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Infinite Disco vs. *Studio 2054*

Toward a Film Psychology of Virtual Concerts in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Abstract: The reinvention of virtual concerts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic experienced a tremendous surge of innovation during 2020, culminating in Kylie Minogue's *Infinite Disco* and Dua Lipa's *Studio 2054*. This article offers a comparison of the two concert livestreams, which is already formally apparent because of their common theme, timely proximity, and the cooperation on the track "Real Groove." However, a film-psychological analysis with particular attention to the concert beginnings reveals aesthetic differences that are essential in terms of the concert experience. Specifically, for the reception situation of a lockdown, it is shown that high levels of intimacy, coherence, and self-reflexivity concerning the pandemic lead to a higher degree of synchronization between the concert and its spectator(s) and accordingly to a stronger intertwining of concert and reception aesthetics. Thus, who has the 'real groove'?

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1. Introduction

> *The world's trying to break me*
> *I need you to save me*
> *Where does the DJ go go go*
> *When the party's over toni-i-i-ight?*

In *Infinite Disco* (2020), Kylie Minogue's "dazzling"[1] corona concert, the DJ is not present but implied by the dance floor that turns into an abstraction of a DJ console and by the lyrics of the corresponding song. The funny idea of accompanying the DJ after the party represents a massive longing for togetherness on a dance floor characteristic of the entire concert. Meanwhile, Dua Lipa refers to the same idea with the "Future Nostalgia" concept, which opens her competitive "disco extravaganza,"[2] unmistakably called *Studio 2054* (2020): Being caught in lockdown, we all want to reexperience the togetherness, closeness, and oneness—to hug someone, to dance, and to love. With the Blessed Madonna and Buck Betty—among many other guest performers—, *Studio 2054* even has two DJs and explicitly shows the desired future being the past.

The COVID-19 pandemic has 'unearthed' multiple forms of "(audio-)visual crisis creativity."[3] These include virtual concerts, whose reinvention during 2020[4] started with semiprofessional home concerts like Global Citizen and World Health Organization's *#TogetherAtHome* series—with contributions from, for example, Shawn Mendes & Camila Cabello and Years & Years[5]—and culminated in Kylie's *Disco* and Dua's *Studio*, the latter considered "the best livestream of the year."[6] Thus, the process of relocation[7] unexpectedly reached the live music industry, which "has been bruised the hardest during recurring lockdowns."[8] The new concert dispositive is an assemblage, that is, "an alterable complex of components that includes the spectator[(s)]."[9] This assemblage cannot be (fully) controlled by the musicians and their managers.

Consequently, not only commercial questions of access[10]—promotion strategies, platforms, worldwide streaming, ticket prices, donation requests, availability after the stream has ended—are essential but also aesthetic questions of the concert

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[1]   Wass 2020b.
[2]   McCormick 2020.
[3]   Kiss 2021: 241. Cf. Kiss 2020.
[4]   Virtual concerts emerged alongside technological innovations such as video-streaming platforms and smartphones; cf. Charron 2017: 2.
[5]   See "Together At Home with Shawn Mendes & Camila Cabello" (2020) and "Years & Years—#TogetherAtHome (Instagram Live)" (2020).
[6]   McCormick 2020.
[7]   See Casetti 2012, 2015.
[8]   Forde 2021.
[9]   Casetti 2015: 10.
[10]   Access can also be a film-theoretical issue; see ibid.: 145–146.

experience's initiation[11] and the spectator(s)' immersion.[12] The more distractions are present in the spectator(s)' assemblage of a virtual concert, the more critical it is to grasp their attention properly.[13] In film-psychological terms,[14] the synchronization between the concert and its spectator(s) or, in other words, the intertwining of concert and reception aesthetics[15] becomes an even more crucial concern in virtual environments.

