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Shute

Reading Assignment

1)

When the author refers to the invisibility of lesbian representation in film, they are referring to Hollywood’s lack of authentic lesbian characters in film. Specifically, the notion that lesbian characters that come out of Hollywood are meant to appeal to a heterosexual male fantasy (as in *Personal Best*) is addressed. Director Robert Towne’s justification of including ‘crotch shots’ in his films is that he “likes looking at their thighs. I adore them. I want to fuck the daylights out of them…” (pg 76). This objectification and sexualization of lesbian characters shows that these characters are not there for the sake of diversity and inclusivity, but rather to appeal to the straight men watching. In addition, another important function of these disingenuous characters is to appear genuine, to make the intended audience (i.e. straight white men) think that the film they are watching is “flexible, liberal, and enlightened (pg 74). By only taking the bits and pieces of an authentic lesbian character that either make the creatives appear noble or that will increase ticket sales, the sacrifice of a proper representation of a lesbian character is made in the process.

2)

1. *Personal Best* includes an “obsessive use of ‘crotch shots’” (pg 76). Following logic from question 1, one can see how this appeals to a heterosexual male fantasy.
2. *Personal Best* has Tory and Chris in a lesbian relationship, but the fact that Tory references her past relationships with men (pg 76) not only attempts to imply that she is to some extent available to men, and thus their heterosexual male fantasy, but also discredits the notion that Tory and Chris are truly lesbians, again giving the imagined male audience a justification to continue to fantasize.
3. Lesbian-feminist critiques of *Personal Best* “most frequently and emphatically commented” on the dissatisfaction they had by the omission of a lesbian context for Tory and Chris’s relationship (pg 77). The implausibility of their “unexamined, taken-for-granted attitude about the relationship” to lesbian audiences shows that the relationship is not genuine, and to some extent, made by heterosexual men for heterosexual men.