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Hana Kotonská

LGBT Representation in American and British TV Shows and Movies

Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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vlastnoruční podpis

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Introduction

On March 21, 2015, Kerry Washington, an American actress who is, among other, a supporter of gay rights, received the GLAAD Vanguard Award (an award for a significant difference in promoting equal rights for LGBT people), and this is a part of her acceptance speech (GLAAD, 2015):

“Having your story told as a woman, as a person of color, as a lesbian or as a trans person [...] is sadly often still a radical idea. There is so much power in storytelling. [...] We need more LGBT representation in media. We need more LGBT characters and more LGBT storytelling. We need more diverse LGBT representation. [...] We need more employment of LGBT people in front of and behind the camera. [...] In the real world, being ‘an other’ is the norm. In the real world, the only norm is uniqueness, and the media must reflect that.”

Her words had an enormous feedback in the audience, and for a good reason. Everything she said was the truth – the truth about the need to have a good, diverse, accurate LGBT representation in media (movies and television alike). That for those media, if they want to depict the real world, our world, correctly and with accuracy, there is no other way than to incorporate (not only) LGBT people into their work.

That is essentially what this work focuses on – it travels through the history of LGBT representation in British and American television and cinema, showing all the different approaches toward LGBT people. It is trying to determine how human sexuality works, in terms of Queer theory, and how important accurate representation is to LGBT people – how it helps them to realize their sexual/gender identity, how it provides them with emotional satisfaction to see other people like them and how they are dealing with their problems. It introduces the Contact hypothesis in a connection with LGBT representation – that it is also important for non-LGBT people because then they can feel more accepting and understanding toward the LGBT community.

The aim of the thesis is to compare LGBT representation in the past with today’s representation, and then to analyze what is being done right and is being done wrong today.

The hope is to not only present some of the negative features (e.g. stereotypes, television tropes, queerbaiting), but also to show the affect negative representation can have on LGBT people and how it can promote homophobia and transphobia. And last but not least, it focuses on online LGBT communities and their work, in terms of promoting positive LGBT representation.

For the sake of this thesis, all the quotations from television series used in this thesis are acquired with the episodes they are featured in – e.g. (*Sherlock*, 1.01 'A Study in Pink'): “quote”, or “quote” (*Sherlock*, 1.01 'A Study in Pink'), as well as (in most cases) with their authors (the characters). All the television series and movies are then fully cited in the list of sources.

1 Human Sexuality and LGBT

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term 'LGBT' as an abbreviation used for "lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people" (Waite, 2013, p. 524). Throughout the history of mankind there have always been individuals who did not feel like they belonged to the set category of heterosexuality. Being heterosexual has been seen as 'normal' because the majority of people is heterosexual. However, today, we know that humans were not meant to be categorized this way and that sexuality is, from the view of biology, a spectrum.

1.1 Sexuality as a spectrum

"As a scientist, I know that sexuality is a spectrum. But you know, social biases they codified attraction. It's contrary to the biological facts," was said by *Orphan Black's* (2013) Delphine Cormier (1.08 '*Entangled Bank*'), a woman who was first a straight character but after being assigned to watch over Cosima (a lesbian character) she started to question her sexuality on the ground of gradually falling in love with her. This quotation basically describes the premise that heterosexuality is the only 'normal' way of living, of being. However, "human sexuality is multiple, varying, and diverse," (Benshoff, 2006, p.2) which means there are not only heterosexual and homosexual people – there are people who are asexual (person who has no interest in or desire for sex), bisexual (individuals who are sexually or romantically attracted to both genders), pansexual and other (Ferris and Stein, 2010, p. 291).

A term was given to identify all of those sexualities – 'queer'. In the past, it was used as slang for people of homosexual orientation, and sometimes even considered to be an abusive choice of language (Jagose, 1996, p. 1), but today, it refers to "a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively-heterosexual-and-monogamous majority" (Green and Peterson, 2003, p. 7).

One of the tools for moving around the sexuality spectrum and also a research method is the Kinsey scale, also called the Heterosexual–Homosexual Rating Scale, which was developed by Alfred Kinsey in 1948. It shows that people do not necessarily have to fit into exclusively heterosexual or homosexual category. It is based on "the degree of sexual responsiveness people had to members of the same and opposite sex" (Ferris and Stein, 2010, p. 290).

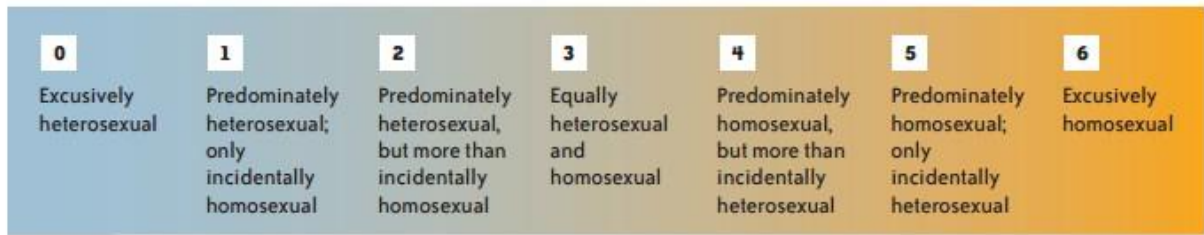


Figure 1: The Kinsey Scale (Ferris and Stein, 2010, p. 291)

No matter how progressive the scale may seem, however, many argue about the fact that it “reduces orientations such as bisexuality and asexuality to a point on a single continuum” (Ferris and Stein, 2010, p. 291), therefore it accuses bisexuals of being either cowardly homosexuals or heterosexuals who like to experiment, and it takes away sexual identity from people who identify themselves as asexual.

Nowadays, many young people see and experience their sexuality as fluid rather than something that is fixed. They tend to experiment with their sexuality, often with no regards to sex/gender – they see this as a freedom to choose what/who they want, to explore their identity. Consequently, there is a vast number of young people who do not believe in labeling themselves, whether it is ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’, or ‘bisexual’ label (Clarke et al., 2010, p. 152). A phenomenon known as ‘sexual fluidity’ describes the potential of sexuality and attraction to change (develop) over time. In the past, the term ‘bisexuality’ was often used to refer such changes, however, it “inadequately captures the diversity and complexity of individual sexual trajectories” (Clarke et al., 2010, p. 159).

1.2 Attitude toward Sexuality

Over the course of history, there have been many different approaches/attitudes towards human sexuality and desires, consequently, there also have been many terms to describe them, and they tend to change their meaning in time.

In ancient Roman and Greece, (homo)sexual practices and desires were seen, as oppose to later Christian times, as “ethical or moral concerns,” (Spargo, 1999, p. 24) and even though

these desires may have been looked at as something detrimental, Romans and Greeks did not consider them as something 'evil' (Spargo, 1999, p. 25).

Before the 1600s the term 'gay' was used in a meaning of "happy, carefree, bright and showy" coming from the Old French "gai," which meant "full of joy or mirth" (Anti-Defamation League, 2011, p. 21). Later, in the 19th century, the term was used for disreputable women, but then, in the 1960s, it was used as a substitute (alternative) for the word 'homosexual' which was until then still used in medicine and law (Spargo, 1999, p. 27, 28). The late 1970s' gay movements wanted to promote the positive gay image – especially in media. They criticized homophobic and stereotypical representation of gay people in television and other means of media (Spargo, 1999, p. 30).

'We're here, we're queer, get used to it,' is the motto of Queer Nation, an activist organization of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power). They used the word 'queer' for their strategies, which, although was still used as a form of homophobic slang, was the term of choice for some homosexuals "before or instead of 'gay' or 'lesbian'" (Spargo, 1999, p. 37).

No matter what they were called, these people never wanted a special treatment. They only wanted to be equal, to be heard. And, still today, it is something that they have to fight for everyday – and not only in the media, but also in their real lives.

1.3 Queer Theory

Sexuality is not only a spectrum that is characterized by its diversity, it is also changeable in time. Individuals who have always been heterosexual can one day start questioning whether or not this is who they really are and this is how they really feel. Or they can simply start feeling (sexual) attraction to the same sex when they are heterosexual (or vice versa).

