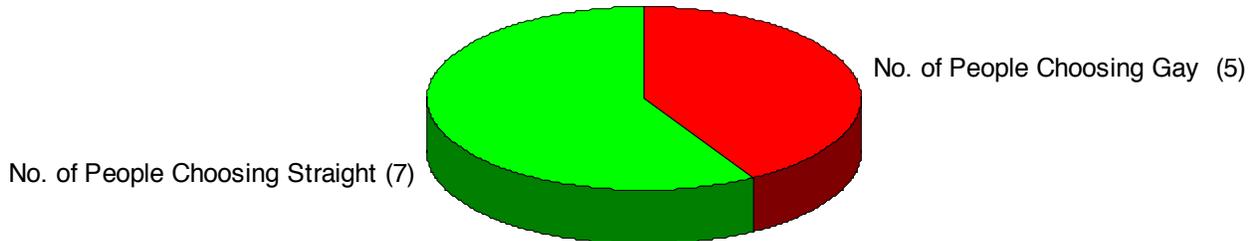
#### Pause Place Three



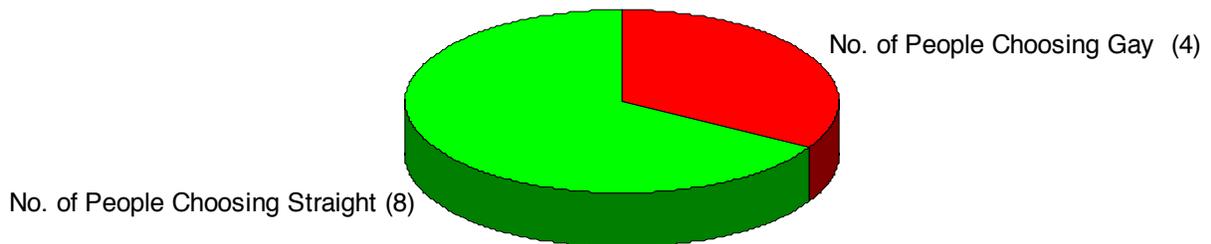
No. of People Choosing Gay (12)

### Identification of Jack's Sexuality

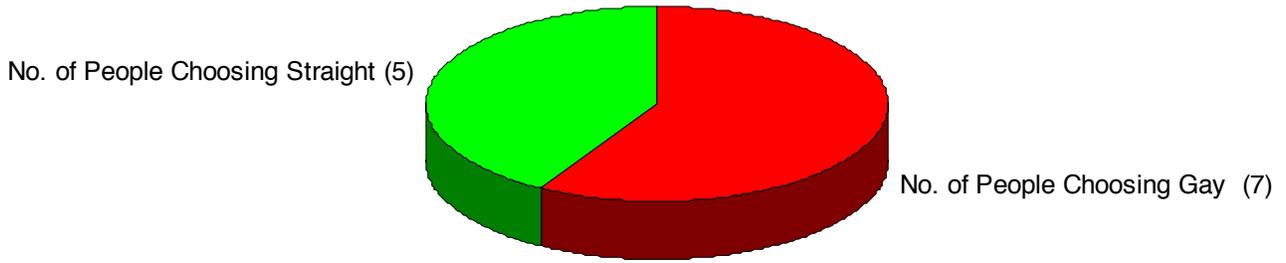
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

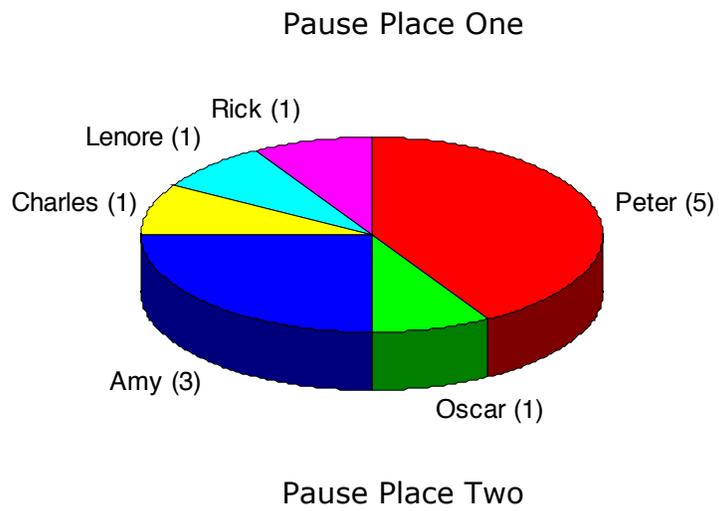


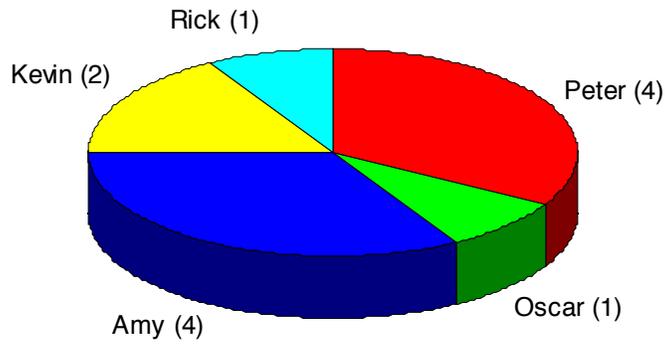
Pause Place Three



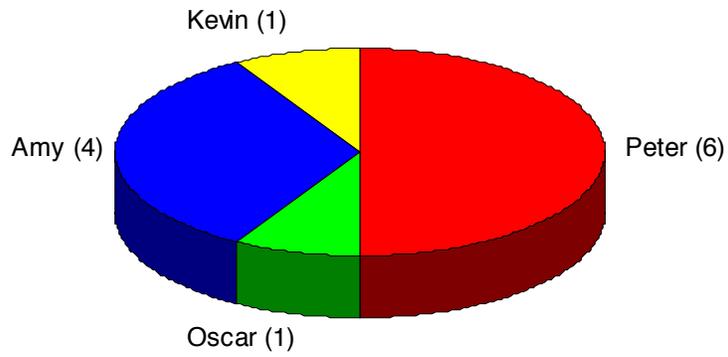
*Three to Tango*

Who do you most like?