In this article, I offer a film-psychological comparison of *Infinite Disco* and *Studio 2054*, which is already formally apparent because of their common theme (togetherness on a dance floor), timely proximity (November 7 and 27, 2020, respectively), and the cooperation on the track "Real Groove," which Kylie performed with Dua as part of a guest appearance in *Studio 2054*. A film-psychological analysis is appropriate because the film-psychological paradigm I present here is situational, processual-dynamic, and affective-integrative.[16] That means it can adequately address the situation of a lockdown, processes of initiation and other aesthetic experiences, and the emotionality of concert music performance. I will selectively validate the results of my descriptive analysis with the results of the recent empirical study on corona concerts conducted by Dana Swarbrick, Beate Seibt, Noemi Grinspun, and Jonna K. Vuoskoski.[17] The relevance of my analysis arises from the fact that there are contributions on virtual concerts from marketing, medicine, sociology, psychology,[18] or musicology[19] but, to my knowledge, not from film studies.

In the following, I will first explain the concert experience's relocation and present the so-called film-psychological experience matrix (2.). I will then sketchily derive the psychological-functional process model of initiation and subject Kylie and Dua's concert beginnings to a corresponding detailed analysis (3.). After that, I will show through a summary of an overall analysis that the two virtual concerts differ not only in terms of dramaturgy (implicit vs. explicit) as suggested at the outset, but are fundamentally different aesthetically, which is why they offer different concert experiences with different degrees of synchronization (4.). Finally, I will conclude by briefly reflecting on the need for transdisciplinary research in the case of new phenomena such as corona concerts (5.).

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[11]   On initiation in motion pictures, see Hartmann 2009.

[12]   On immersion in the visual arts and media, see Liptay/Dogramaci (eds.) 2016.

[13]   As one reviewer of *Infinite Disco* states, "It takes a fair amount to keep hold of an audience sitting at home with the myriad distractions of phones, kettles, volume control and an easy path to the bathroom for almost an hour"; Solomon 2020.

[14]   Speaking of film psychology, I refer to my affective-integrative film psychology because it is, to the best of my knowledge, the only film-psychological approach from applied research; see Pibert 2019.

[15]   Cf. ibid.: 152.

[16]   Cf. ibid.: 147–148.

[17]   Swarbrick et al. 2021a.

[18]   See, for example, Lisdayanti 2021, Ambler/Wodecki/Amass 2020, Vandenberg/Berghman/ Schaap 2021, Swarbrick et al. 2021a, respectively.

[19]   See, for example, Kusuma 2020, Parsons 2020.

2. Relocation of the Concert Experience

Francesco Casetti considers relocation the leading process of change in today's film culture.[20] In general, he defines relocation as "the process by which the experience of a medium is reactivated and reproposed elsewhere than the place in which it was formed, with alternate devices and in new environments."[21] While Casetti's notion of environments mostly refers to different places, web platforms are additionally to be distinguished as virtual (or media) environments.[22] Because of the lockdown situation, the living room (bedroom, kitchen, etc.) can be seen as the dominant place for experiencing virtual concerts. In a recent empirical study on corona concerts, about half of the approximately 350 participants from 13 countries across 4 continents used YouTube as a platform (46 percent), followed by a quarter on Facebook (25 percent) and one in ten on Instagram (9 percent).[23] Regarding devices, about a third watched the concerts on a smartphone (32 percent), also a third on a laptop (31 percent), and a fifth on a big TV screen (20 percent). Just under a third of the respondents used built-in speakers (30 percent), a fifth used simple headphones or earplugs (20 percent), and another fifth used high-quality headphones or earplugs (18 percent). These findings suggest that the majority do not have high demands on equipment when watching corona concerts and that YouTube is the central virtual environment.

Unlike the relocation of the music video experience from MTV to YouTube,[24] which occurred gradually for about a decade, the relocation of the concert experience in 2020 was disruptive and forced. One classical musician comments, "This is of course a situation we would all prefer not to be in."[25] While, before the pandemic, a concert movie could be treated as remediation[26] of the original concert experience (except for concert documentaries), corona concert movies are original themselves,[27] which makes them an even more relevant object of study for film scholars.

The corona concert experience, as mentioned above, takes place in a volatile assemblage.[28] This generally consists of the *space* of reception, the movie on a screen, some speakers, and the spectator(s) with their practices and needs[29]—each of these

components becoming concrete in a specific reception situation. For the reception situation of a lockdown, we can probably imagine a spectator in a living room (bedroom, kitchen, etc.), battered by loneliness,[30] watching a virtual concert on YouTube using a smartphone and built-in speakers. The notion of space has theoretical priority over place because most devices are portable and, above all, spectators construct the space of reception as an "existential bubble"[31] to protect themselves from distractions.