The 1990s gave birth to 'queer theory', a social theory about gender identity and sexuality. Among other critical practices and priorities, like the fact that no sexuality is in its essence 'deviant' or 'normal' (Ferris and Stein, 2010, p. 58), it deals with "readings of the representation of same-sex desire in literary texts, films, music, images" (Spargo, 1999, p. 9). The theory rejects the notion of a single sexual identity, and it rather focuses on the progressive and evolving

character of human sexuality and that our “innate, inborn sexual identity is too limiting” (Ferris and Stein, 2010, p. 291).

One of the major works that contributed to queer theory, and is, by some critics, considered its initial catalyst, is Michel Foucault’s three volume study called *History of sexuality* from 1978 (Clarke et al., 2010, p. 41). He started his work with its first volume in the 1970s, unfortunately, he was never able to finish the whole study before he died of AIDS in 1984 (Spargo, 1999, p. 8, 10, 11). Foucault argued that sexuality is not biologically given to us (at least not all of it), that it is rather an invention of society that is historically and culturally rooted in us. In his studies, Foucault was more focused on the role sexuality has in society than to analyze what it actually is (Spargo, 1999, p. 12, 14).

Antecedent to the queer theory, in 1981 Alan Malyon argued that “adolescent same-sex sexual orientation is not simply a transition to heterosexuality,” (D’Augelli, 1996, p. 127) thus adolescent ‘experimenting’ with the same sex does not necessarily mean that it is just a phase and they are going to grow out of it. These premises, such as ‘everyone experiments in college’ can be discouraging for young LGBT people who are thinking about their coming out. ‘Coming out (of a closet)’ is an acknowledging process of an individual coming to terms with the fact that they are romantically or physically attracted to the same gender, they identify as a lesbian, as a gay, or as a bisexual (or pansexual) and they share this with others (to whom they are coming out to) (Rust, 1996, p. 87).

One of the examples of an individual realizing their sexuality in college and admitting that they are attracted to someone of the same gender (and their following coming out) can be Willow Rosenberg (played by Alyson Hannigan) from the 1997’s American television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. She was presumed to be heterosexual because of her relationship with Oz (Seth Green) and her feelings for her friend Xander (Nicholas Brendon). However, in college, she meets Tara Maclay (Amber Benson) with whom she begins a romantic relationship. Despite her really good relationships with her friends, she is reluctant to tell them because she is afraid of their reaction. Nevertheless, when she decides to come out to her friend Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar), she is met with understanding (4.19 ‘*New Moon Rising*’):

Willow: "There's something between us [her and Tara]. It wasn't something I was looking for. It's just powerful. And it's totally different from what Oz and I have."

Buffy: "Well, there you go. I mean, you know, you have to follow your heart, Will. And that's what important, Will."

A different way of telling your parents (and the whole 'community') that you are gay is shown in an American fantasy television series based on *The Mortal Instruments* by Cassandra Clare called *Shadowhunters*. One of its main characters is Alexander "Alec" Lightwood played by Matthew Daddario. From the beginning of the series it is obvious that he has a strong bond with his best friend and adoptive brother Jace Wayland (Dominic Sherwood) – later we learn that he is actually in love with him, but once he realizes that Jace will never reciprocate his feelings he lets go. However, upon meeting a warlock named Magnus Bane, his homosexual nature starts to resurface again. Unfortunately, his family duty is to marry into a shadowhunter family which he is willing to do, but at the ceremony when he sees Magnus walk into the room he walks away from his bride-to-be and kisses him in front of his parents and the whole shadowhunter society that is attending to the wedding. It is an example of the 'actions speak louder than words' approach to coming out, or any other revelation for that matter, allowing the people to see how much you love the other person and that you are not afraid of their reaction because you believe that they only want what is best for you – that they only want you to be happy.

A metaphorical 'coming out' can be seen in *Supergirl* (2016), which is the first television series solely focused on Kara Zor-El, the cousin of Kal-El (Superman), an alien from the planet Krypton who becomes a superhero in her city (National City). Supergirl's Earth identity is Kara Danvers (Melissa Benoist), and her accepting her true identity as a Kryptonian, embracing her destiny and learning her abilities can be paralleled to people accepting themselves as queer. It all goes hand in hand with keeping a secret who you really are (from the world) and one day deciding to share it (*Supergirl*, 1.01 'Pilot'):

Kara: "There's something about me that for most of my life, I've run from it. But last night, I embraced who I am and I don't want to stop."

Winn (a friend): "Oh, my God, you're a lesbian."

Other than metaphorical parallels and an occasional joke, there also are some actual lines from the series that refer to Kara's identity revelation as 'coming out':

Alex Danvers (1.05 '*Livewire*'): "I can't even imagine what she's (their mother) gonna do to me for you coming out as Supergirl."

Alex (1.12 '*Bizarro*'): "Even if an enemy had harvested your DNA when you came out as Supergirl, the embryo would still be in gestation."

For LGBT youth, or for queer people in general, these stories about finding one's self and gaining the courage to share their feelings and the truth about themselves with others are essential – they are reflecting the reality that they must go through and maybe, sometimes, it takes away their fear of rejection and makes it less difficult for them when they see other people in the same situations, having the same feelings.

1.4 Gender Identity

People who experience a feeling of mismatch between their gender identity and their assigned sex are referred to as transgender or transsexual. The queer theory has been extended with transgender theory by "explicitly incorporating ideas of the fluidly embodied, socially constructed, and self-constructed aspects of social identity" (Nagoshi, 2014, p. 1). The difference between transsexual and transgender people is the need of having, or not having (respectively) a sex surgery and undergo a hormone treatment.

There are two approaches to gender identity - essentialist (gender is immutable and biological, male/female) and constructionist (gender is "a social construction and [they] acknowledge the possibility that the male-female categories aren't the only way of classifying individuals" (Ferris and Stein, 2010, p. 269, 270)).

Recently, television has been portraying more 'trans' characters – in American teen drama *Pretty Little Liars* (2010), the most feared and mysterious character 'A', who terrorized everyone and kept his/her identity a secret for several years, turned out to be a transgender character, Charlotte DiLaurentis (formerly known as Charles DiLaurentis) portrayed by Vanessa Ray (present time) and Dylan Garza and Wyatt Hodge (in flashbacks). Her past of being a boy who likes to wear

dresses and makeup is presented during her true identity revelation to, not only the other characters, but also to the audience in episode *'Game over, Charles'* (6.10):

Charlotte: "For as long as I can remember, I asked mom to buy me dresses, but he (her dad) wouldn't let her."

Her father was scared of his son's identity 'crisis' and he at the end found an excuse to put her into the Radley Sanitarium, where she spent several years and was (incorrectly) diagnosed with intermittent explosive disorder (IED).

Another television example is Sophia Burset from an American women-in-prison narrative *Orange is the New Black* (2013). Sophia is a transgender character played by an actual transgender woman Laverne Cox. She also happens to be the only transgender woman in the prison, therefore, she is under constant transphobic abuse from both her inmates and the staff, which inevitably leads to her containment in the SHU for her own 'protection'. The most problematic relationship after her transformation, though, is the one she has with her father. However, when he is dying he accepts Sophia and even calls her his daughter (2.08 *'Appropriately Sized Pots'*).

From the movie industry, a recent British biographical romantic drama film called *The Danish Girl* (2015) presented a transgender character Einar Wegener/Lili Elbe, one of the first known recipients of sex change surgery, played by Eddie Redmayne. Its story is loosely inspired by the lives of Danish painters Lili Elbe and Gerda Wegener (Alicia Vikander). When Lili is talking to her doctor before the operation she says, "This is not my body, Professor, please take it away," summarizing the feeling of mismatch, the feeling of transgender people who feel unnatural in the bodies that were given to them.

Representation of transgender people is important not only for trans people but also for others because when they see the struggle trans people go through every day it can make them more understanding, more accepting, and therefore reduce transphobia.