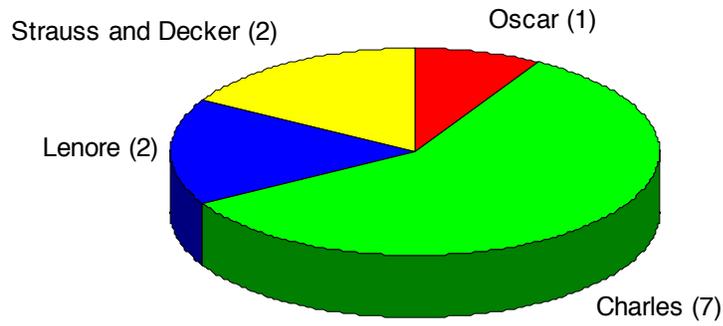


Pause Place Three

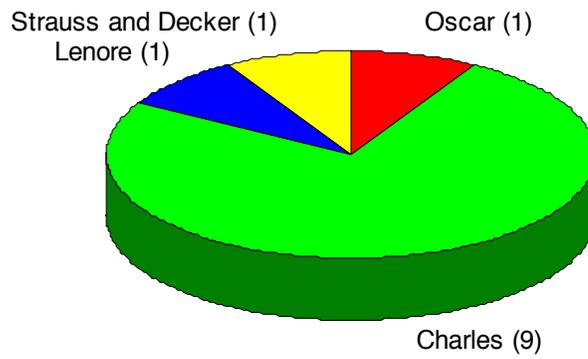


Who do you dislike most?

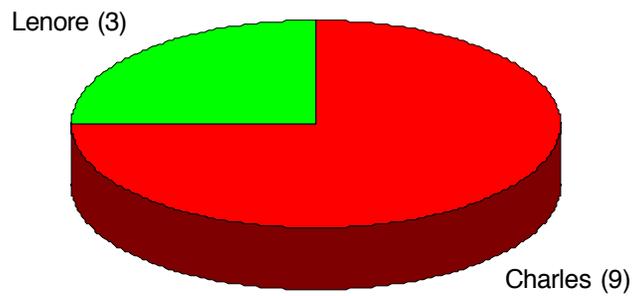
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

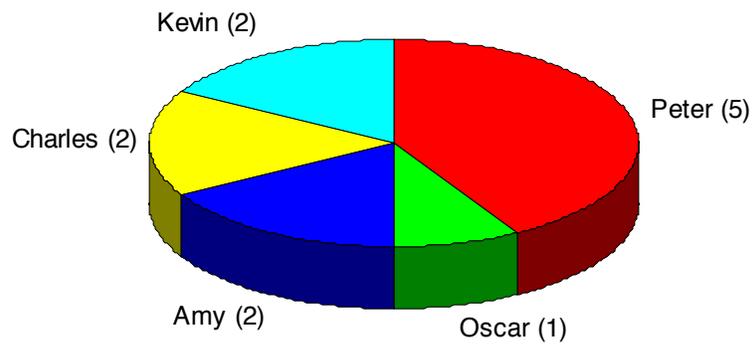


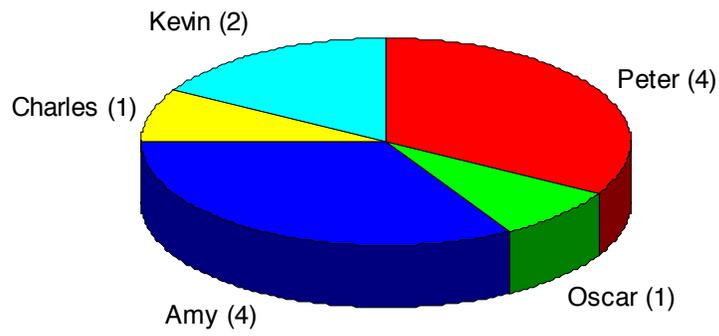
Pause Place Three



Who do you want to be most like?

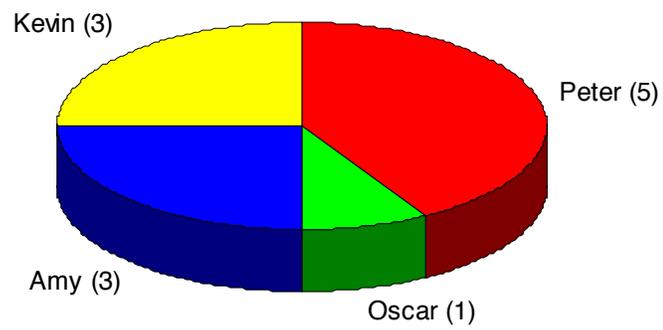
Pause Place One





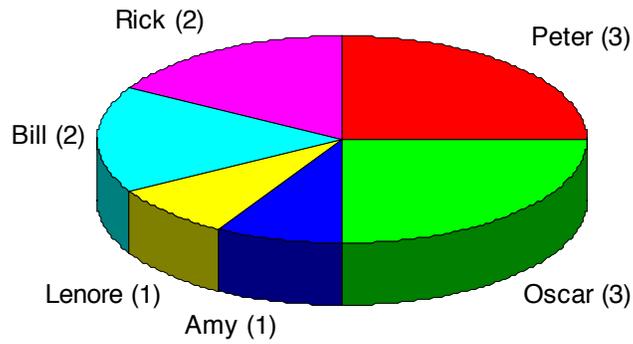
Pause Place Two

Pause Place Three

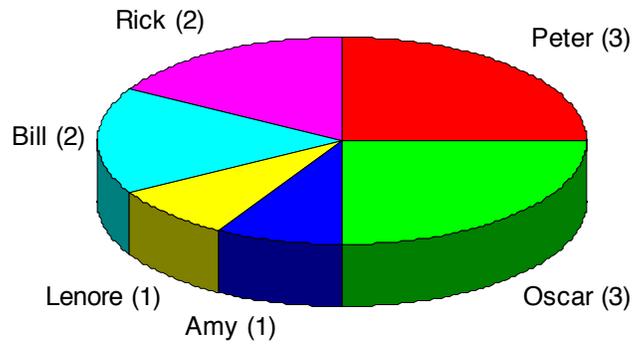


Who is most like someone you know?