Casetti describes today's mode of experience as *performance*: It includes three traditional but reoriented audiovisual practices (sensory, cognitive, and affective) as well as four entirely new practices, all conative (technological, textual, relational, and expressive).[32] Affective, relational, and expressive practices are crucial because they are based on the core needs for emotionalization, social exchange and networking (relationality), and self-staging (expressivity).[33] I integrated Casetti's practices into my film-psychological experience matrix (tab. 1).[34] The experience matrix combines the vitality pentad according to Daniel Stern (intentionality, movement, space, time, intensity)[35] with the psychological triad (affect, cognition, behavior) and places the eight elements—arranged from film to encounter to spectator(s)—on four levels of analysis.[36] The three traditional practices are implied in the experience matrix, the four new, conative practices are explicitly listed—namely, in the behavior of the spectator(s).[37] Moreover, the components of the assemblage can be located along the macro level of the experience matrix.

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[30]   Swarbrick et al.'s data shows 70 percent of the respondents being lonely from "some of the time" to "often"; Swarbrick 2021, Swarbrick et al. 2021b: 27.

[31]   Casetti 2015: 10, 48, 73.

[32]   See Casetti 2009: 63–64, 2010: 25–26, 2015: 186–189.

[33]   Cf. Casetti 2010: 23–24, 26.

[34]   Cf. Pibert 2020: 246–247.

[35]   Cf. Stern 2010: 4–5.

[36]   Pibert 2020: 246.

[37]   Ibid.

Level of Aggre-gation	Film	Encounter					Spectator(s)	
	Film Event	Film Experience					Film Adventure	
	Formal Aesthetics	*Vitality*				*Affect*	*Cognition*	*Behavior*
		Intentionality	*Movement*	*Space*	*Time*	*Intensity*		
Micro Level	Shot		Space of Action		Present Moment	Emotion(s)	Stimulus Information, Sign(s)	Techno-logical and Textual Practices
Meso Level	Scene/Sequence		Image-Space: Expressive Movement Unit		Episode of Consciousness	Feeling(s)	Situational Model, Mental Representation	
Macro Level	Film		Space of Film vs. Space of Reception		Narrated vs. Narrating Time	Atmosphere vs. Mood	Explorative Interpretation, Satisfaction	Film Choice, Commit-ment
Meta Level	Film Culture		Network: Screen Landscape, Hypertextuality		Phase of Life	Entertainment	Knowledge	Relational and Expressive Practices

Tab. 1: Film-Psychological Experience Matrix from Pibert 2021: 221[38]

In the already mentioned empirical study, Swarbrick et al. conducted an online survey to investigate the effect of corona concert characteristics on the concert experience, with the salience of the COVID-19 pandemic and liveness as the main predictors, and *kama muta* and social connection as the main outcomes.[39] While the authors obtained retrospective overall judgments (that is, judgments referring to a concert as a whole) that must be located on the macro and meta levels in the experience matrix, I would argue that covid salience and liveness are experienced mainly on the micro and meso levels. Furthermore, I would place *kama muta* on the micro level and social connection on the meso and meta levels.

> *Kama muta* (Sanskrit term for 'moved by love') is a construct that conceptualizes the warm, positive emotion that we often label as *being moved* as a social relational emotion, which also encompasses a range of other, related labels such as *heartwarming*, *nostalgia*, and *love*.[40]

According to Swarbrick et al., social connection is a three-dimensional construct consisting of feelings of connectedness to the performer(s) and audience, feelings of

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[38] This is the film-psychological experience matrix's first publication in English, which is an own translation and slight modification of the original publication; see Pibert 2019: 150.
[39] Swarbrick et al. 2021a.
[40] Ibid.: 3.

being in the presence of others, and behaviors like "reading, commenting, sharing, or discussing."[41] In sum, *kama muta* and social connection reflect the core needs for emotionalization, relationality, and expressivity virtual concerts have to satisfy.