1.5 Homophobia and Transphobia

Ferris and Stein (2010, p. 291) describe homophobia as "a fear of or discrimination toward homosexuals or toward individuals who display purportedly gender-inappropriate behavior."

The definition of transphobia by Hill (2002) is “in terms of emotional disgust toward individuals who do not conform to society’s gender expectations” (Nagoshi, 2014, p. 38). Both of these phobias are toward LGBT people who came out and who are the focal point of someone’s fear or disgust. In the past, the most horrifying example of these fears and disgust was the persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany, where they dealt with homosexuals the same way they did with Jews (Pearson, 2008, p. 20).

A television show well-known for its homophobic and transgender jokes is an American television sitcom *Friends* (1994). One of the queer characters is Ross Gellar’s (David Schwimmer) former wife Carol (Anita Barone, Jane Sibbett) who came out as a lesbian. Another one is Chandler Bing’s (Matthew Perry) father Charles (Kathleen Turner) who was gay and later became a trans woman (“nobody is going to be looking at the bride if the father of the groom is wearing a backless dress” (7.22 *‘The One with Chandler’s Dad’*)), and there were also many sub-textual hints and jokes about Chandler and Joey’s (Matt LeBlanc) friendship. Carol was portrayed as a stereotypical lesbian – “she always drank [beer] out of a can, I should have known” (1.01 *‘The Pilot’*), the character of Chandler is often made fun off by the assumption of other people that he is homosexual – “oh, and don’t worry, I am totally okay with the gay thing” (3.06 *‘The One with the Flashback’*), Phoebe (Lisa Kudrow) even married a gay ice-dancer who later confronts her with the fact that he is straight (2.04 *‘The One with Phoebe’s Husband’*):

Duncan: “I don't know how to tell you this. I'm straight. [...] Yeah, I know.”

Phoebe: “I don't understand. I don't understand. How can you be straight? I mean, you're so smart and funny...and you throw such great Academy Award parties.”

There not as many examples of homophobia and transphobia in the media anymore but they are still not completely gone – and they will never be as long as some people still feel that way.

1.6 Homosexuality and AIDS

Ever since the connection between HIV/AIDS was made, people have been afraid which have made them prejudiced toward homosexual people (especially gay men). This reception

of homosexuality of course reflected into Hollywood movie production and into television, more often, than not, having a negative effect on the queer audience.

Old Hollywood introduced the topic of homosexuality and HIV/AIDS in the 1990s. It started with the movie *Philadelphia* (1993) starring Tom Hanks as its main gay character Andrew Beckett. This movie is considered one of the first Hollywood films to “confront America’s homophobia and asserted the moral high ground, tackling the stigma of homosexuality and AIDS” (Foster, 2012, p. 15). The character that is shown in dynamic with Beckett is a lawyer named Joe Miller (Denzel Washington) who represents the ‘normal’ everyday guys who is “confronting his homophobia and anxiety about AIDS” (Donalson, 2012, p. 72).

In television, the 2014 ABC’s drama *How to Get Away with Murder* introduced a gay men character named Connor Walsh (Jack Falahee) who has been in an on-again, off-again relationship throughout the first season with Oliver Hampton (Conrad Ricamora). However, the HIV storyline they introduced in season 1 finale (1.15 ‘*It’s All My Fault*’) is, by some, seen as a setback for such a progressive series (Peitzman, 2015). Nevertheless, these two men are in “an interracial and serodiscordant relationship, have real sex lives that they talk about in addition to all of the emotional aspects of their relationship” (Upadhyaya, 2015) – something that would seem more than natural and obvious when talking about a straight couple.

It is a positive thing that media no longer doom all LGBT characters who have AIDS, and that they are trying to show that they can still lead fulfilled lives.

2 LGBT Representation

2.1 The History of LGBT Representation

Ken Plummer (Hanmer, 2010, p. 147) says, “People increasingly have come to live their sexualities through, and with the aid of television, press, film and cyberspace.” With the increase of openly LGBT people and the (hope of) improving attitude of heterosexual general public toward these individuals there has to be an equal increase in media representation. Even though this seems like the right assumption, and it is expected to hold such expectations, they are not always met.

In 1954, Gordon W. Allport developed ‘The Contact Hypothesis’, which is a concept of people being more accepting of a minority if they are in contact with a member of said minority. There have been numerous studies made applying this hypothesis – e.g. Horton and Wohl’s *Mass Communication and Para-social Interaction* (1956), Herek and Glunt’s *Interpersonal Contact and Heterosexuals’ Attitudes Toward Gay Men: Results from a National Survey* (1993), both of which proposed the idea that having a good representation of any minority group in media (radio, TV, movies) serve to an increase of understanding from other people (Rowe, 2010, p. 2).

LGBT representation on television started back in 1950s, though, the portrayal of queer characters was usually based on the trope that queer people are ‘evil’ because the only gay characters were male villains (Panigrahi, 2012, p. 2). Adam Sandel (2015) listed in his article for *Advocate.com* the ‘21 Best (and Worst) Queer Movie Villains’, amongst which there are characters known as ‘the effeminate villain’ like Prince John (*The Adventures of Robin Hood*, 1938), or Joel Cairo (*The Maltese Falcon*, 1941), the mama’s boy Norman Bates (*Psycho*, 1960), the sadistic transvestite serial killer Buffalo Bill (*Silence of the Lambs*, 1991), or famous Disney cartoon villains like Scar (*The Lion King*, 1994) or Governor Ratcliffe (*Pocahontas*, 1995).

Gene Roddenberry, the creator of *Star Trek: The Original Series* (1966), said that “TV is a powerful medium and that it was being wasted on a plethora of pap entertainment” (Gambone, 2010, p. 267), implying that he believed in the power of television and he used it as a tool for promoting diversity – whether it was racial, nationalistic, religious or sexual. Sadly, in the 1960s, when the series was created, this idea of diversity could only go so far. George Takei,

who portrayed Hikaru Sulu in the series and who is also now openly gay, remembered one of his conversations with Roddenberry while he was interviewed for the book of Paul Gambone's *Travels in a Gay Nation: Portraits of LGBTQ Americans* (2010). Roddenberry told him that he was well aware of the gay issues that the society faced but he could not afford to deal with it on air because that would cost him the show, and his "concern [was] keeping the show on the air so that [he could] make the statements that [he could] make" (Gambone, 2010, p. 268).

Where movies and LGBT representation in the past are concerned, Christopher Pullen is referring in his book *Queer Youth and Media Culture* (2014) to Vito Russo's observation that the queer representation in old Hollywood cinema was mostly about "denial, absence and 'othering', evident in the archetypes of the 'sissy' (the overly feminized gay man) and the 'dyke' (the overly masculinized lesbian), or the murderous queer character or the pathological victim" (Pullen, 2014, p. 4).

In the last couple of years, the stories of LGBT people told in movies have moved from simple 'coming out' narratives and the LGBT people being just secondary characters to profound stories, often based on the truth. In 2015, a vast number of movies focused on telling real stories, on telling historical fact – *Stonewall* which is about the birth of the Gay Rights Movement in 1969. Or *Freeheld*, the story of Laurel Anne Hester (Julianne Moore), a woman dying of cancer who wanted for her pension benefits to go to her partner Stacie (Ellen Page) but this privilege was for same-sex domestic partners, but at the end, their fight inspired the New Jersey Legislature to amend the Domestic Partnership Act, granting pension benefits to domestic partners of all New Jersey public employees. There have been other bibliographical movies, such as already mentioned British film *The Danish Girl* (2015), or an older movie from 1998 *Gia*, a tragic story about one of America's first supermodels, Gia Marie Carangi (Angelina Jolie). This is seen as a big progress in the movie industry in comparison to the beginning of 1990s where the movie *Basic Instinct* (1992) introduced the only bisexual character in a major movie that year (Catherine Tramell played by Sharon Stone), additionally, her character was an insane murderer (Mondello, 2015).

