

2016

# The Beneficence of Gayface

Tim MacAusland

Western Washington University, [tim.macausland@wwu.edu](mailto:tim.macausland@wwu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cedar.wwu.edu/orwwu>

 Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

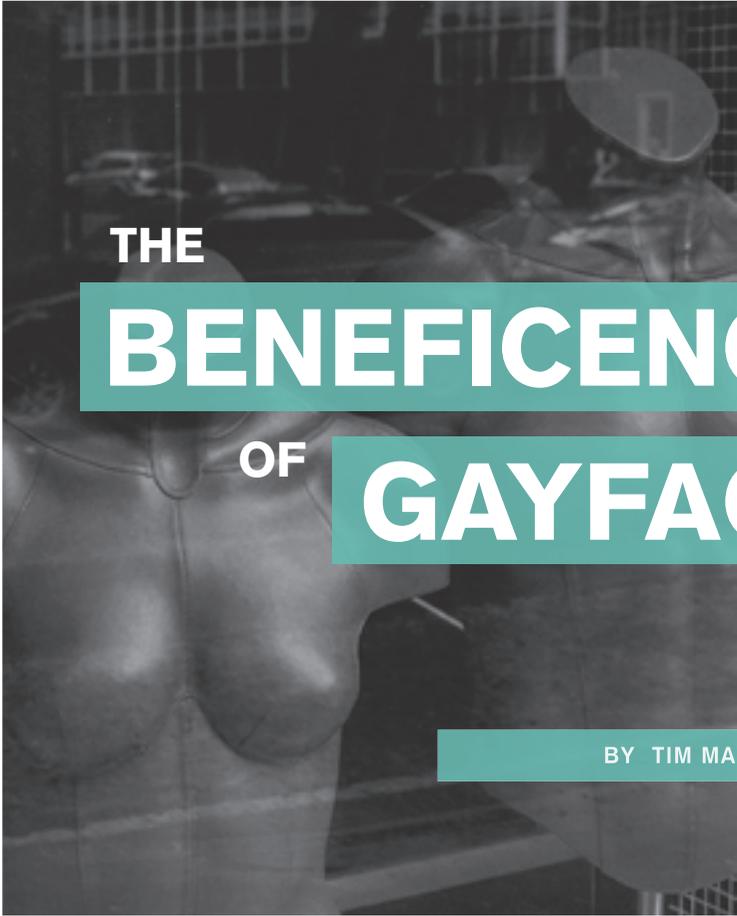
---

## Recommended Citation

MacAusland, Tim (2016) "The Beneficence of Gayface," *Occam's Razor*: Vol. 6 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://cedar.wwu.edu/orwwu/vol6/iss1/2>

This Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Western Student Publications at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Occam's Razor by an authorized editor of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact [westerncedar@wwu.edu](mailto:westerncedar@wwu.edu).



# THE BENEFICENCE OF GAYFACE

BY TIM MACAUSLAND

In 2009, veteran funny man Jim Carrey, best known for his zany and nearly cartoonish live-action performances—perhaps none more literally than in the 1994 film *The Mask* (Russell, 1994)—stretched his comedic boundaries with his portrayal of real-life con artist Steven Jay Russell in the film *I Love You Phillip Morris* (Requa, Ficarra, 2009). Despite earning critical success and some of Carrey's highest praises of his career, it made many filmgoers who saw it turn their heads in wonder, though not for Carrey's distinct yet animated leading performance. What gained the attention of many critics were his scenes with co-star Ewan McGregor, who played the eponymous character and the target of Russell's affections (Requa, Ficarra, 2009). Audiences were not caught off guard by the fact that the characters were gay; homosexuality had already broken through

to the mainstream within the previous decade with films like *American Beauty* and *Rent*. It was, rather, that the actors themselves were not gay. However, they never let it show or undermine the believability of the roles they played. As expected, the stars received much of the acclaim, but the film does represent a peculiar quandary in the ethical value of straight actors in gay roles. This practice is known as gayface, which, though commonly used to encompass all queer identities, also has counterparts that are more specific in transsexuality. Nonetheless, despite the apprehension they elicit, performances like these exemplify the need to tolerate and encourage gayface for the prospect of sexual equality.