3. Kylie and Dua's Initiation

The psychological-functional process model of initiation (fig. 1) shows the processes of the initial synchronization between the concert and its spectator(s) or, in other words, how the concert and reception aesthetics are initially intertwined. It can be derived in a few steps: by considering the core need for emotionalization as well as the precedence of affective phenomena over cognitive ones, which is axiomatically anchored in film psychology,[42] by further taking into account that, in the case of re-located concert experience, an assemblage has to be configured, i.e., a space of reception has to be established, and by finally adding the functions of diegetizing and narrativizing, which Britta Hartmann elaborates in her pragmatic-functional initiation model of film beginnings.[43]
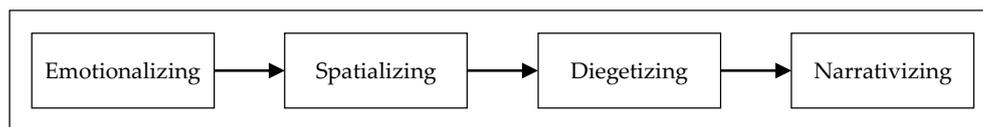

| Emotionalizing | → | Spatializing | → | Diegetizing | → | Narrativizing |

Fig. 1: Psychological-Functional Process Model of Initiation

Initiation is composed of four processes, which at the same time represent its specific functions. As shown in the causal chain (fig. 1), the functions often follow one another, but they do not necessarily have to.[44] Emotionalizing means eliciting those emotions (or feelings)—right at the beginning of the concert experience—that contribute to immersion, whereby emotionalizing processes follow the affective dramaturgy of the concert beyond the initial phase. Spatializing refers to configuring a more or less stable assemblage, especially creating a space of reception for the entire aesthetic experience. "Diegetiz[ing] means the spectator's imaginative acts related to the design of a largely coherent and internally consistent narrated world."[45] And narrativizing is the plot-triggering function, usually with a plot-triggering moment marking the beginning of the narrative.[46] The more

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[41]   Ibid.: 5.
[42]   See Pibert 2019: 147–148.
[43]   Hartmann 2009.
[44]   Cf. ibid.: 183.
[45]   Ibid.: 136.
[46]   Cf. ibid.: 182–183, 185.

successful the initial synchronization, the greater is the likelihood that the concert experience will occur without interruption and at a high level of attention.

Because the "microcosm" of the beginning is reflective of the "macrocosm" of the whole audiovisual work,[47] the following detailed comparison of Kylie and Dua's initiation will merge into the results of the overall comparison in the next section. I will use the method of descriptive film-psychological analysis, which, on the one hand, takes into account the *most probable* experience (and behavior)[48] and, on the other hand, assumes its wholeness through the concept of synchronization or intertwining.[49]

Infinite Disco starts with a white-on-black trigger warning of "some scenes hav[ing] a strobing effect that may affect photosensitive viewers" (00:00:03–00:00:07), indicating a light and laser show with a high degree of intensity. After the title sparkles in the darkness, the camera creeps forward to Kylie's silhouette. She wears a hooded robe and is situated on a small pedestal, framed by glittering lights that turn the ground into a sea of stars and a few short beams of light that carefully scan the sky. Musically, the stars unite with high triangle sounds and the beams of light with slightly lower strings. While being illuminated from behind, Kylie asks, singing, "Do you believe in … do you believe in … magic, magic, magic, magic? Do you believe in magic?" (00:00:48–00:01:01). When she is finally lit from the front and can be seen in a medium full shot, she sings half of the first verse of "Magic," then half of the chorus, with the camera moving away again. This is followed by a short pause, accompanied by a cross dissolve back to the medium full shot. Then she puts forward in high notes, "Come, come, come into my world / Won't you lift me up, up, high upon your, high upon your love?" (00:01:41–00:02:02). The music unfolds, turning into "I Love It," Kylie undresses, revealing a gold jumpsuit, starts dancing, and long, parallel beams of light appear from the back and left, creating a light cube with the singer at its center. The lyrics (00:02:19–00:02:58) suggest that love will be brought to the dance floor as the main theme of the concert:

> Waiting for your love was enough to go break my heart
> Ooh, not being close to you, it made my world fall apart
> I was like a lonely star at night
> Waiting for someone to share the light
> Love like this no one can take away, away, away
> Your love is my love
> And my love is all you need

While the trigger warning might build an expectation of a bombastic opening, this cognition is immediately dismissed by *Disco*'s careful development. Kylie appears

