Critical Analysis: Red, White and Royal Blue

A positive change in queer representation

By: Hannah Early

Queer representations in media are oftentimes depicted through societal stereotypes and used as a tool to gain attention.

- ➔ Hypersexualization
- ➔ Overly Feminine Gay Men
- ➔ Butch Lesbians

Given the preconceived notions, the film adaptation of *Red, White and Royal Blue* challenges the common perceptions of queer couples and individuals that are presented in media, breaking away from the inaccurate and stereotypical portrayals that are still prevalent in many modern media platforms.

Table of contents

01 AIDS Pandemic

02 Stereotypes

04 Media Representation

05 Red, White and Royal Blue

AIDS and Hypersexuality

"Reduction of homosexuality solely to sexuality and sex."
- Roman Kuhar

MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS *of* HOMOSEXUALITY
An Analysis of the Print Media in Slovenia, 1970–2000

20,000 ARE INFECTED . . . AND IT'S GETTING WORSE

Britain threatened by gay virus plague

GAYS IN FEAR

They dread revenge

News of the World investigates the deadly

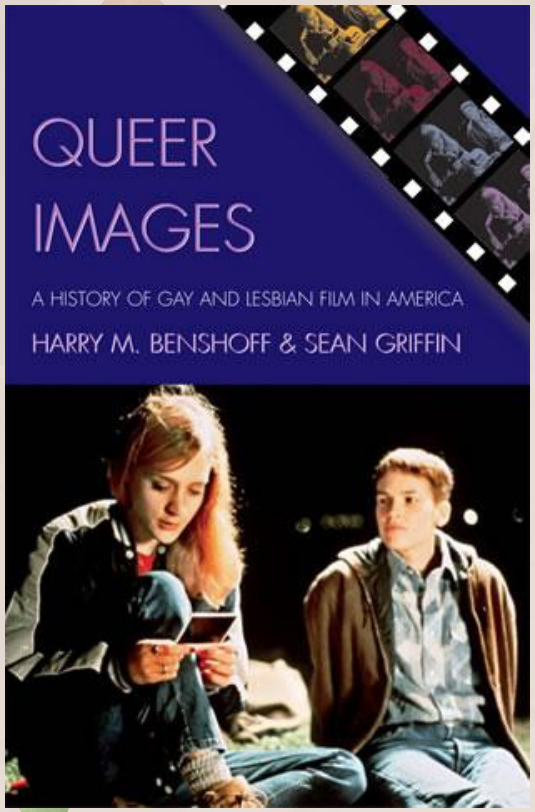
MY DOOMED GAY PLAGUE

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, JULY 3, 1981

A20 L

RARE CANCER SEEN IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS

Outbreak Occurs Among Men in New York and California —8 Died Inside 2 Years

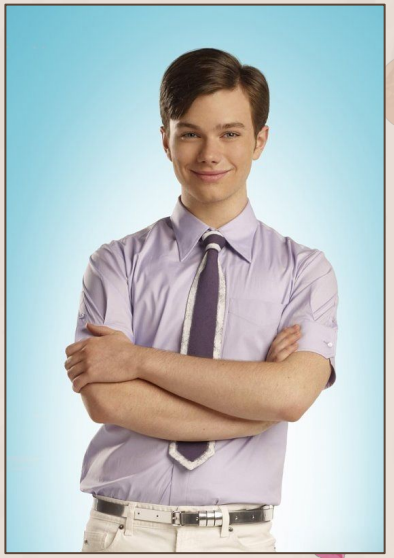


Stereotypes

"Stereotypes of homosexuals as effeminate men and mannish women afford heterosexuals the vision of what a homosexual is supposedly really like."

- **Benshoff and Griffin**

Carrie "Big Boo" Black – Orange is the New Black (2013)



Kurt Hummel – Glee (2008)

Anxious Displacements: The Representation of Gay Parenting on *Modern Family* and *The New Normal* and the Management of Cultural Anxiety

Andre Cavalcante View all authors and affiliations

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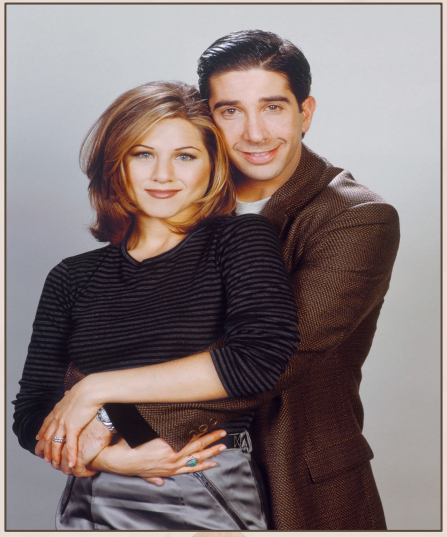


