Extra Credit

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The depiction of homosexuality in popular media has always been flawed. The stereotypical flamboyant homosexual is a direct result of these flawed depictions. However, representations of homosexuality, much like any representation in mainstream media, are not always bad, and can sometimes be both accurate and exaggerated. “I Love You Phillip Morris” falls into the case of having both accurate and exaggerated representations of homosexuality.

The movie follows the life and exploits of a con artist named Steven Jay Russel. Steven has two primary same sex love interests. The first is a man named Jimmy, who he meets in Miami, and the second is Phillip Morris, who he meets in prison. In both relationships, we can see accuracies and inaccuracies of homosexuality.

One of the first inaccuracies in the movie, is the “Gay lifestyle”. When Steven moved to Miami and partners with Jimmy, Steven tell us that being gay is expensive. The expensive lifestyle is also represented as very flamboyant; they wear tight fitting silk cloths, and own two dogs, etc. This perpetuates the perceived stereotypical lifestyle of homosexuals. The next major inaccuracy is that behavior of the homosexual men in the movie. Many of them, especially Phillip, are extremely flamboyant. They are also represented as hyper sexual. The first time we are introduced to Steven being homosexual, he is having intercourse. The fact that child Steven saw a penis in the cloud also perpetuates this. These are all stereotypical traits attributed to a homosexual individual and the movie hit nearly all of them.

However, as previously stated, there is a good amount of accurate depictions too. The first is that Steven knew he was homosexual from the get go. This shows the movie respected the fact that being homosexual is natural and not just a choice. Another good representation, is how love between Steven and his lovers is represented. The love between them is not just lust, but true. This is shown by the emotion the men express for one another. Like Steven crying and talking with Jimmy has he is on his deathbed, and the notes between Steven and Phillip. The reluctance of Steven to show his bosses his male lover is also a sad, but accurate depiction. Homosexuals are frequently ostracized because of their relationships.

Over all the movie does both a good and bad representation of homosexuality. However, the writers do obviously understand homosexuality; because their strongest accuracy is the emotional one. This might show that they only included the stereotypical aspects for comedic effect, like the penis in the sky when he was a child. None the less these inclusions of exaggerated actions and behaviors causes the stereotype to perpetuate and become more prominent.