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[47]   Ibid.: 48.
[48]   Another possible method of film-psychological analysis is empirical investigation, e.g., using Stern's microanalytic interview; see Stern 2004: 229–240. Cf. Pibert 2021: 221.
[49]   Ibid.

all alone—without a band, background singers, dancers, or screens—, surrounded by darkness, pointing out the salience of the COVID-19 pandemic. The similarity between her and the spectator's lockdown situation can help intertwine the concert and reception aesthetics from the very beginning of the concert experience. Kylie's affective strategy for the opening is based on a bodily stimulation through high sounds and a cumulation of positive surprises—an emotion that occurs when the first verse of "Magic" is cut off (at least, if one knows it), when the same happens to the chorus (i.e., to the complete song), when the spectator is invited to "come into [her] world,"[50] and when "I Love It" turns out to be the actual first song. I want to argue that the unfolding 'magic' episode of consciousness intensifies until it culminates in the present moment of *kama muta* at the invitation. Accordingly, Swarbrick et al. found that the covid salience predicted *kama muta*.[51] The *kama muta* moment fulfills not only the function of emotionalizing but also of spatializing because the invitation helps to establish an intimate "existential bubble." *Disco*'s diegetizing can be described as gradual, with the pedestal and light cube being the first components, followed by the rectangular dance floor shown from the bird's-eye view at the beginning of the second song, "In Your Eyes." Moreover, the synchronous composition of all elements—lights, sounds, camera movements, lyrics, gestures, etc.—facilitates the construction of a coherent and consistent diegesis. Finally, "I Love It" kicks off *Disco*'s plot by telling about consummate love and eternal togetherness, taking an affirmative approach with a positive attitude.

In comparison, *Studio 2054* starts with a black screen and dance music fading in. After six seconds, the title appears in large transparent letters, revealing a view of a dancing nightclub audience. A voice then begins, briefly talking about a rave and concluding with, "It's part of, you know, street culture to try, you know, to do things illegal" (00:00:23–00:00:28). This statement transitions to "future, fu-ture nostal-l-l-gia-a-a"—a distorted exclamation of the first song's title and the already mentioned concept, which is apparently synonymous with *Studio 2054*. Then the aspect ratio changes to 4:3, a bunch of about twenty people are cheering in a semicircle around a microphone, bathing in colorful, chaotically jumping beams of light. On the right side of the frame, there is a camera that underlines the liveness of the virtual concert. The main camera moves past it, closer to the dancing crowd. Next, there is a quick sequence of cuts in rhythm to the drums of the song intro and the flashing lights. Geometric structures hang from the ceiling, also flashing. The color scheme and outfits highlight the disco era, with the jumbled images sometimes blurring. Finally, Dua appears from behind, in a white glitter dress, steps up to the microphone—now a small, round platform can be seen in the fog on the floor—and, after a brief dance interlude, begins to sing:

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[50]   This kind of invitation is typical of pop concerts and concert movies; see, for example, Madonna's *Confessions Tour* (00:01:20–00:01:49) and, more abstract, Stromae's *Racine carrée* (00:00:00–00:04:39).

[51]   Swarbrick et al. 2021a.

You want a timeless song, I wanna change the game
Like modern architecture, John Lautner[52] coming your way
I know you like this beat 'cause Jeff's[53] been doin' the damn thing
You wanna turn it up loud, Future Nostalgia is the name
I know you're dying trying to figure me out
My name's on the tip of your tongue, keep running your mouth
You want the recipe, but can't handle my sound
My sound, my sound (hey)
(Future nostalgia)
No matter what you do, I'm gonna get it without ya (hey, hey)
(Future nostalgia)
I know you ain't used to a female alpha (no way, no way)
(Future nostalgia)