At the end of the 20th century, television started to focus on incorporation of queer characters and by 1998 it was filled with gay material. April 30, 1997 was a turning point in television history for queer people – on this day the character of Ellen Morgan (portrayed by Ellen DeGeneres) in the ABC TV sitcom *Ellen* officially came out as gay (Panigrahi, 2012, p. 3). According to Becker (2006, p. 107), however, in the season of 1998–1999 “the number of gay themed episodes on the Big 3 network dropped noticeably as did the number of gay and lesbian recurring characters” because of the lack of success of *Ellen*, that was most like caused by “anti-gay backlash and dwindling viewership,” (Panigrahi, 2012, p. 3). Nevertheless, it was only a small obstacle before NBC’s sitcom *Will & Grace* made its way to television (Becker, 2006, p. 107). At the start of the 2000–2001 season it was one of the biggest hits on TV (Becker, 2006, p. 136) and even though these sitcoms, like *Will & Grace* (or *Friends*), represented gay people stereotypically (Edwards, 2010, p. 159), they were able to open the door for later successful television series that featured gay characters like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003), *Dark Angel* (2000–2003), *Dawson’s Creek* (1998–2003), and *ER* (1994–2009) (Becker, 2006, p. 108).

Nowadays, the media is more open to accurately portray queer people. They are no longer utterly stereotypical, they are no longer solely used as a comical aspect for the story. They are “in-depth, multi-faceted human beings, no different from their heterosexual counterparts” (Rowe, 2010, p. 8). “We have come so far in this movement. It’s hard for young LGBT people to imagine a world without Will and Grace, without Ellen, without Greg Louganis and Martina Navratilova,” said the first openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church (Gene Robinson, cited in Gambone, 2010, p. 4).

2.2 BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival

At the 2016 BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival, Top 30 LGBT Films of All Time (see the list in the appendices) were announced with the help of over 100 film experts including critics, writers and programmers. It presents cinematography from 84 years of cinema and 12 countries (BFI, 2016).

The top LGBT movie was voted Todd Haynes’ award-winning *Carol* (2015), an adaptation of Patricia Highsmith’s 1950s love story *The Price of Salt* (also known as *Carol*), starring Cate

Blanchett as Carol Aird and Rooney Mara as Therese Belivet. The movie is a cinematographic masterpiece that portrays “a homosexual relationship set during a much less tolerant era” (Chang, 2015). For the characters themselves, it is more than natural to find themselves in love and they have no desire to investigate it. The story differs from others by not killing or emotionally depriving the characters. The screenwriter of the movie, Phyllis Nagy, shared her feelings about it – for her it was “more subtle and interesting, where no one dies or contemplates suicide or even has an agonizing moment about what it means to be gay” (Powell, 2015). The whole atmosphere of the film shows that people should not feel ashamed of falling in love, no matter the other person being of the same gender – that two women can fall in love with each other just as easily and quickly as a man and a woman.

2.3 What is Done Right

“As if there is something unusual about telling stories involving women and people of color and LGBTQ characters on TV. I have a different word: normalizing,” says Shonda Rhimes (Cruz, 2015), the showrunner of television series like *Grey’s Anatomy*, *Scandal*, or *How to Get Away with Murder*, about the idea of ‘diversity’ on television.

As an example of a good queer representation can be 2009’s musical comedy-drama television series *Glee* (FOX), that present a number of non-heterosexual characters (Santana Lopez, Brittany Pierce), especially gay men (Kurt Hummel, Blaine Anderson). This show was able to produce “a gay teen character that expresses a large amount of awareness of depictions of gay men in popular culture and often encourages discussion of the topic” (Jenner, 2014, p. 142). However, the character of Kurt Hummel (Chris Colfer) is often accused of also being the subject of stereotypes – specifically the stereotype of an effeminate male gay character, with his “fashionable clothing and mannerism” (Panigrahi, 2012, p. 5).

One of the already mentioned television series – *How to Get Away with Murder* – has another queer character, which was assumed to be heterosexual at the beginning. It is the series lead African-American character Annalise Keating (Viola Davis). Later in the series the possibility of her being other than heterosexual was presented when her former college lover Eve Rothlow (Famke Janssen) appeared. The show’s creator Pete Nowalk explained his decision of making

Annalise queer by wanting to show her (happy) life in college, before any of the terrible events that are happening on the series right now (Nededog, 2015).

One of the NBC's TV series that introduces queer characters during its run is the 2013's psychological thriller–horror television series by Bryan Fuller called *Hannibal*. It is based on characters and storylines from Thomas Harris' novel *Red Dragon* from 1981. Ever since the first episode, the fans were picking up vibes from the two male leading characters – FBI special investigator Will Graham (Hugh Dancy) and a psychiatrist Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Mads Mikkelsen) – the duo was later named by the fandom 'Hannigram'.

One might argue that the relationship between Graham and Lecter is purely platonic, that they are merely friends (at least for time that they are not 'enemies'). However, the show creator begs to differ – in one interview he addresses the topic of subtext, "It's practically text in a couple of episodes, just because we really want to explore the intimacy of these two men in an unexpected way without sexualizing them [...] it is not sexual, but it's beyond sexual. It is pure intimacy in a non-physical way" (Haltermann, 2014). Fuller mentions on numerous occasions (during interviews, etc.) that he sees Graham as heterosexual, however, he cannot say the same about Lecter. He often refers to their dynamic throughout the series as a 'seduction' – "a cat-and-mouse game" (Romano, 2015).

Some fans and critics accuse *Hannibal* of queerbaiting (see chapter [3.1 Queerbaiting](#)), though the only thing the series is guilty of is "deepening its subtext" (Romano, 2015), up until the season three finale (and the series finale) called '*The Wrath of the Lamb*' (3.13) where the two men covered in the blood of the 'Red Dragon' hold each in a tight embrace and fall off a cliff into the ocean.

In episode 3.12 '*The Number of the Beast Is 666*', Will has one of his 'therapeutic' conversations with Bedelia Du Maurier (Gillian Anderson), Hannibal's psychiatrist and colleague, where Will finally asks 'the' question, and disproves all the evidence anyone has against the nature of their relationship (especially Hannibal's infatuation with/feelings for Will):

Will: "Is Hannibal in love with me?"

Bedelia: “Could he daily feel a stab of hunger for you and find nourishment at the very sight of you? [...] Yes. But do you ache for him?”

Beside this beautiful dynamic couple of ‘Murder Husbands’, *Hannibal* introduced in episode 2.08 ‘*Su-zakana*’ the character of Margot Verger (Katharine Isabelle), one of Lecter’s patients who is abused by her twin brother Mason (Michael Pitt, Joe Anderson). At the beginning, she is set as a romantic interest for Will, but it is later proven that she only used him (sexually) for the sake of conceiving a child – creating a loophole in her father’s will that only a male heir can inherit the Verger business. Her plan never comes to pass as Mason learns of it and stages an accident after which Margot is rendered infertile. Later, in season three, Margot meets Alana Bloom (Caroline Dhavernas), a friend of Will Graham’s who becomes Mason’s therapist. Gradually, they fall in love and we learn that not only is Margot a lesbian (a known fact from the beginning for those who read the book), but that Alana (who had an intimate relationship with Hannibal) is bisexual. After the time jump during season three, we learn that they got married and that Alana carried a son who is to become the sole heir of the Verger business (because they killed Mason and Hannibal helped them harvest his sperm, therefore the boy is Mason’s son). There were not many happy endings in the series (if there were any), but Alana and Margot got the closest (despite the fact that Hannibal promised Alana that he would come for her and her wife).