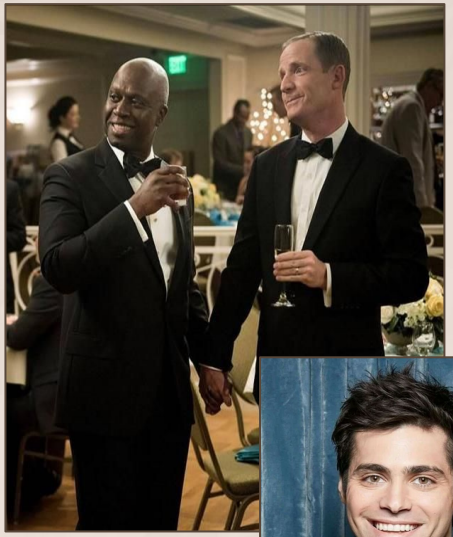
Acceptable representation on Media
← Heterosexual
← White

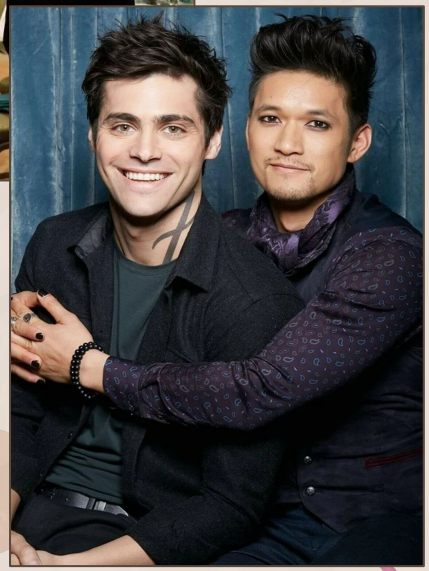
Non-acceptable representation on media
Gay/Queer/Homosexual →

When things deviate from the so-called norm, it draws viewers in…

...but the new 'norms' reinforce pervasive stereotypes of gay men

The portrayals of white and overly feminine queer men became the *acceptable* gay representation





But were now starting to see some breaking up of the stereotypes - getting more inclusive

A Positive Change

"Queer cinema ultimately can normalize queer relationships in popular culture"

– Katelyn Thomson

Red, White and Royal Blue

Historically:
Common Stereotypes in terms of Character types

Progressively:
Plot does not revolve around their sexuality or Coming-Out (Queerness is secondary).
Interracial complexity.

Main Focus:
Individual Identities
Royal Titles (actual conflict)

2 Mirroring Shifts

Audience Expectations		What the Film Actually Does
Physical Relationship	→	Emotional Relationship
=		
Coming Out Plot	→	Personal Lives + Public Personas

Physical Relationship → Emotional Relationship

0:40:09

0:55:20

Coming Out Plot → Personal Lives and Public Personas

Alex Presidential Re-Election.

Henry Royal Family Duties

0:48:40

"He [Henry's Grandfather] sat me down on my 18th birthday and told me not to let any selfish desires I may be harboring reflect poorly on the crown."

—Henry Fox

Overarching Conflict: Family positions' and how to navigate their relationship within their public personas.

➔ **Private lives are no longer private.**

"We've struggled everyday with what this means for our families, our countries, and our futures. And while neither of us is naive about what it means to be a public figure, we never imagined our most private and intimate thoughts and fears and truths would become fodder for public examination."

-Alex Claremont-Diaz

1:34:45

There is not a single plot that encompasses the whole film, much less a plot centered on their sexual identities. The film develops Alex and Henry's relationships while also giving them their own individual identities.

Red, White and Royal Blue creates a well-rounded and entertaining story that defies common homosexual stereotypes and serves as an effective example of queer representation.

References

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Thomson, Katyeln. “An Analysis of LGBTQ+ Representations in Television and Film.” *Bridges: An Undergraduate Journal of Contemporary Connections*, Wilfrid Laurier University, 2021, scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1053&content=bridges_contemporary_connections.