Though perhaps not as well known or culturally notorious as its racial counterpart, a rudimentary understanding of gayface can be comprehended

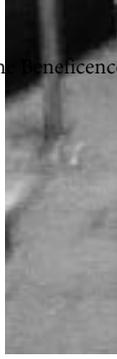
through the sordid history and evolution of blackface. Once a ubiquitous and racially charged practice in film and theater leading up to the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, blackface consisted of typically Caucasian actors applying heavy makeup, such as shoe polish, to present themselves as someone of African American descent, ordinarily to proliferate harmful stereotypes to humorous or hostile effect. It was perhaps most notoriously observed in the film *The Birth of a Nation*, which depicted African Americans as sexual deviants and Ku Klux Klan members as virtuous people (Griffith, 1915). Blackface has been ostracized in contemporary media and only ever appears in more self-aware, satirical commentary of itself. Such examples include Robert Downey Jr.'s Oscar-nominated role in *Tropic Thunder*, where he appears as an overly devoted Australian method actor controversially cast outside his race (Stiller, 2008). As Michael Rogin details in his book *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*, "Blackface is a form of cross-dressing, in which one puts on the insignias of a sex, class, or face that stands in binary opposition to one's own" (30). Much in the same way blackface aimed to single out African American culture as something perverted in relation to what was widely considered as the "ideal" American culture, namely a white one, gayface has its own—albeit subtler—origins in cinema.

Indeed, blatant homosexuality depicted in American films was largely unheard of before the Motion Picture Production Code (or Hays Code) citation prohibited it from 1930 to 1968, which cited the behavior as "indecent" for public audiences to spectate. The allusion to homosexuality was permitted, as the director could slip it past the censors by keeping the character's sexual orientation unconfirmed and incidental to the plot. Out of these stipulations, the "sissy" archetype emerged, most prominently in the 1930s, and with it came some of the earliest instances of gayface (Benshoff 14). As opposed to blackface, early depictions of gayface in the form of the sissy were not quite so malign or openly degrading. Fitting in with Hollywood's earlier propensity for more lighthearted fare, wherein comedies

---

## OUT OF THESE STIPULATIONS, THE "SISSY" ARCHETYPE EMERGED, MOST PROMINENTLY IN THE 1930s

typically highlighted the heterosexual ideal directly, the sissy represented a man whose effeminacy served to fulfill a lovably pitiful character. Such a character acted as a foil to the more than likely straight romance that drives the narrative; his lack of masculinity accentuates that of the male protagonist (Benshoff 16). This is the case with *The Dickson Experimental Sound Film*, a seventeen-second video featuring two men dancing to the melody of a violinist, which many consider the first instance of suggested homosexuality in a moving picture (Dickson, 1895). The sissy's sexuality was superficially metrosexual at best, and seldom did his mannerisms or disposition elicit strong disapproval in audiences. He behaved as a whimsical fool or a persnickety stooge. His latent homosexuality registers in the viewer's mind as no more than an unconscious understanding, or at the very least a doubt, that whatever sexuality he embodies is of little consequence to the viewing experience.



As the decades have waned on and the forbidding of gay characters—previously under the classification of “sexual perverts” by the Hays Code—has been lifted to the point of their mainstream status, there has been a dramatic shift since the days of the sissy. Well-written queer parts have transformed the role of the homosexual from something ridiculed or pitied, to something that is highly sought after due to their newfound emotional pull with audiences, thereby making them critically lucrative. This gives the actor a suitable range to spread their talents beyond their own sexuality—assuming they are, in fact, straight actors employing gayface—and elicit praise otherwise not accessible with the oversaturation of straightness. Of course, Hollywood has always recognized great transformation, such as Christian Bale’s weight loss for *The Fighter* or weight gain for *American Hustle*. Bale was nominated for an Oscar for his work on both, and was awarded Best Supporting Actor for the former (“Christian Bale Biography”). In a similar manner, queer identities suffused with poignancy or reflective of controversy

are commended, such as Hilary Swank’s performance in *Boys Don’t Cry* or Heath Ledger’s and Jake Gyllenhaal’s in *Brokeback Mountain*. For many actors seeking total character engrossment, it is not necessarily the tendentiousness of a queer role that allures them. In an interview regarding his film *Philadelphia* (Demme, 1993), wherein he portrayed a homosexual man afflicted with AIDS, Tom Hanks expressed,