Pause Place One



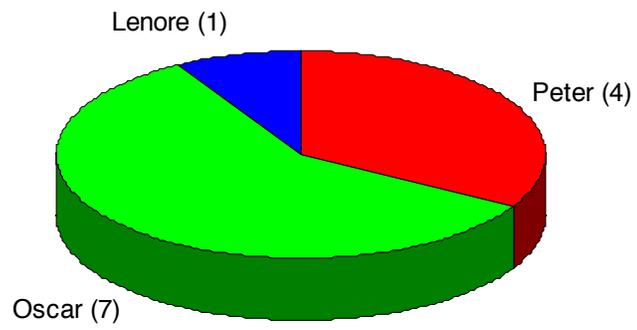
Pause Place Two



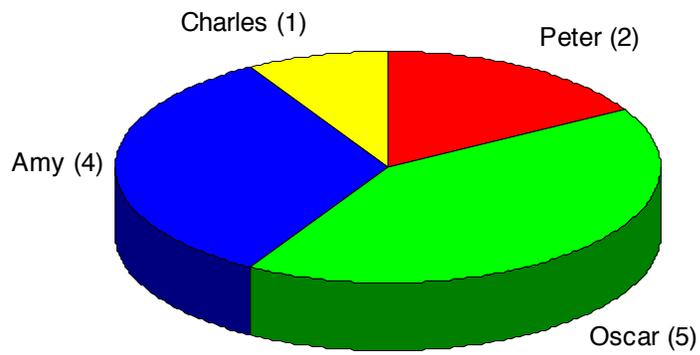
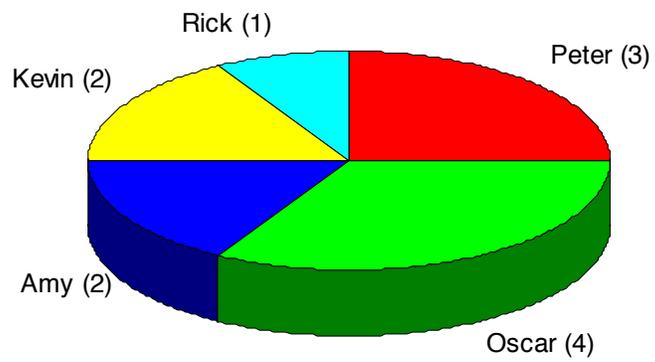
Pause Place Three

With whom do you sympathise most?

Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

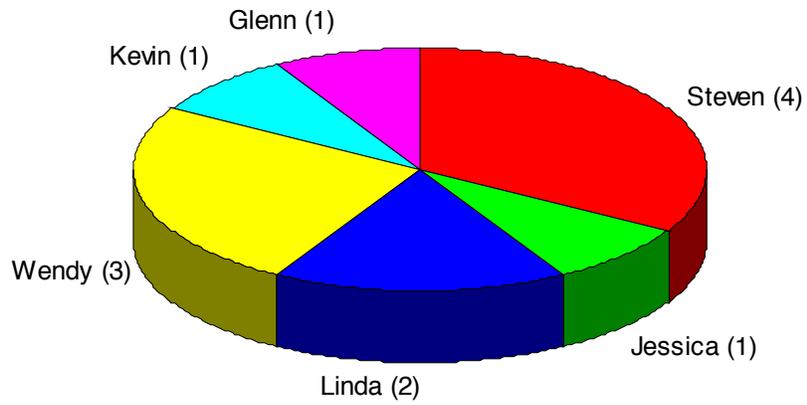


Pause Place Three

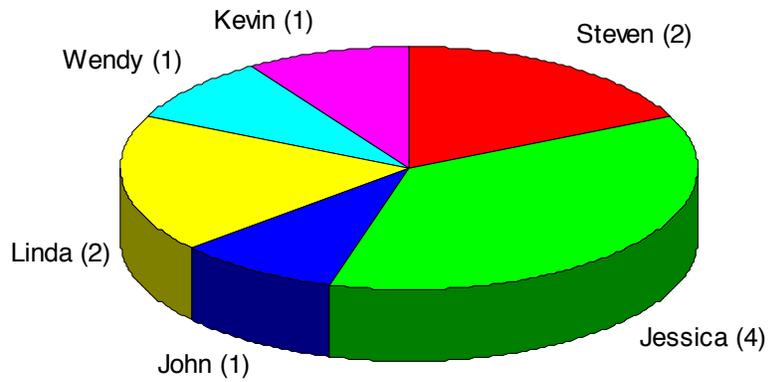
*Get Real*

Who do you most like?

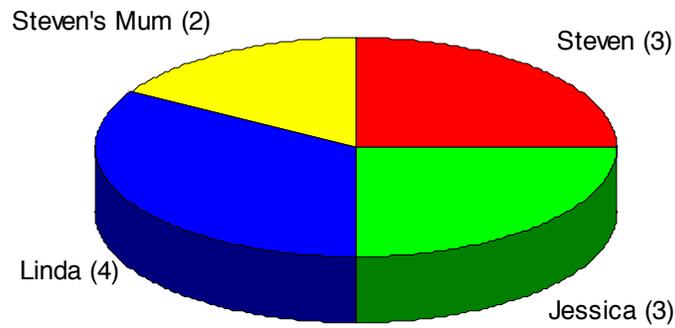
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