Where coming out is concerned, one of the recent television series decided to completely skip this part because its storyline is set in the future, 97 years after a nuclear apocalypse – it is the American post-apocalyptic series *The 100* (2014). Therefore the creators felt the need to emphasize the possibility that in the (near) future, LGBT people will not have to go through such a process because being queer is going to be considered normal (just like having blue eyes or ginger hair). Its leading female character, Clarke Griffin (Eliza Clarke), was presented as straight (due to her somewhat of a relationship and one night with one of the male characters) but in season 2, she was revealed to actually be bisexual because of her kiss with commander Lexa (Alycia Debnam-Carey) (2.14 ‘*Bodyguard of Lies*’). Later in season 3, after their reconciliation, the relationship between these two women develops into something more and they (indirectly) confess their love for each other which is followed by the physical consummation of their relationship

(3.07 'Thirteen'). *The 100* was accepted very well by the LGBT community (until the end of episode 3.07 'Thirteen' – see chapter [2.4.2 "Burry Your Gay" trope](#)) because of its fresh approach to the subject of queer representation – not only by presenting multiple queer characters (there are also two male gay characters and at least two more lesbian characters) but also by the positive approach of the characters toward homosexuality and bisexuality.

This progress in the name of LGBT representation in media is what Steven Seidman (2004) calls a "slow and uneven but steady march toward social acceptance and equality," (Berger, 2010, p. 176) which is all we can hope for.

2.4 What is Done Wrong

"Absence [...] or simply negative media representation play a role in cultural heterosexism, the stigmatization of queer people," (Panigrahi, 2012, p. 10). There are still many things that are not done right considering LGBT representation in media. Many television series, especially sitcoms (*Friends*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *Will & Grace*, etc.), are still using stereotypes for queer people, there are many harmful or shameful television and movie tropes that are still used today, and often it is so only because showrunners and movies creators still believe that it is acceptable, since that is how we have always done it.

2.4.1 Stereotypes

The LGBT community has been facing the same problems as has the other minorities concerning representations in media. This is especially true regarding stereotypes – "the stereotyped depiction of gay people in films was analogous to the earlier stereotyped images of Asians in the media," says George Takei (cited in Gambone, 2010, p. 268) about the images in American media during the 1960s. Thankfully, the approach to this particular issue has been improving in the recent years. However, there are still many heavily stereotypical queer people in television and in movies.

Two of them have already been mentioned – Jack McFarland from *Will & Grace* and Carol Willick from *Friends*. However, both of these characters have their substantiation in their respected shows. Jack is highly stereotyped to be in contrast with his friend Will (who is also homosexual) but who is a lawyer and not easy to categorize (as gay). Carol is the subject of jokes

but at the same time, her character is very well developed outside of her initial storyline of ‘the girl that Ross married who turned out to be gay’ – she has a son with Ross, she is portrayed in a serious, committed relationship and she gets married to Susan.

2.4.2 “Bury Your Gays” trope

This trope, or more specifically *Lesbian Death Syndrome*, is a terminology used by many critics and by some members of the general audience to describe a particular television or cinema death scenario where one half of a gay couple is killed, usually right after physically consummating their relationship – therefore achieving happiness, which is quickly taken from them.

Heather Hogan, a lesbian TV critic for *Autostraddle*, an online magazine for lesbian and bisexual women, created the ‘Ultimate Infographic Guide to Lesbian/Bisexual TV History’. The purpose of it was to show people the truth that is happening on screen right now concerning the number of dead lesbian characters in the last year. In the years 1976-2016 there have been 1 586 TV shows with straight characters and only 193 TV shows with lesbian or bisexual characters, of which in 68 of them the lesbian/bisexual character dies, additionally (Hogan, 2016):

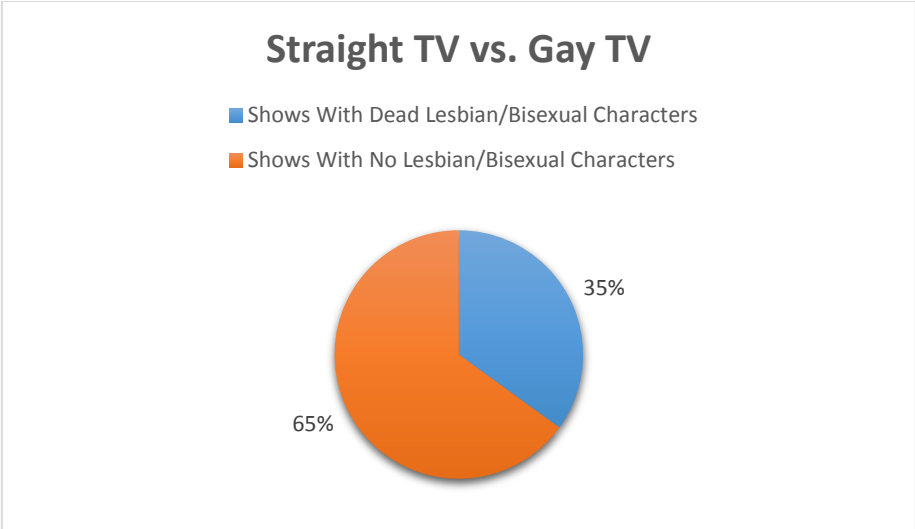


Figure 2: Straight TV vs Gay TV (Hogan, 2016)

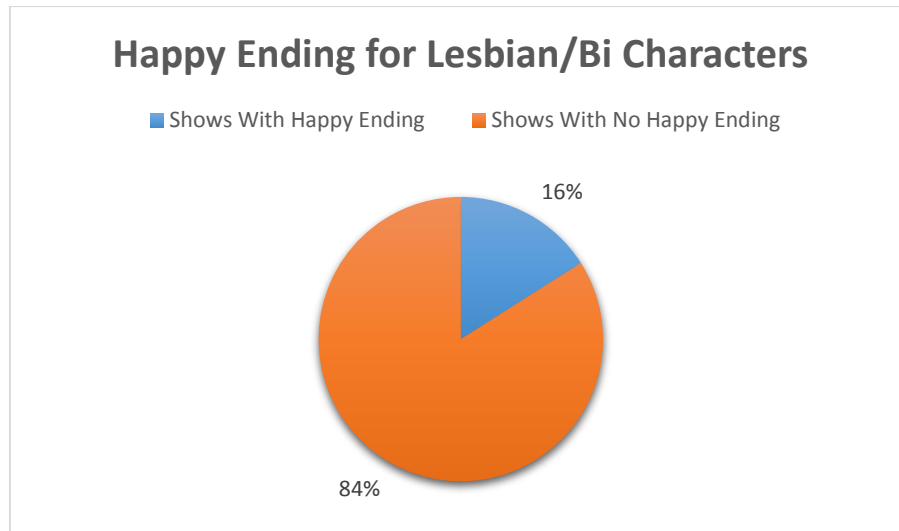


Figure 3: Happy Ending for Lesbian/Bi Characters (Hogan, 2016)

As one of the many examples found in television can be Tara Maclay (Amber Benson) from the 1997's TV series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Tara was introduced in episode 'Hush' (4.10) as a member of the UC Sunnydale's Wicca group where she meets Willow Rosenberg (Alyson Hannigan). Benson commented on the relationship between Willow and Tara with the words, "it was not about ratings or seeing two girls kissing, it was about two people, regardless of gender, who fall in love" (Stafford, 2007, p. 107). Two years earlier she also regarded the relationship in *Love Bites: Relationships in Buffyverse* (2005) as "the healthiest in the show" because they "treated each other with compassion and respect." The main idea behind their relationship was for Willow to be with someone she felt comfortable with and whom she loves after she was left by Oz (Seth Green), the fact that that person happened to be of the same gender was irrelevant.

Tara's tragic demise, however, is considered to be a part of this trope not only because she was a lesbian but also because of the fact that she has been shot by a stray bullet to the heart the morning after she and Willow reconciled and spent the night together (6.19 'Seeing Red'). Consequently, Willow is filled with grief and rage after witnessing her lover being shot and then dying in her arms. When she learns it is not in her power to bring her back to life, it brings her over the edge and she succumbs to the dark side of magic and at the end is willing to destroy the world (6.20 'Villains').

Another lesbian character, and one of the more recent examples, is the character of commander Lexa (Alycia Debnam-Carey) from the already mentioned TV series *The 100*. She too was killed by a stray bullet seconds after finally being intimate with the lead female character Clarke Griffin (Eliza Taylor) in episode 'Thirteen' (3.07). After the episode aired on March 3, 2016 it created a wave of resistance not only from the fans but also from critics and the show's actors as well. A vast number of articles has been written about this particular character death and how it was handled. Even trade publications like *Variety* and the *Hollywood Reporter* have contributed with their deconstructions.