People are saying that I was bold to do this, that it was a courageous choice. I don’t see it. It’s bold for me to do what? To play a man who goes to sleep in Antonio Banderas’s arms every night? Who has sexual intercourse with him somehow? Is that what’s bold? As a society we should be beyond that. (Hanks)

Nevertheless, with the advent of known straight actors tackling roles outside their sexualities, so too has arisen a lesser-known controversy around the morality of gayface.

Similar to how blackface is condemned for its stark and unflattering representations of African Americans, gayface has received its share of criticism over the years, though certainly not enough to make much of a dent in its prevalence, if at all. Hollywood has matured from the concept of the sissy and other more offensive archetypes with its ever-expanding liberalism, but there still exist movies that rely on their homophobia within the narrative. A blatant example of this is *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry*, a film targeted specifically to straight men. This gives cause for concern for gay moviegoers, and understandably stimulates a desire to ensure that films advocate



homosexual relationships rather than making profit at their expense by putting them in a harsh light. Admittedly, however, Adam Sandler and Kevin James do not fall under the category of gayface for their collaboration. They are both straight actors that portray homophobic straight men portraying gay men, but they expect the audience to chuckle every time the famously gay-for-pay Nick Swardson prances about in a butterfly costume with a preponderance of glitter speckled upon his bare chest (Dugan, 2007). Though by the end of the film an apparent pro-gay and overall accepting message is conveyed, some pictures take a more negative approach. Take for instance *The Silence of the Lambs*, a Best Picture winner that is often considered one of the finest films of recent decades (Demme, 1991). However, one cannot help but cringe at heterosexual actor Ted Levine's character Buffalo Bill, a transsexual who also happens to be a maniacal sociopath. His sexual repression "forced" him to slaughter a handful of women to complete his transformation into the female sex by means of a flesh suit made out of their skin (Demme, 1991). Some cite this example as one of the worst offenders for films that perpetuate the trope of having an LGBT character as the villain; his "savage" sexuality becomes the sole origin of such evil and can only be defeated by the straight-laced protagonist. LGBT communities have valid fears when it comes to a straight actor crossing the threshold.

Perhaps the greatest cause for anxiety over the representation of homophobia in film through the execution of gayface stems from the awareness of the total control these straight actors and directors have in the final product of these queer personas. Like any disenfranchised population, queer-

identified individuals have absolute reason to be wary of representation by those people who identify with an opposite sexuality, whose bigotry has both disenfranchised and caused acts of hateful violence against them. Technically speaking, any homophobic filmmaker given the authority to depict queer lifestyle in a harsh and degrading light could do so to the same effect as blackface, both in terms of pervasiveness and infamy. Such development could easily and single-handedly define what it means to be queer in the eyes of the viewing public, much in the same way propaganda operates. Thankfully, the LGBT rights movement has made great efforts toward mitigating those fears; it is almost safe to presume that gayface will be used with good intentions, as filmmakers wish to avoid widespread condemnation.

An economic reason for having issue with gayface is the purported displacement of openly gay actors from gay parts. Some feel that such roles should be restricted to those actors who already subscribe to the scripted sexual orientations, thinking they would be

more inclined to fit the part. For instance, Christopher Kelly of *Salon's* succinct reproof of the film *Behind the Candelabra*, which stars the straight actors Michael Douglas and Matt Damon as the pianist Liberace and his gay lover Scott Thorson, (Soderbergh, 2013) asks the reader whether it may be “time to say thanks but no thanks—and demand that gay artists tell these stories instead?” (Kelly). It is admittedly an admirable proposal, one that caters to the careers of those actors who, more often than not, are playing straight and thus outside their natural disposition; however, there are some repercussions that follow such a proposition.