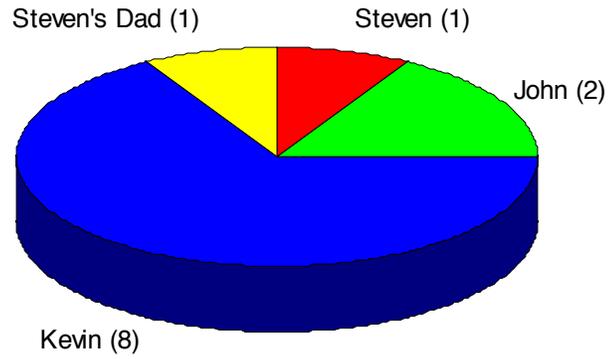


Pause Place Three

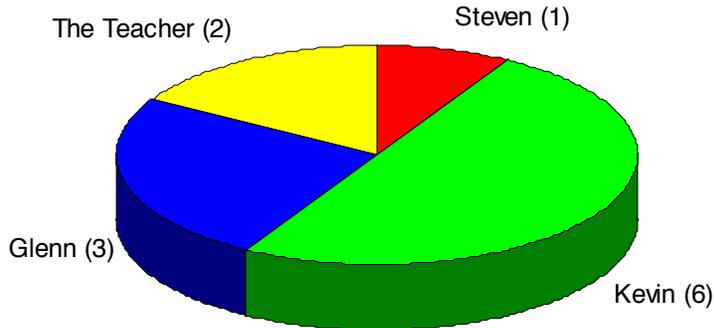


Who do you dislike most?

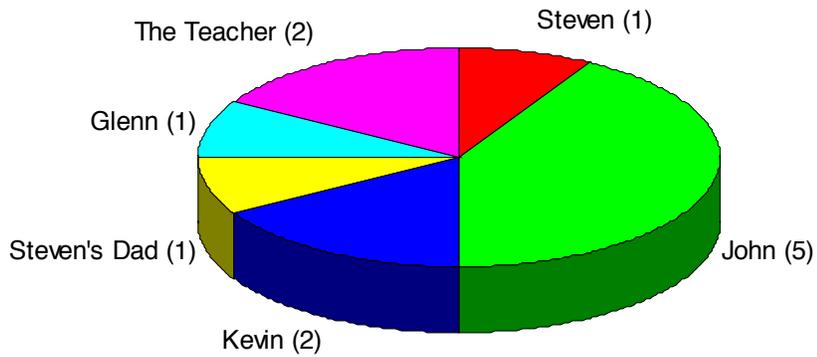
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

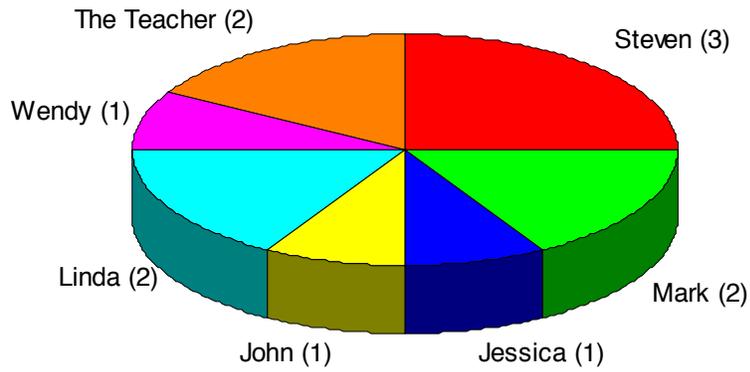


Pause Place Three

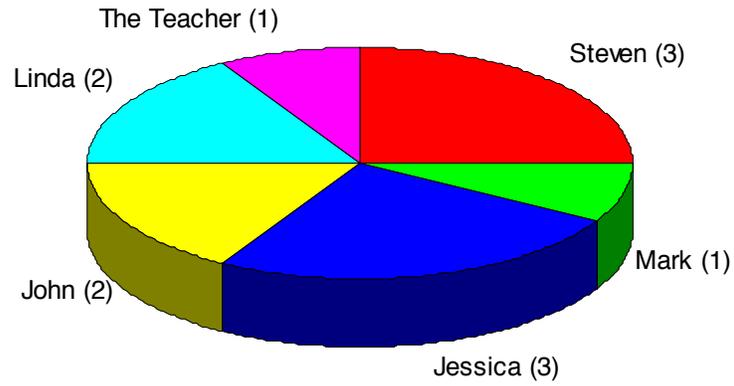


Who do you want to be most like?

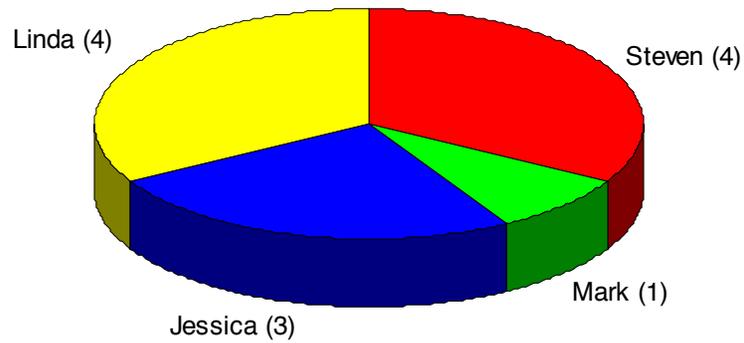
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