Variety focused their article on the, mostly but not exclusively, LGBT fans – how their combined power is critical to the show's faith, especially considering their voice in the media (Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, etc.) and their willingness to fight for themselves when they think they are being used, "a subset of viewers got #LGBTfansdeservebetter to trend for hours during the show's [next episode], demonstrating that they can use their collective might to very different uses than a network might like." (Ryan, 2016). Another point Ryan (2016) severely discussed in the article was the fan-baiting that was happening before the episode (3.07) aired – the show's creator (Jason Rothenberg) had been promoting not only Clexa (the relationship between Lexa and Clarke) but also Debnam-Carey's presence in the season finale by inviting the fans to the shooting scene of the final episode of the current season, "the way *The 100* shamelessly toyed with LGBTQ viewers — who are among the show's most active promotional allies — constitutes inexplicable and deeply unwise misdirection." (Ryan, 2016) What is even more baffling about Lexa's death is the way it was persecuted. Not only was she killed right after achieving happiness (sleeping with Clarke), but she did not die a warrior death which could be expected from a character who is portrayed as a leader (a commander) of the twelve Earth's surviving clans. She was killed by stray bullet that was originally meant for Clarke – not by standing in the way or sacrificing herself to save her loved one, she "just happened to be in the bullet's path" (Ryan, 2016).

The show managed to create a well-written fearless mighty queer female character which happened to be one of its kind. Lexa's character was a beacon of hope for all LGBT fans who were able to see themselves in her. Her death, however, reminded them again there is still a lot of work

to do in the department of good and true LGBT representation. Nevertheless, the fans decided to turn this horrible event into something positive – The Trevor Project, the “only national organization providing suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth in crisis” (Leskru WW, 2016). As of right now, they have managed to raise over \$100K in Lexa’s name and the number is still growing.

Lexa is not the only current lesbian character that died, The *Hollywood Reporter’s* article (Snarker, 2016) is talking about four queer character deaths – Rose (*Jane the Virgin*), Lexa (*The 100*), Kira (*The Magicians*), and Denise (*The Walking Dead*) – that has been seen on TV since the beginning of 2016, “this wave of queer female deaths follows a long-standing pop culture trope known as Bury Your Gays” (Snarker, 2016). The author of the article is also pointing out the math – 146 lesbian or bisexual characters has died on TV show, and only 18 couples have been granted happy endings.

This trope is one of means that can easily degrade positive LGBT representation in a show/movie to a negative one, especially when it is used merely for its ‘shock value’ – which nowadays losses its ‘shock’ properties since it is used so often. Nonetheless, when it is used it has a negative effect on queer people because it may tell them that they can never have a happy ending no matter how much they try, and more importantly, that they do not deserve it because they are queer – it is leaving a very negative message for our LGBT youth.

2.4.3 Queer People are Funny

The idea of two people of the same sex together is sometimes presented as something hilarious, as a joke, therefore they are not taken seriously. This is usually their purpose of being in the story – they are there only to be laugh at and for the aim to be compared to the “better-developed characters of their hetero-sexual counterparts” (Driver, 2008, p. 74), consequently being portrayed as two dimensional characters.

Sometimes, they are in the story only to be joked about or the series/movies makes jokes about queer people in general (*Friends*, 3.08 ‘*The One with the Giant Poking Device*’):

Joey: “If the Homo sapiens were, in fact, ‘homo’ sapiens...is that why they’re extinct?”

Ross: "Joey, Homo sapiens are people."

Joey: "Hey, I'm not judging."

Nowadays, it is merely used in sitcoms as one of the means of comedy and therefore not taken too seriously, but it can still be very offensive to some members of the LGBT community – the premise that their identity is something that is easily made fun of is very discouraging, especially for young LGBT people that are still finding themselves.

3 LGBT Fanbase

With the introduction of the internet and social media, the communication among people who are interested in the same television shows or movies has become easier (in some cases it was even the first possibility of such connection since most fans are from different countries), and not only that. Hidden in the internet, there was the opportunity for fans to also communicate with the creator and cast (actors and actresses), which could potentially somehow affect their favorite TV show/movie, the storylines and the characters. An example of a TV show creator who is not only in contact with the fans of the show but has also made himself aware of their “theories, analyses and interpretations” (Nordin, 2015, p. 57) is Matthew Graham, a co-creator of the British science fiction drama *Ashes to Ashes* (2008).

Although, this may seem as a good opportunity for the fans to have a say in the fate of their favorite TV shows and their characters, it is also an opportunity for the creators to manipulate and take advantage of their audiences to increase the ratings. By people simply going back and re-watching the episodes on *Netflix* or *Hulu* and discussing in later on social media, like *Twitter* or *Facebook*, it gives the show money and support because “talking about it creates awareness of the product and one could claim that if it leads to a bigger audience, there is no such thing as bad publicity” (Nordin, 2015, p. 59).

3.1 Queerbaiting

For some critics, the term ‘queerbaiting’ is “a Tumblr-term, [and] queerbaiting itself does not exist outside Tumblr because [it is] not considered to be a real practice,” (Nordin, 2015, p. 18). However, it does have an important role in the LGBT representation, or more precisely, in the lack of it. The term itself does not have an official definition which anyone can refer to, though, the usage of the term is mostly in connection to television series and movies and their tactical playing with the queer audience using “gay subtext that is written between two characters of the same sex, with no intention of actually having them have a romantic or erotic relationship,” (Panigrahi, 2012, p. 1).

Since it is a recent fan-developed term, not many scholars focused on analyzing the exact meaning, its functions, characteristics and influence. However, it is noteworthy, that queerbaiting

does not mean that the (queer) fans believe their meaning and understanding of given situations is “more valid than the producers’,” it is about them “claiming to know the producers’ preferred meaning and accusing them of lying about it or not standing for it,” (Nordin, 2015, p. 40).

The most discussed TV shows that are accused of queerbaiting are *Sherlock* (Sherlock and John), *Supernatural* (Dean and Castiel, known as Destiel), *Rizzoli & Isles* (Jane and Maura), and *Once Upon a Time* (Emma and Regina, known as Swan Queen).

In the very first episode of *Sherlock* (1.01 ‘A Study in Pink’) we can hear a conversation, which basically sets the tone for the whole series:

John: “You don’t have a girlfriend, then.”

Sherlock: “Girlfriend? No. Not really my area.”

John: “Alright. Do you have a boyfriend? Which is fine, by the way.”

Sherlock: “I know it’s fine.”

John: “So you’ve got a boyfriend.”

Sherlock: “No.”

BBC’s *Sherlock*, a modern day interpretation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* detective stories, is one of the TV shows that is most argued about, queerbaiting wise. Even the showrunners and cast often hint on the topic of Sherlock (Benedict Cumberbatch) and John’s (Martin Freeman) relationship – the show’s creator Steven Moffat says that he wanted to play with their relationship but never actually proclaim their sexualities. Martin Freeman even calls *Sherlock* “the gayest story in the history of television” (Sheehan, 2015). The show uses the relationship between these two men and them being more than often mistaken for a couple as a hilarious highlight for the story (*Sherlock*, 1.01 ‘A Study in Pink’):

Angelo: “Sherlock, anything on the menu, whatever you want, free, on the house, for you, and for your date.”

Sherlock: (to John) “Do you want to eat?”

John: (to Angelo) "I'm not his date."

Angelo: "I'll get a candle for the table. It's more romantic."

John: "I'm not his date!"

The original material on which the series is based on (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's books) does not give a definite framework for the relationship between Holmes and Watson – therefore many people who have read to books and are able to see the characters as more than friends argue about the showrunner's intentions and the queerbaiting (Panigrahi, 2012, p. 7).