For starters, considering the reversal—gay actors and straight roles—would make for quite the inhibiting double standard. The logical question that would arise is whether straight roles would likewise be restricted to straight actors. Granted, queer individuals could hardly damage the reputation of the straight community through their portrayals in quite the same way. However, if society's gradual shift toward sexual equality is wholly realized, such a double standard would come into

effect. By no means does such a double standard need to be implemented at the present time. But there may come a day that performances from openly homosexual actors, such as that of Neil Patrick Harris as the womanizing Barney Stinson on the critically acclaimed sitcom *How I Met Your Mother*, or Ellen Page's performance as the straight title character in *Juno*, are publicly disallowed. With the aftermath of this actor-character sexual correspondence, queer actors everywhere—the very ones the proposal would seek to protect—would suddenly find themselves at a loss for work, the bulk of written roles intended to be either heterosexual or undefined. GLAAD reports that only 16.7% of the major film releases in 2014 included queer-identified characters (Wong). No matter the potential shift a progressive society can have on said statistic, it would do more harm than help to limit these actors to queer roles.

One other gripe people have with the actors of gayface themselves is that it can force them outside their sexual comfort zone by having to project intimacy with a partner whom they would not otherwise cozy up to. One would not necessarily have that in mind when watching a film, but it is something that many actors have to overcome, whether they are performing outside their sexuality or not. To frame it within the realm of gayface, one could look at the controversy surrounding the breakout French film *Blue Is the Warmest Color*. Though much of the off-screen tension came by means of Abdellatif Kechiche's questionably opprobrious directing style, stars Léa Seydoux and Adèle Exarchopoulos reflected that they were “pushed further than they wanted to go on screen,” with Seydoux remarking that she “felt like a prostitute” (Del). It is a problematic barrier, but if disappearing into a role were an easy task, anyone could

be an actor. “Part of the job is making yourself comfortable in situations that are not familiar,” an anonymous heterosexual actor reflects in an interview with Nicholas Brown of *The Atlantic*. Indeed, but despite the expectation on the industry, there truly is more of a sociological and psychological reluctance to market one’s image as homosexual in nature. In the interview, the anonymous actor goes on to say, “I don’t want people to think I’m gay. And I’m even more uncomfortable because that isn’t a thought that I want to have” (Brown). On the other hand—that of the viewer apprehending a straight person playing gay—actor Harry Hamlin of *Making Love* perhaps best summarizes the internal process of understanding gayface with his comments in the documentary *The Celluloid Closet*:

I am sure that inside of me there is the same homophobia that we all share. If I see a guy who is playing a gay role, I’ll question it. I’ll say, ‘Wow, is he gay?’ And why I do that, I don’t know. But then I’ll stop myself and say, ‘Hey, that’s really ridiculous. You know; you’ve been there; you’ve done that.’ You know the question is, ‘Why do we care?’ Who cares?

(Epstein, Friedman, 1995)

The subject both actors touch upon, but do not entirely broach, is one that has been rooted in queer theory for quite some time. This has been defined as the *homosexual panic*: the fear of being gay or being judged as gay (Sedgwick 19).

In her book *Epistemology of the Closet*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick discusses this homosexual panic in more criminological terms. She writes that it is a “defense strategy,” wherein “a person

(typically a man) accused of antigay violence implies that his responsibility for the crime was diminished by a pathological psychological condition, perhaps brought on by an unwanted sexual advance from the man whom he then attacked” (Sedgwick 19). Though the judicial claim can still hold some degree of credence in contemporary court (sans in California, which officially debarred the defense in 2014), this still relates to what Brown’s anonymous actor outlines: connoted homosexuality pressed onto a straight individual can elicit an averse response by means of their either latent or fully realized homophobia. It would appear that the manifested homophobia with Brown’s interviewee and Hamlin also evokes morally contrite responses, as opposed to those who unabashedly employ the gay panic defense. It does bring up an interesting predicament in the practice of gayface, namely that, as the actor detailed, above all else behooves a casting director to hire performers who