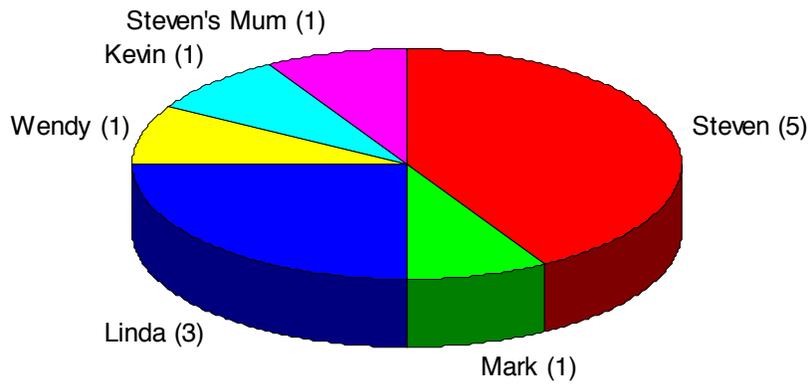


Pause Place Three

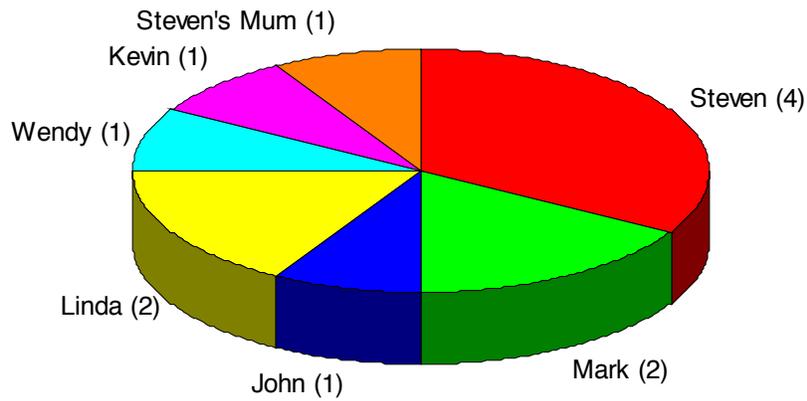


Who is most like someone you know?

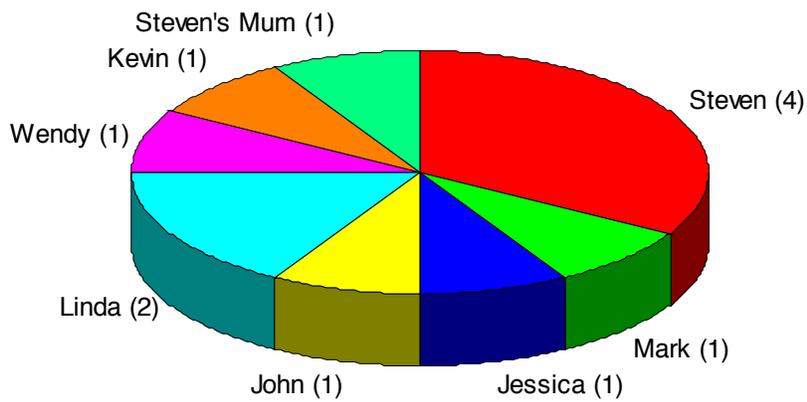
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

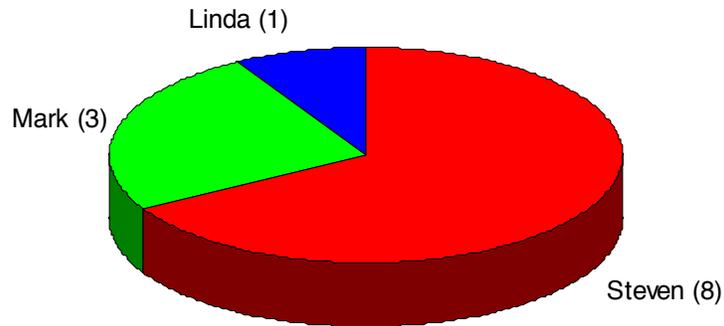


Pause Place Three

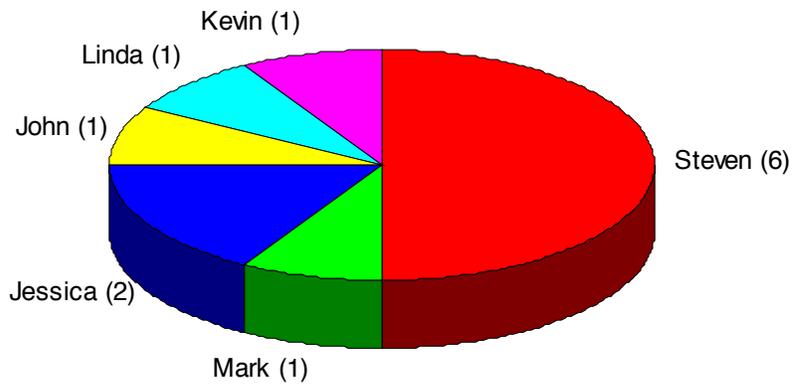


With whom do you sympathise most?

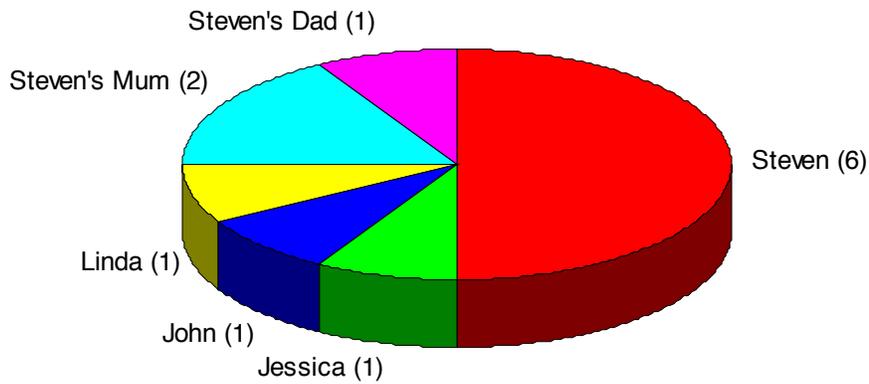
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two



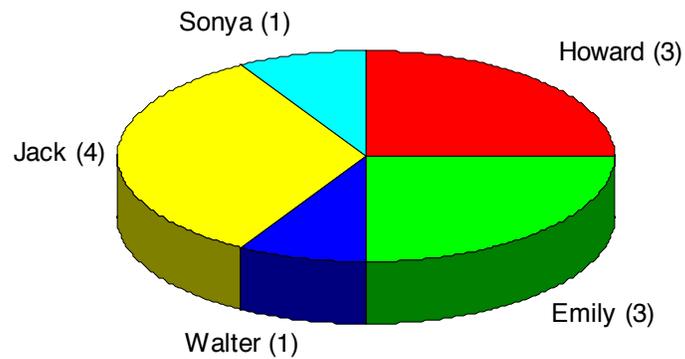
Pause Place Three



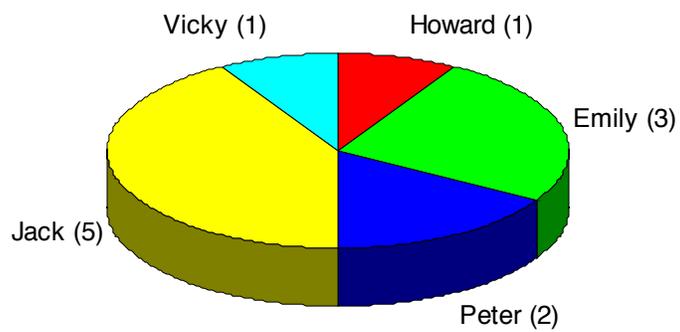
*In and Out*

Who do you like most?