Instead of creating a *kama muta* moment, *Studio*'s opening produces social connection—above all, feelings of being in the presence of others. The low, rhythmic sounds of the drums, supported by the flashing lights, literally hammer the nightclub atmosphere into one's head.[54] However, it is probably hard to immerse into a nightclub world in the lockdown situation, even if one is longing for togetherness on a dance floor. Thus, Dua's emotionalizing runs the danger of provoking reactance. Furthermore, while Kylie is alone and tries to connect to the spectator(s) by directly addressing them, Dua only interacts with her numerous cast members—not taking up the lyrics' second-person narrative and without social distancing, i.e., 'ignoring' the pandemic. Correspondingly, Swarbrick et al. found that performer interaction was negatively correlated with covid salience.[55] They also found that "social connection and *kama muta* were not correlated with performer interaction, suggesting that this is not an important component in experiencing social connectedness"[56]—unlike performer interaction with the audience.[57] This observation makes a negative emotional reaction to Dua's self-contained—and "illegal," as it is hinted at by the voice-over—party even more probable. In line with this, there is simply no offer to spatialize in Dua's initiation, since there is no invitation or another form of direct address of the spectator(s). In addition, *Studio*'s diegetizing is somewhat abrupt and confusing because the space of action is distorted by various special effects from the establishing shot on, and the composition is rhythmic but chaotic. Similarly, the beginning of the narrative asks too much of the spectator(s): who is John Lautner, who is Jeff? In contrast to Kylie's love statement, Dua fights for a

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[52]   John Lautner was an American Modernist Architect. For more information on this reference, see Crowe 2020.

[53]   Here, Dua refers to Jeff Bhasker, the song's producer.

[54]   Descriptions like 'to hammer into' can help to address the "dynamic forms of vitality," i.e., "psychological, subjective phenomena that emerge from the encounter with dynamic events" and are difficult to put "into precise words"; Stern 2010: 7, 17.

[55]   Swarbrick et al. 2021a: 9, fig. 4, 16.

[56]   Ibid.: 16.

[57]   Ibid.: 9, fig. 4, 16.

paradigm shift to female empowerment, taking a confrontative approach with a negative attitude. Therefore, Kylie's initiation probably leads to a "centralized gaze", whereas Dua's results in a "decentralized glance."[58] In other words, the initial experiences differ in terms of attraction vs. distraction or immersion vs. escapism.

4. Film Psychology on a Dance Floor

In an overall film-psychological comparison of *Infinite Disco* and *Studio 2054*, three factors that mark differences in the aesthetic experience could be identified: intimacy, coherence, and self-reflexivity (tab. 2). The experience factors do not include concert characteristics, such as those conceptualized by Swarbrick et al.,[59] but rather experience characteristics that can relate to different positions in the experience matrix (tab. 1). While Kylie offers togetherness, the livestreams' common theme, as a celebration of love in its many facets—with a variety of love metaphors and different gender constellations in dancing couples—, Dua brings back multiple and, to a certain extent, sexualized nightclub experiences—with provocative costumes, real DJs, a bar, and a female pole dancer. Paradoxically, *Studio*'s liveness, which implies Dua's sometimes imperfect vocals, does not help the audience to strongly immerse in her 'realistic' world, while Kylie's pre-recorded, perfectionist presentation draws the spectator(s) into an idiosyncratic universe. Unlike Dua's, this one-room universe is not crowded but intimate, addressing the audience and eliciting *kama muta* moments: there is no band, just two backing vocalists, ten dancers in couples, six choir members, and no guests. The concert's intimate atmosphere can intertwine with the spectator's loneliness in the lockdown situation better than Dua's—with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic—unrealistic warehouse gathering, incorporating four band members, four backing vocalists, twenty dancers in groups, six skaters, three circus performers, four "club kids" (01:08:01), five special guests, and, above all, ten guest performers.

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58   Casetti 2015: 184.
59   Swarbrick et al. 2021a.

Experience Factors	Experience Characteristics	*Kylie's* Infinite Disco	*Dua's* Studio 2054
Intimacy	Togetherness	Love/Celebration	Sex/Party
	Liveness	Pre-recorded	Live
	Affective Strategy	*Kama Muta*	Social Connection
	Mode of Interaction	Interaction with the Audience	Performer Interaction
	Cast	Eighteen Persons	Fifty-Six Persons
	Space of Action	One Room	Warehouse/ Four Rooms, Corridors
Coherence	Dramatic Structure	One Act	Four Acts
	Costume Changes	No	Yes
	Dramaturgy	Implicit	Explicit
	Narrative Development	Continuous	Discontinuous
Self-Reflexivity	Subject	Reality	Mediality
	Social Distancing/ Covid Salience	Yes	No
	Space of Concert	Condensed	Expanded
	Degree of Innovation	High	Low