---

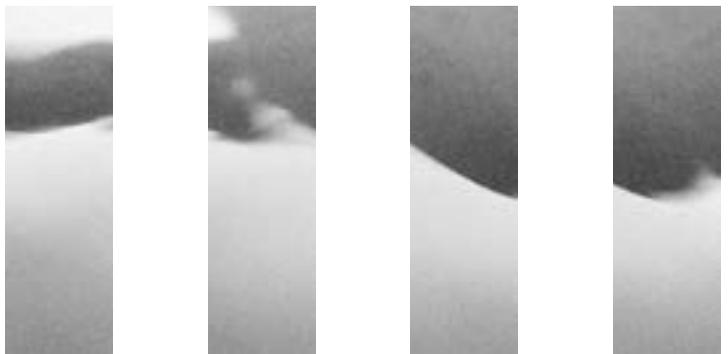
HOMOSEXUAL PANIC :  
THE FEAR OF BEING GAY  
OR BEING JUDGED AS GAY

are actually capable of quashing their discomfort with any given part.

Of course, above all the criticism gayface has generated, there is the quintessential complaint that plainly cites the actor's polar sexuality in relation to the character as a case against its implementation. In short, some feel that representing a human characteristic as culturally delicate as sexuality without the foundational and inherent exposure to it is downright egregious and offensive, much in the same way blackface is viewed. However, the discourse on the matter suddenly becomes blurrier when an individual's supposedly innate sexual binary is removed; when one considers that they are not actually locked into a specified orientation, so to speak. In Judith Butler's *Gender Troubles*, she claims that identity is performative, that "there need not be a 'doer behind the deed,' but that the 'doer' is variably constructed in and through the deed" (195). In application to one's sexuality, one could then posit that it is not so much that being inherently heterosexual, homosexual, or any other sexual variation defines one's orientation itself. Rather, it is the act of finding one's

sexuality that is ultimately projected. Such would prove to be a solid case for gayface, wherein virtually straight actors must find some justifying, overarching truth that makes it permissible to portray some intrinsic quality that does not necessarily accord to what they have predominately considered themselves to be. Rather than pretending to be gay-for-pay, they are gay to some extent through their real-life actions, despite the fact that they are following a written script.

Though this would not particularly harmonize with how it is typically presented to a viewing public, I personally have had first-hand experience of gayface through this projected sexuality and gender that Butler describes. When I was nineteen, I participated in a stage show at Peninsula College of Peter Shaffer's *Equus*. The plot follows an impressionable, teenage boy named Alan who realizes his sexuality through his pseudo piety and erotic worship of horses, which he believes is embodied by an omnipresent horse god. Much of the material does not shy away from the ineffable, as Alan praises his god by riding his favorite horse, Nugget, bareback, until he reaches his sexual climax. The show ends with Alan's psychiatrist unearthing his repression of blinding six horses with a hoof pick, in an act of defiance to his envious and unmerciful god. As Alan, I found myself utterly aroused by the material and characterizations, despite the fact that I have never humored the sex appeal of a horse, or bestiality, in my life. My projection of Alan's attraction for Nugget, a character portrayed by a very muscular and handsome (straight) man who sported a skintight unitard for the production, is an example of Butler's concept of projected sexuality. In the first scene, Alan and Nugget tenderly