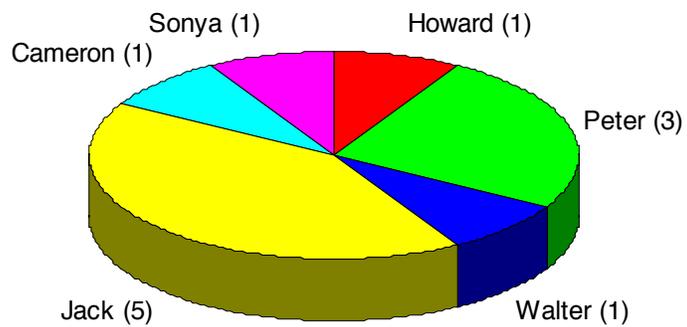
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

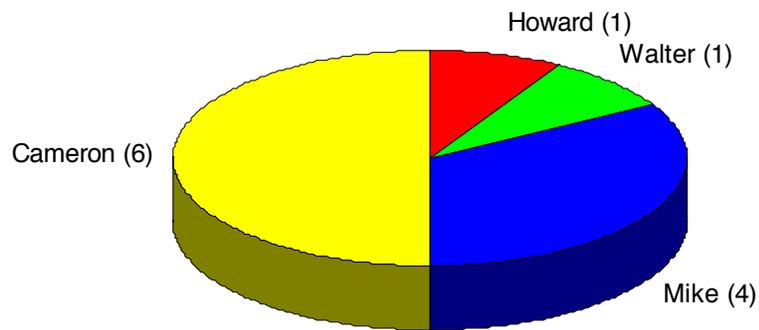


Pause Place Three

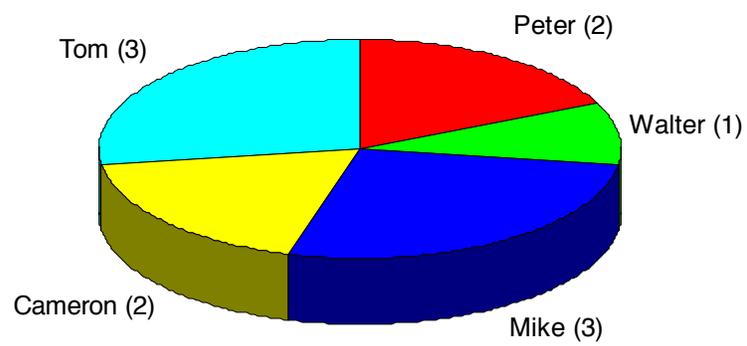


Who do you dislike most?

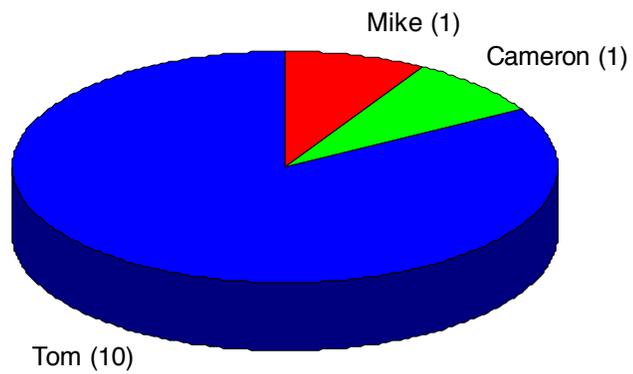
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

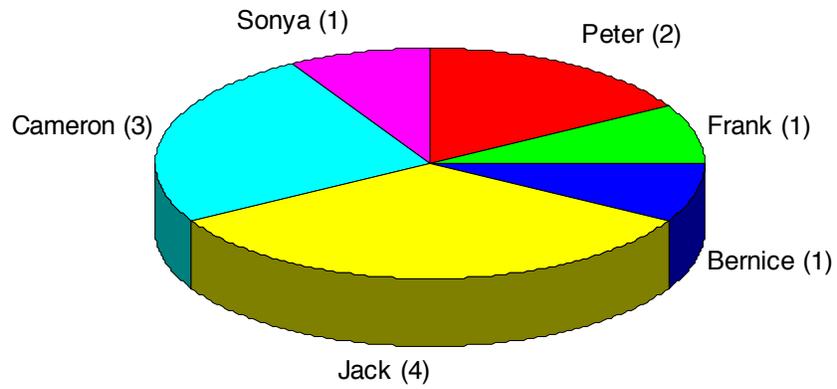


Pause Place Three

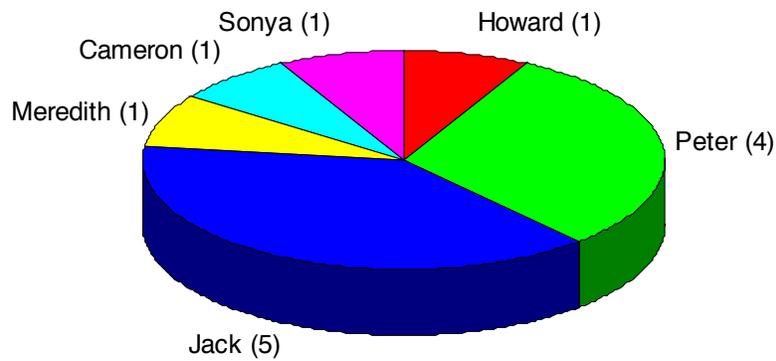


Who do you want to be most like?

