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Journal 6

Select and consider a minority group (that is, a group differentiated from the social majority, whether by ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, etc.). How does the media most commonly present this particular group? What other presentations of this groups do we see? Are these presentations fair? Do some or all presentations of this group contain elements of prejudice or stereotype? How do you think the presentation of this group has changed over the last fifty to sixty years?

The rights, especially the rights to marriage, of homosexuals are one of the most controversial social topics of the last few years and the debate has been heated. One of the main contributors to the conversation, the media, from news to television to movies, has presented homosexuals with certain bias. The gays of America in the media are commonly depicted as very flamboyant and ostentatious, both in dress and in personality. They are also usually represented as effeminate or masculine, whichever is the opposite of their specific gender role. In addition to these relatively neutral stereotypes, some media pundits will decry homosexuals on desanctifying American family values (when discussing homosexual rights of marriage and adoption) while others portray them as very good parents, one of the more mainstream examples being a TV show called *Modern Family.* However, even socially supportive media such as *Modern Family* still depict homosexuals as flamboyant and ostentatious.

This near uniform portrayal of homosexuals in our media is very prejudiced and stereotypes gays. Although there are certainly flamboyant and ostentatious gays, just as there would be flamboyant and ostentatious people in any group of people, these people are certainly the “vocal minority”, and such stereotypes are not fair to the general gay community. There are, however, as previously touched upon, some positive aspects in recent media history that support homosexuals in America. Unlike 50 to 60 years ago, when being openly homosexual could and would land you (involuntarily) into a mental institution, as it was regarded as a mental disorder, today gays are encouraged to “come out” and not hide their true sexual orientations. Although our society, and our media, is still very prejudiced toward homosexuals, we have certainly come along way from seeing them as mentally unbalanced.