embrace and breathe down one another's necks, gingerly stroking each other's skin in conjunction with the psychiatrist's soliloquy. Now, I, being a straight man outside all thespianism, have never found myself sexually attracted to another man in my life. However, on that stage, as Alan, with the ever-receptive Nugget sending me scores of energy like a good actor should, my own sexuality transcended into something else entirely. Suddenly I was Alan, caressing Nugget and listening to my own heartbeat race. Since that show, I have worked with that same actor on multiple occasions, and have never once rediscovered that intensity I felt onstage. Such is the same with some actors who stumble upon an alternate avenue of their sexuality through a role and ultimately redefine themselves in the process. Now, compare that with a show I did about a year later called *Ondine*, wherein I had to kiss a male actor in drag due to the lack of female cast members to fill the part. The reason nothing resonated with me sexually during that scene is attributed to the levity of the interaction; it was never intended to be taken seriously, and only served as a bit of comedic relief. It was great theater in its own right, but it takes a truly solid immersion into a character to produce a sexuality that is so wholly other. This sort of unrealized, pseudo-sexuality plays into Sedgwick's detailing of what she calls the "universalizing view," which details that such homosexuality is rather something that exists in everyone to varying degrees of materialization (Sedgwick 1).

Oftentimes detractors of gayface focus on the details surrounding the performance, such as the sexuality of the actor, but seldom evaluate the performance itself, the intentions behind it, and the overall effect it has on mainstream audiences. When

taking into consideration films that have been lauded not only for their cinematic heft, but also for their overarching progressive themes, one would find that non-queer actors headlined many of these projects with a queer protagonist; again, Tom Hanks in *Philadelphia* serves as a great example. Yes, there are some ostensibly homophobic films that require viewers to tread lightly, à la *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry*, but by and large Hollywood is producing more and more films that appeal to pro-gay audiences. When considering the dispute surrounding gayface, J. Bryan Lowder states, "Part of the gay community's patience with gayface has to do with a kind of representational pragmatism: Many gays are so happy to see a story like Harvey Milk's told at all that they're willing to cede the role to Sean Penn" (Lowder). As well they should be, considering that *Milk* is perhaps the seminal motion picture in support of the gay rights movement. It was a film produced to favorably reflect society's ever-liberalizing stance on sexual equality in the face of unwarranted homophobia (Van Sant, 2008). Though Hanks and

---

IN ORDER TO PROMOTE  
A REFLECTIVE SEXUAL  
BALANCE, AN ACTOR  
WHO IS ABLE TO FILL A  
ROLE COMPLETELY AND  
DO IT JUSTICE SHOULD  
PLAY THE PART

Penn, both of whom won the Best Actor Oscar for their respective work, are straight men, one should consider the support they gave the gay community by bringing not only homosexuality, but intimate, “alternative” sexual expression into a positive light (Van Sant, 2008).

Of course, though the queer rights movement has been making gradual headway with the advent of the twenty-first century, there still remains a just reason to be wary of surfacing homophobia in public outlets. Needless to say, American culture has not yet achieved sexual equality, and sociological precautions must be made to prevent negative outflux against the movement. However, the prohibition of gayface should not be one of these precautions.

It is understandable to be cautious of homophobia leaking out on-screen at highly discernable and ostensibly mainstream rates, but for the most part, the film and television industry has adapted to fit the standards of the contemporary and liberal viewing public, and so projects containing malice against queer identities are rarely green-lighted for production. It is perfectly safe, therefore, for Hollywood to set aside sexual inhibitions, and employ the foresight to not only preview, but also provoke egalitarian endgames in terms of total sexual equality. Indeed, one would presume that in a perfect world, sexuality would be less of a glaring stigma or taboo and more of a triviality, whereby for instance a character’s orientation—be it gay, straight, bi, trans, etc.—would be inconsequential not only to most plots, but also to his or her merit by the conclusion of the film’s narrative arc. Thus, if a character’s sexuality is of little importance in relation to the theme, the same logic should apply regarding the sexuality of the actor playing that character. Rather, in order to promote a reflective sexual balance, an actor who is able to fill a role completely and do it justice should play the part.