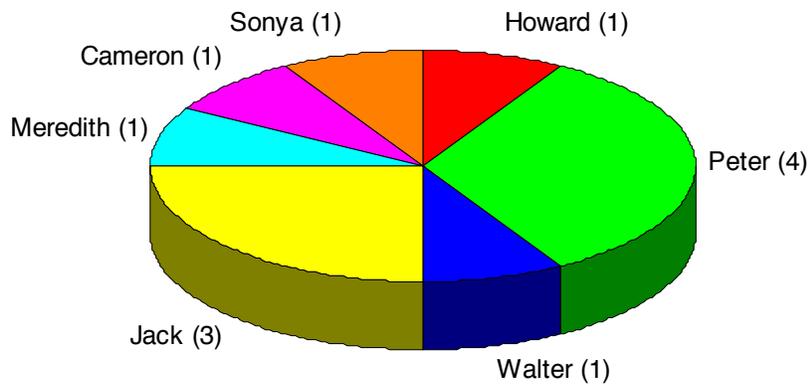
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

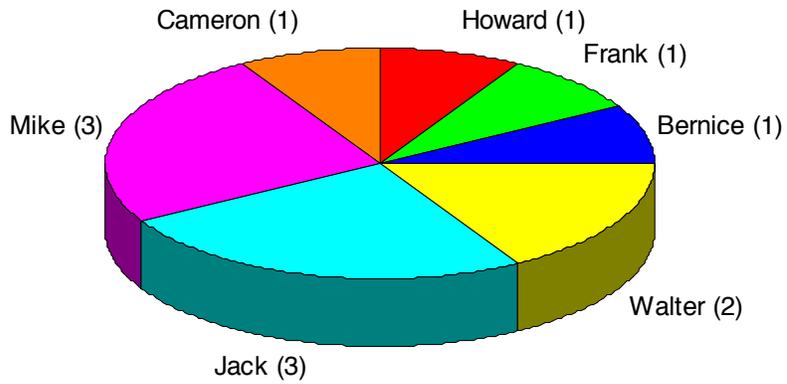


Pause Place Three

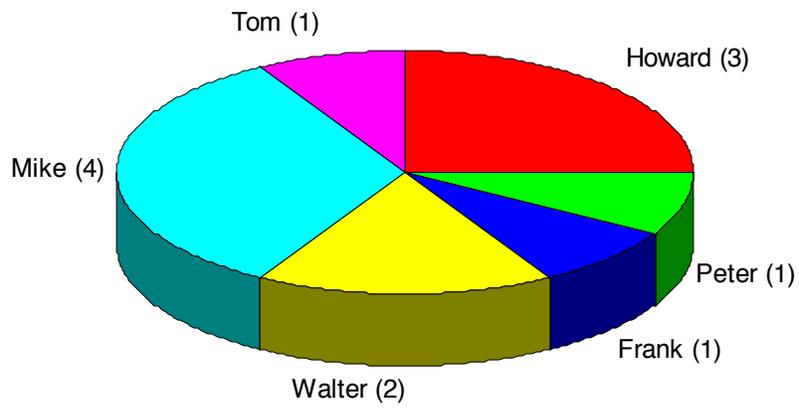


Who is most like someone you know?

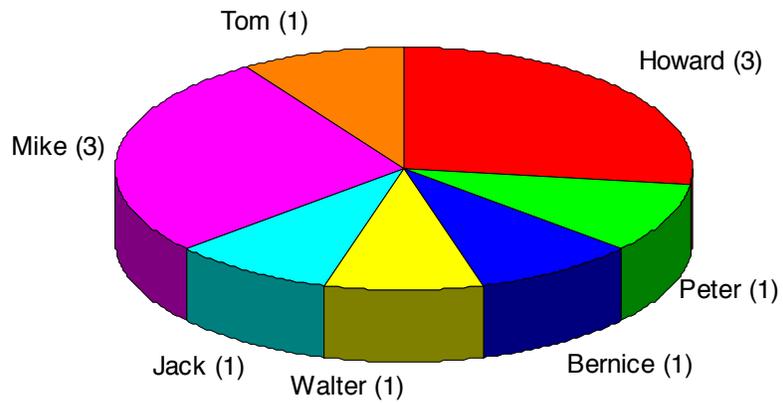
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two

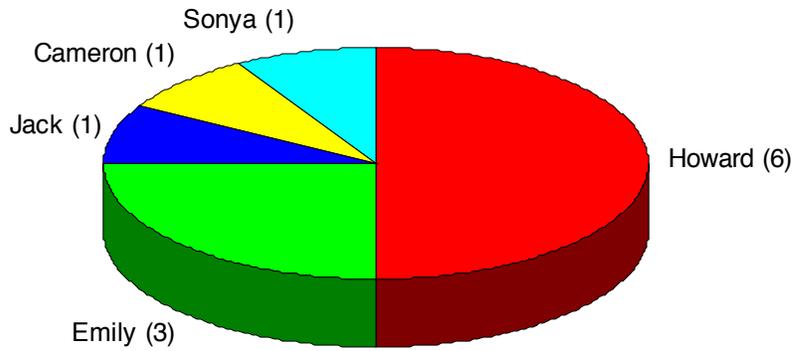


Pause Place Three

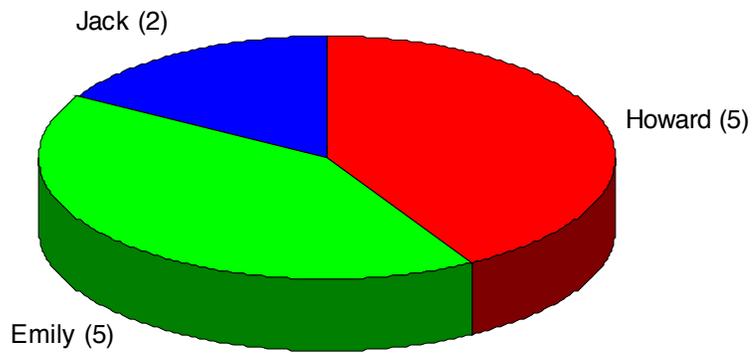


With whom do you sympathise most?