Sherlock never takes hints from other characters about the nature of his relationship with Watson seriously and sometimes he makes 'jokes' about it himself, on the other hand, John is known to immediately reject any such indications (*Sherlock*, 2.01 'A Scandal in Belgravia'):

Irene: "You jealous?"

John: "We're not a couple."

Irene: "Yes, you are."

Despite all of these moments and subtext and hints, their 'potentially romantic' relationship never developed past these humorous implications.

In the fantasy TV show *Supernatural*, the most currently discussed relationship is the one of Dean Winchester (Jensen Ackles) and the angel Castiel (Misha Collins) – Destiel. However, even before the addition of Collins' character, Dean had been the subject of another relationship that the viewer interpreted in their own way – Wincest (the relationship between the bothers, Dean and Sam). And nowadays, 'destiel' has managed to gain more popularity than the 'wincest':

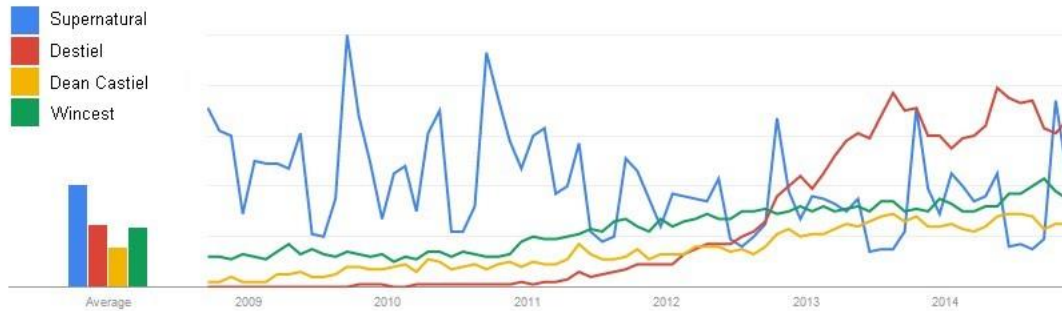


Figure 4: Interest over time. Web Search. Worldwide, Sep 2008 - Nov 2014 (Gennis, 2014)

The 200th episode of *Supernatural* called ‘*Fan Fiction*’ (10.05) is filled with subtext that is actually brought to light through a school play that is based on the *Supernatural* books (that will be in the future known as *The Winchester Gospel*). In this episode, Dean has a conversation with the play director Marie about subtext when he learns that the actresses playing Dean and Castiel in the play are a couple in real life:

Marie: “Although, we do explore the nature of destiel in act 2.”

Dean: “I’m sorry, what?”

Marie: “Oh, it’s just subtext. But, then again, you can’t spell subtext without S-E-X.”

Another example is a TNT television series *Rizzoli & Isles*, and its leading female characters – Jane Rizzoli (a police detective played by Angie Harmon) and Maura Isles (a medical examiner played by Sasha Alexander). “As long as we’re not being accused of being homophobic, which is not in any way true and completely infuriating, I’m OK with it,” says the actress playing Jane Rizzoli (Angie Harmon, cited in Bridges, 2013). There are many episodes with homosexual subtext, but it is mainly used as a form of comedy, on occasion they like to pretend to be a couple – mostly to discourage men. Episode 1.06 ‘*I Kissed a Girl*’ is about a gay woman who was killed by her own wife for the insurance money. In the case, Jane is supposed to go undercover to a lesbian night club to procure DNA from some of the women. And this is one of the conversations she has with Maura:

Jane: “I wonder what kind of women we would like if we liked women.”

Maura: “What?! Well, first of all, I would be the guy.”

[...]

Jane: “Well, it's a good thing you're not my type.”

Maura: “What do you mean I'm not your type?! That's so rude!”

The last example of contemporary queerbaiting is ABC's fairytale-inspired family drama *Once Upon a Time* and their leading female duo of Emma Swan (Jennifer Morrison) and Regina Mills (Lana Parrilla) – addressed by fans as ‘Swan Queen’. The story is about a small town in Maine called Storybrooke that is actually a magically created place in our world where the Evil Queen (Regina Mills) trapped all the inhabitants of the Enchanted Forest (the place where fairytales come to life) with a Dark Curse, which can be broken in 28 years-time by the daughter of Snow White and Prince Charming – the Savior (Emma Swan). The dynamic between these two characters is very complicated and develops through time (thanks to ‘their’ son Henry). Henry is Emma's biological son, but she gives him up for adoption when she is in prison. He is then adopted by Regina as a part of Rumpelstiltskin's plan to get the Savior to Storybrooke. When Emma and Regina first meet they are enemies fighting a custody battle, then they become allies when Henry's life and the town are in danger, slowly agreeing on the fact that they are now both Henry's mothers (co-parenting), and they eventually become very close friends.

One of the main symbols in *Once Upon a Time* is true love – which is associated with very powerful magic:

Regina (1.18 ‘*The Stable Boy*’): “Love, true love, is magic. And not just any magic. The most powerful magic of all. It creates happiness.”

Rumpelstiltskin (1.22 ‘*A Land without Magic*’): “True love, Miss Swan—the only magic strong enough to transcend realms and break any curse.”

This connection between magic and true love is seen as very intriguing when concerning Emma and Regina's relationship – they both possess the power of magic, and, more importantly, they are able to create very powerful magic when they are working together.

Many people argue that Swan Queen is not an example of queerbaiting because it does not meet as many attributes 'given' to queerbaiting as it should (Nordin, 2015, p. 18). And even though both of the characters have been given their male romantic counterparts, their fans (or as they call themselves 'Swen') never gave up on the possibility that they could actually end up together, despite the fact that they are often being bullied for their beliefs.

Nevertheless, since the internet LGBT communities have grown, there is always the possibility of over-analyzing characters, relationships and scenes between two people that share a purely platonic bond or are basically 'just friends'. This is often the result of their desire and need of representation where there is none, or where there is a very poor representation (often only with minor characters). "Heterosexuality is [...] taken for granted and often considered to be validated and rewarded by the producers while homosexuality is considered to be made invisible or is made visible but is then denied," Nordin (2015, p. 51) explains one of the reasons behind queerbaiting.

For LGBT fans it is very important to be heard and to be represented correctly, to "see themselves accurately reflected onscreen, rather than turned into a plot device or reduced to a dangling carrot to entice a queer audience before shouting, No homo!" (Gennis, 2014). Queerbaiting can be this way very harmful because it never actually tells the story – it just hints that there might be something there but it is usually immediately shut down when it is asked if it is really true, leaving the LGBT fans in a strange state of not knowing and feeling used.

3.2 Fan Fiction and Online Communities

"Fans are able to explore and develop their identities in both online fan fiction communities and online queer communities," (Sheehan, 2015). Every show and movie has the potential of creating its fandom – a community of people who are fans of the same show/movie. The environment of said fandom can be very beneficial for certain individuals who can gain "confidence, self-esteem, and a form of agency by being able to discuss each episode in a friendly respectful environment" (Hanmer, 2010, p. 150).

Fan fiction is a fan based writing which provides "sequels/prequels to major literary, filmic or televisual works" (Berger, 2010, p. 173). Fans see it as a creative way of revisiting familiar

characters and often as a way of changing set canon storylines – ‘canon’ in this context means “the ‘official’ pairings and storylines set in place by the author of the original work” (Panigrahi, 2012, p. 6).

In the 1960s fanfiction (especially sci-fi fan fiction) started to thrive (Berger, 2010, p. 174). Creating fan fiction is similar to creating spin-off to a series – like *Torchwood* (2006-2011) was made as a spin-off of the British science-fiction television series *Doctor Who*. *Torchwood*’s main character is Captain Jack Harkness (played by John Barrowman) who is bisexual and who first appeared on *Doctor Who* and then got his own series to further develop his character. Moreover, the man who is responsible for reviving *Doctor Who* in 2005 is a former fan fiction writer Russell T. Davies (Berger, 2010, p. 180).