Tab. 2: Kylie and Dua's Differences in the Aesthetic Experience

Infinite Disco is a highly coherent, concentrated one-act *tour de force*, without unnecessary costume changes or other distractions, implicitly presenting a continuous journey from romantic love to all possible kinds of love. It ends with "Magic," the initially withheld song that frames the concert and delivers the leading metaphor. Even if there is a narrative variation—for two songs, Kylie becomes an air hostess on a "KM-Air" (00:14:29) flight—her short talks, including a safety briefing, are not interludes but a means to directly involve the audience: like the DJ, the plane is not present but a subject of imagination. In contrast, *Studio 2054* is a reduced version of the classical four-act pop concert structure (with three interludes) that explicitly adopts the aesthetics of music videos. Moving from a music television show set (act 1) to a nightclub with a roller disco set (act 2), then to a boudoir and another nightclub (act 3), and turning back to the TV show set (act 4), Dua presents a discontinuous narrative development that lacks coherence. For example, there is a costume change in act 1, act 3 has two rooms, and two DJ sets can be experienced as

competing. Furthermore, the numerous guest performers prevent a coherent experience: FKA Twigs' pole-dance solo (interlude 1) and Elton John's "Rocket Man" performance from a screen above the dance floor (interlude 3) do not make much sense in terms of the narrative.

While *Disco*'s self-reflexivity is directed on the spectator(s)' lockdown reality because Kylie points out loneliness, practices social distancing, and therefore provides covid salience throughout the concert, *Studio* is self-reflexive of its own mediality and thus classical —for instance, using a 4:3 aspect ratio or showing tube TVs.[60] By this means, Dua expands the space of her concert to intertextuality and intermediality,[61] whereas Kylie reflects the spectator(s)' condensed space of reception. Both livestreams were a great success with audiences and critics. However, I cannot entirely agree with reviews stating that the *Studio* "experience offers a glimpse at how the Covid-era could revolutionize live music for the better."[62] Instead, I want to argue that *Studio*'s "TV show or […] long music video"[63] is a remediated adaptation to the new circumstances, while *Disco*'s light and laser show is a product of audiovisual crisis creativity that delivers an innovative experience. In the reception situation of a lockdown, its high levels of intimacy, coherence, and self-reflexivity concerning the pandemic lead to a higher degree of synchronization between the concert and its spectator(s) and accordingly to a stronger intertwining of concert and reception aesthetics. This is why the 'real groove' is Kylie's. Consequently, in the virtual presentation of this article, held via Zoom in a lockdown situation, 11 of 15 respondents (73 percent) preferred Kylie to Dua in terms of concert satisfaction, with the initiations and both versions of "Real Groove" being shown.

5. Conclusion

In this article, I presented the film-psychological experience matrix as the core of the affective-integrative film psychology—a transdisciplinary paradigm designed for applied research on processes of change in film culture such as relocation of the concert experience. Then I derived the psychological-functional process model of initiation to subject Kylie and Dua's concert beginnings to a corresponding detailed analysis whose results merged into those of an overall film-psychological comparison of the livestreams' experiences. It was shown that, despite their common theme—togetherness on a dance floor—, the virtual concerts are fundamentally different aesthetically, which is why they offer different concert experiences with different degrees of synchronization.

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[60]   For more information on this, see Rehbach 2018.
[61]   As shown above, the concert starts with an architectural reference.
[62]   Osei 2020.
[63]   Dua, as cited in ibid.

The major limitation of my descriptive film-psychological analysis was its inability to address dynamic forms of vitality in the spectator(s)' experience because it brought into focus, on the one hand, detailed processes of initiation and, on the other hand, aggregated experience factors. Nevertheless, I could selectively validate the results of my analysis with those of Swarbrick et al.'s empirical study. I could even conduct a secondary analysis because the authors published their data in an open-access repository. While film scholars typically do not collect empirical data and psychologists usually are not interested in aesthetics, future research should combine both methodologies. Specifically, I see a need for transdisciplinary research in the case of new phenomena such as corona concerts.

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Figures

Fig. 1: Psychological-Functional Process Model of Initiation. Own diagram.

Tables

Tab. 1: Film-Psychological Experience Matrix from Pibert 2021: 221.

Tab. 2: Kylie and Dua's Differences in the Aesthetic Experience.