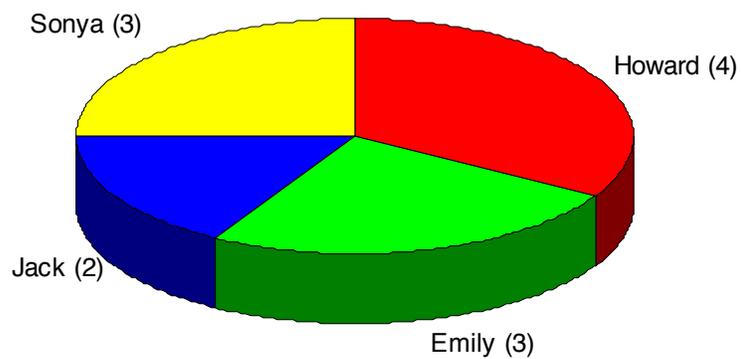
Pause Place One



Pause Place Two



Pause Place Three



Subject:

*Get Real* Questionnaire

Which Characters do you think are gay/lesbian/bisexual?

Select from gay/lesbian/bisexual/straight or other.

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Steven	_____	_____	_____
Mark	_____	_____	_____
Jessica	_____	_____	_____
John	_____	_____	_____
Linda	_____	_____	_____
Wendy	_____	_____	_____
Kevin	_____	_____	_____
Steven's Mum	_____	_____	_____
Steven's Dad	_____	_____	_____
Glenn	_____	_____	_____
The teacher	_____	_____	_____

Please answer these questions selecting one of the characters from the above list for the appropriate pause place.

Who do you like most?	_____	_____	_____
Who do you dislike most?	_____	_____	_____
Who do you want to be most like?	_____	_____	_____
Who do you think is most like someone you know?	_____	_____	_____
With whom do you sympathise most?	_____	_____	_____

Subject:

*In and Out* Questionnaire

Which Characters do you think are gay/lesbian/bisexual?

Select from gay/lesbian/bisexual/straight or other.

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Howard	_____	_____	_____
Emily	_____	_____	_____
Peter	_____	_____	_____
Frank	_____	_____	_____
Bernice	_____	_____	_____
Walter	_____	_____	_____
Jack	_____	_____	_____
Mike	_____	_____	_____
Meredith	_____	_____	_____
Vicky	_____	_____	_____
Cameron	_____	_____	_____
Sonya	_____	_____	_____
Tom	_____	_____	_____

Please answer these questions selecting one of the characters from the above list for the appropriate pause place.

Who do you like most?	_____	_____	_____
Who do you dislike most?	_____	_____	_____
Who do you want to be most like?	_____	_____	_____
Who do you think is most like someone you know?	_____	_____	_____
With whom do you Sympathise most?	_____	_____	_____

**Subject:**

### *Three to Tango Questionnaire*

Which Characters do you think are gay/lesbian/bisexual?

Select from gay/lesbian/bisexual/straight or other.

	Pause Place One	Pause Place Two	Pause Place Three
Peter	_____	_____	_____

Oscar	_____	_____	_____
Amy	_____	_____	_____
Charles	_____	_____	_____
Kevin	_____	_____	_____
Lenore	_____	_____	_____
Zack	_____	_____	_____
Bill	_____	_____	_____
Rick	_____	_____	_____
Strauss	_____	_____	_____
Decker	_____	_____	_____

Please answer these questions selecting one of the characters from the above list for the appropriate pause place.

Who do you like most?	_____	_____	_____
Who do you dislike most?	_____	_____	_____
Who do you want to be most like?	_____	_____	_____
Who do you think is most like someone you know?	_____	_____	_____
With whom do you Sympathise most?	_____	_____	_____

## References

Barbero, Jesus Martin (1993): *Communication Culture and Hegemony: From the Media to Mediations*. London: Sage, p. 74

Branigan, Edward (1992): *Narrative Comprehension and Film*. London: Routledge, p 72,76

Bryman, Alan (2001): *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Burr, Vivien (1995): *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge, pp1-15

Chandler, Daniel (2002): 'Media Representation' [WWW document] URL [http://www.aber.ac.uk/medi/ Modules/TF33320/represent.html](http://www.aber.ac.uk/medi/Modules/TF33320/represent.html)

Dubin, Steven C. (1998): 'Gay images and the Social Construction of Acceptability'. In Nordi, Peter M. & Beth E. Schneider (Eds.): *Social Perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies: A Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 434-466

- Dyer, Richard (1990): *Now You See It: Studies on Lesbian and Gay Film*. London: Routledge pp. 211-286
- Dyer, Richard (1977). 'Stereotyping'. In Dyer, Richard (Ed): *Gays and Film*. London: BFI
- Farmer, Brett (2000): *Spectacular Passions: Cinema, Fantasy, Gay Male Spectatorships*. London: Duke University Press p. 4,5
- Gitlin, Todd (1987): 'Television's Screens: Hegemony in Transition'. In Lazere, David (Ed.): *American Media and Mass Culture: Left Perspectives*. CA: University of California Press pp. 240-253
- Gordon, Angus (1999): 'Turning Back: Adolescence, Narrative, and Queer Theory, *GLQ: Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 5(1): 1-24
- Hall, Stuart (1997): 'The Work of Representation'. In Hall, Stuart (Ed.): *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage pp13-74
- Jenkins, Richard (1992): *Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Routledge, p 177
- Keller, James R. (2000): *Queer (Un)Friendly Film and Television*. McFarland
- Lothe, Jakob (2000): *Narrative in Fiction and Film: An Introduction*. Oxford University Press, p.12
- Moore, Shaun (2000): *Interpreting Audiences: The Ethnography of Media Consumption*. London: Sage
- Mortiz, Marguerite J. (1994): 'Old Strategies for New Texts: How American Television is Creating and Treating Lesbian Characters. In Ringer, Jeffrey R. (Ed.): *Queer Words, Queer Images: Communication and the Construction of Homosexuality*. London: New York University Press
- Russo, Vito (1981): *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies*. London: Harper and Rowlands.