In the 1960s a new version of fan fiction with very sexual (especially homosexual) themes appeared and later in 1990s “slash communities started to form online, and new queer canons have emerged” (Berger, 2010, p. 173). ‘Slash’ fan fiction is focused on telling a story of a couple that was not explored (or was not sufficiently explored) by the original TV series or movie in rather aggressive sexual way (Berger, 2010, p. 174). Panigrahi (2012, p. 6) regarded slash fiction as “a popular way of breaking canon in fandom.” A subcategory of slash fan fiction is ‘femslash’ – a reaction to the fact that there were not enough lesbian characters (especially in contrast to the number of gay men characters) (Berger, 2010, p. 182).

FanFiction.net is an internet portal where fandom creative minds can ‘unleash’ their imagination. According to their database, the most voluminous categories in TV shows are *Supernatural* (with over 113 000 stories), *Glee* (109 000), *Doctor Who* (71 600) and *Sherlock* (55 200). *Supernatural* has been the object of fan fiction (especially slash fan fiction) since the series started. At the beginning they were focused on the relationship between the two brothers, Sam and Dean Winchester. Later, however, with the introduction of the character of the Angel of the Lord Castiel, the content of the stories was brought up to a whole new level because as of that moment (4.01 ‘*Lazarus Rising*’) there was an actual real possibility of these two character becoming something more (it was no longer a subject of incest between two brothers) (Gennis, 2014).

There are many other forms of creative work that the fandoms are 'responsible' for. One of which is 'fan-art' – hand/graphically drawn/painted pieces of art (pictures) featuring their favorite non-canon couples in 'very' canon positions/situations (kissing, making love, etc.). This type of art is extremely popular on internet portals such as *LiveJournal.com* or *Tumblr.com* (Panigrahi, 2012, p. 9).

Nordin (2015, p. 9) defines *Tumblr* as "a microblogging site where anyone with an account can post notes and supply them with hashtags." It is filled with fan-art, gif sets, videos, quotes, and yes, analysis and interpretations of TV/movie characters, plotlines, and (not only) significant moments created by their dedicated fans who share it with each other.

Being a part of fandom can be seen as very important for certain people because, thanks to the other members of the community, they are able to express their feeling and explore their identities when they see other people going through the same things they are. It makes them feel more normal. It makes them feel like they belong because there is someone other there who believes exactly what they believe. And creating something together (fan fiction, fan videos, fan-art, etc.) embodies the feeling of belonging to something bigger.

4 Conclusion

“My sexuality is not the most interesting thing about me,” is one of the most known and praised television quotes concerning LGBT characters by Cosima Niehaus (Tatiana Maslany) in *Orphan Black’s* episode 2.02 ‘*Governed by Sound Reason and True Religion*’. It summarizes the whole idea behind positive and accurate LGBT representation – the characters should be there, not only because they are queer, but because they are people.

The aim of this thesis was to compare the past with the present in terms of LGBT representation in American and British television and cinema. The conclusion would be that despite the fact that the representation of queer people in those types of media has grown in the last couple of years, it is still not enough, which means that even today we still have a long journey ahead of us to achieve equal representation for our LGBT brothers and sisters, for our children.

The examples of LGBT representation introduced in this thesis show that in today’s television and cinema, there is still negative representation, there are still stereotypes and there is still homophobia and transphobia, and so is in real life – however, the main idea behind any media is its power to somehow affect people, to teach them, to help them understand, and to show them a better way – it has a responsibility to mankind. Movie makers and television show runners should realize that the power of their media is in their hands – they have the responsibility too.

However, some of these short analysis also show that television and cinema were able (in a significant number of cases) to move past fear and stigma. There are more people behind the camera willing to accept the fact that the LGBT community is a part of humanity, because they are in fact human, people, just like the rest of us, and therefore, they deserve to be represented the right way, the way the rest of us are.

One of the outcomes is also the fact that online LGBT communities and fandoms are growing each day to fight for their rights, to fight for positive representation and with each wrong move done against them, they are ready to prove that they will not tolerate it.

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Gia. Dir. Michael Cristofer. By Michael Cristofer and Michael Cristofer. Perf. Angelina Jolie, Faye Dunaway, Mercedes Ruehl and Elizabeth Mitchell. HBO, 1998.

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Glee - Complete Series. By Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk, and Ian Brennan. Perf. Lea Michele, Cory Monteith, Naya Rivera, Amber Riley. 20th Century Fox, 2015. DVD.

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The Ellen Show - The Complete Series. By Carol Leifer and Mitchell Hurwitz. Perf. Ellen DeGeneres, Jim Gaffigan, Emily Rutherford, Martin Mull, Cloris Leachman. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2006. DVD.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Top 30 LGBT Films of All Time (BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival, 2016)

1. *Carol* (2015) – director Todd Haynes
2. *Weekend* (2011) – dir. Andrew Haigh
3. *Happy Together* (1997) – dir. Wong Kar-wai
4. *Brokeback Mountains* (2005) – dir. Ang Lee
5. *Paris is Burning* (1990) – dir. Jennie Livingston
6. *Tropical Malady* (2004) – dir. Apichatpong Weerasethakul
7. *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985) – dir. Stephen Frears
8. *All about My Mother* (1999) – dir. Pedro Almodóvar
9. *Un chant d'amour* (1950) – dir. Jean Genet
10. *My Own Private Idaho* (1991) – dir. Gus Van Sant
11. *Tangerine* (2015) – dir. Sean S. Baker
11. *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972) – dir. Rainer Werner Fassbinder
11. *Blue Is the Warmest Colour* (2013) – dir. Abdellatif Kechiche
14. *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931) – dir. Leontine Sagan
14. *Show Me Love* (1998) – dir. Lukas Moodysson
14. *Orlando* (1992) – dir. Sally Potter
17. *Victim* (1961) – dir. Basil Dearden
18. *Je, tu, il, elle* (1974) – dir. Chantal Akerman
19. *Looking for Langston* (1989) – dir. Isaac Julien
20. *Beau Travail* (1999) – dir. Claire Denis
20. *Beautiful Thing* (1996) – dir. Hettie MacDonald
22. *Stranger by the Lake* (2013) – dir. Alain Guiraudie
22. *Theorem* (1968) – dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini
22. *The Watermelon Woman* (1996) – dir. Cheryl Dunye
22. *Pariah* (2011) – dir. Dee Rees
22. *Mulholland Dr.* (2001) – dir. David Lynch
27. *Portrait of Jason* (1967) – dir. Shirley Clarke

- 27. *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975) – dir. Sidney Lumet
- 27. *Death in Venice* (1971) – dir. Luchino Visconti
- 27. *Pink Narcissus* (1971) – dir. James Bidgood
- 27. *Sunday Bloody Sunday* (1971) – dir. John Schlesinger
- 27. *Tomboy* (2011) – dir. Céline Sciamma
- 27. *Funeral Parade of Roses* (1969) – dir. Toshio Matsumoto

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Hana Kotonská
Katedra nebo ústav:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Blanka Babická, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2016

Název práce:	LGBT Zastoupení v Amerických a Britských Televizních Seriálech a Filmech
Název práce v angličtině:	LGBT Representation in American and British TV Shows and Movies
Anotace práce:	Tato práce je zaměřen na jedince, kteří patří do LGBT komunity a na to, jakým způsobem, a jestli vůbec, je jako skupina zastoupena v Amerických a Britských médiích (konkrétně v televizních seriálech a filmech). Součástí práce je analýza vybraných televizních seriálů a filmů z hlediska LGBT zastoupení.
Klíčová slova:	LGBT, média, film, TV, sexualita, queer, queer teorie, homosexualita, Kinseyho stupnice, Kontaktní hypotéza, stereotypy
Anotace v angličtině:	This thesis focuses on individuals who belong to the LGBT community, and on the matters in which they are, or are not, represented in American and British media (specifically, in television series and movies). A part of this thesis is also an analysis of selected television series and movies in the term of LGBT representation.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	LGBT, media, movie, TV, sexuality, queer, queer theory, homosexuality, Kinsey scale, Contact Hypothesis, stereotypes
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Appendix 1: Top 30 LGBT Films of All Time
Rozsah práce:	32 s.
Jazyk práce:	Angličtina