A large reason why many actors delay their coming out of the closet until they have established their careers and fan bases is the fear of typecasting; once the cat is out of the bag, they will never again be seriously considered for straight roles. It is indeed a valid fear, one that was perhaps most famously demonstrated by the late Rock Hudson, an iconic heartthrob in mid-twentieth-century cinema. Though he never publicly identified himself as gay, up until his death from AIDS during the epidemic of the 1980s, it has long been recognized within the industry as truth (Benshoff 203). In fact, Hudson was known to employ the use of “female beards” to conceal his homosexuality, including his sole wife Phyllis Gates. One cannot particularly blame Hudson,

who, for the bulk of his career, hinged on his marketability as what a typical male lead was expected to be. In other words, he employed what could be considered as straightface almost exclusively. He even portrayed a straight man pretending to be gay as part of an elaborate ruse to bed Doris Day's character in the romantic comedy *Pillow Talk*, another meta performance with the application of hindsight (Benshoff 93). On a macro level, all of this can argue for the disaffiliation between an actor's private and professional life, in the hopes that the former should have no sway over the latter. Of course, this would devalue the potentially opportunistic decision of a straight actor to play a queer character, in the hopes of critical acclaim; but the choice of an actor-character combination should be made based on how it enhances the film itself, not the possibility of accolades.

This comprehensive argument for gayface does not call for its monopoly. It does not, by any means, suggest that gay actors cannot inhabit gay roles, for that would simply be counterproductive. Fundamentally speaking, it only advocates its continued employment in Hollywood and elsewhere without an inhibiting consciousness, which elicits such meticulous micromanagement of the casting process. Rather, it is more in favor of a laissez-faire approach, one that does not take an actor's sexuality in account at all. In fact, there have already been cases wherein gayface actors have performed opposite actual gay actors with much success; cases wherein the parts fit the actors, rather than the other way around. The television sitcom *Modern Family* is perhaps the most exemplary of these, exhibited by the widely commended onscreen relationship between openly homosexual Jesse Tyler Ferguson and heterosexual Eric Stonestreet as the

gay couple Mitch and Cam. Essentially, if there is anything their numerous combined accolades are evidence of, it is that not only can gayface be productive, it can also coexist and thrive off of an authentic queer performance.

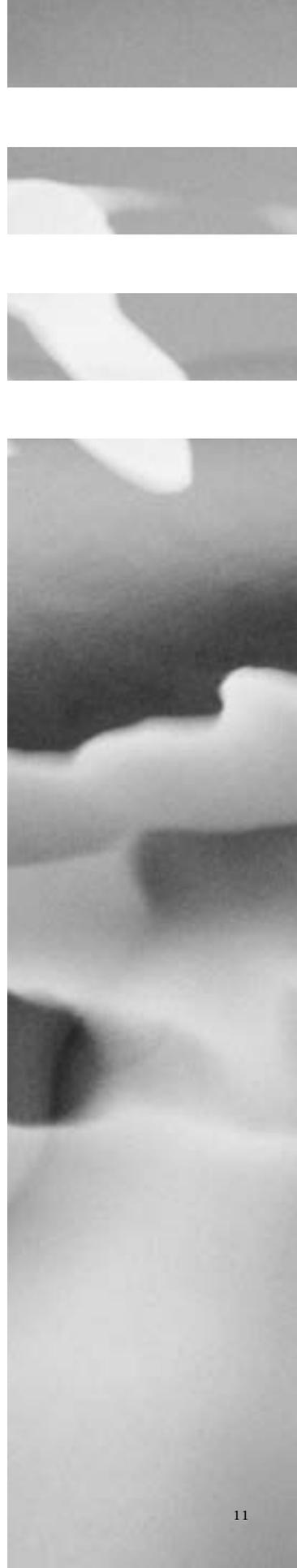
In a pragmatic attempt to further divide the actor from the part by tearing down the fourth wall, what makes the discourse of gayface more intriguing is the role of the camera as the catalyst in the entire discussion. To put it mildly, were cameras not to be rolling, it is doubtful that anyone would care whether the actors interact in such a physical manner. No one would take issue with Jim Carrey and Ewan McGregor actually having sexual intercourse, should they suddenly have the desire to; it is only when it is put to celluloid that their gayness is considered potentially harmful to the

queer community. This highlights the mainstream audience's difficulty with sexual experimentation in reality and on-screen.

Homophobia exists in human society and, like all forms of bigotry; it is not something that is likely to be entirely extinguished. There is no problem with looking back on the grueling and still incomplete road to sexual equality as a helpful reminder, but one must also keep an eye on future dealings; an endgame, if you will. Though gayface is not quite so paramount now, it will be very much so in the generations to come, in order to cement a maximally egalitarian society. At the very least, gayface should be employed if only for the actors themselves, who, like me, will be able to unlock alternate components of themselves through their characters' sexualities. In French philosopher's Michel Foucault's study *The History of Sexuality*, he posits,

The truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience; pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself; it is experienced as pleasure, evaluated in terms of its intensity, its specific quality, its duration, its reverberations in the body and the soul. (57)

Even if gayface actors can reach this summit in their performances, Foucault's argument should be the only rationale necessary to ensure its survival. In fact, gayface, though relevant, ideally should not be a term used often at all. It should be something seldom thought of, more of an afterthought in the grand scheme of the performance. This is how gayface fits into a sexually equitable society: present, but incidental to the overall depiction of human character.



## REFERENCES

- Behind the Candelabra*. Dir. Steven Soderbergh. Perf. Matt Damon, Scott Bakula, and Eric Zuckerman. Jerry Weintraub Productions, 2013. Film.
- Benshoff, Harry. *Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005. Google Book Search. Web. 13 May 2015.
- Brown, Nicholas. "Why Do I Still Feel Uncomfortable Playing a Gay Man on TV?" *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company, 27 Dec. 2012. Web. 14 Apr. 2015.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- "*Christian Bale Biography*." IMDb. IMDb, 15 Oct. 2015. Web. 30 May 2015.
- Del, Chris. "Do Great Performance Justify 'Gayface'? - StageBuddy." StageBuddy. N.p., 23 June 2014. Web. 30 May 2015.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. I. New York: Vintage, 1978. Print.
- Hanks, Tom. "Playing the Part." Interview by Emily Rizzo. *Newsweek* 14 Feb. 1994: n. pag. Google Groups. Web. 26 May 2015.
- I Love You Phillip Morris*. Dir. Glenn Ficarra and John Requa. Perf. Jim Carrey, Ewan McGregor, and Leslie Mann. EuropaCorp, 2009. Film.
- Kelly, Christopher. "Are Straight Actors in Gay Roles the New Blackface?" *Salon*. N.p., 12 June 2013. Web. 30 May 2015.
- Lowder, J. B. "The Curious Case of Gayface." *Slate*. N.p., 6 June 2013. Web. 14 Apr. 2015.
- Milk*. Dir. Gus Van Sant. Perf. Sean Penn, Josh Brolin, and Emilie Hirsch. Focus Features, 2008. Film.
- Philadelphia*. Dir. Jonathan Demme. Perf. Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington, and Roberta Maxwell. TriStar Pictures, 1993. Film.
- Rogin, Michael P. *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*. Berkeley: U of California, 1996. Google Books. Web. 13 May 2015.
- Sedgwick, Eve K. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: U of California, 1990. Print.
- The Birth of a Nation*. Dir. D.W. Griffith. Perf. Lillian Gish, Mae Marsh, and Henry B. Walthall. David W. Griffith Corp, 1915. Film.
- The Celluloid Closet*. Dir. Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman. TriStar Pictures, 2001. DVD.
- The Mask*. Dir. Chuck Russell. Perf. Jim Carrey, Cameron Diaz, and Peter Riegert. New Line Cinema, 1994. Film.
- The Silence of the Lambs*. Dir. Jonathan Demme. Perf. Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, and Lawrence A. Bonney. Strong Heart/Demme Productions, 1991. Film.
- Tropic Thunder*. Dir. Ben Stiller. Perf. Ben Stiller, Jack Black, and Robert Downey Jr. DreamWorks SKG, 2008. Film.
- Wong, Curtis M. "GLAAD's 2014 Studio Responsibility Index Ranks LGBT Representation In Hollywood." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 22 July 2014. Web. 30 May 2015.

Photo Credit: Folkert Gorter