



4-13-2018

Stop Pretending To Be Like Me

Brianna O'Boyle
Gettysburg College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/surge>

 Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#)

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.

O'Boyle, Brianna, "Stop Pretending To Be Like Me" (2018). *SURGE*. 318.
<https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/surge/318>

This is the author's version of the work. This publication appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution. Cupola permanent link: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/surge/318>

This open access blog post is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact cupola@gettysburg.edu.

Stop Pretending To Be Like Me

Abstract

I was scrolling on my Facebook feed when I saw a post that appeared to be a proposal featuring two women captioned: “She said yes!!!!!!” My first thought was how wonderful it was to see a happy, loving gay couple, and how heartening it is that they can be open and out about their relationship. As a queer person, it is always nice to see people who share that part of myself being visible. However, upon closer examination it was obvious that it was two straight best friends, joking. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Dallas Buyers Club, Deadpool, Gettysburg College, Hollywood, Laura Prepon, Philadelphia, Queer as Folk, Ryan Reynolds, Sean Penn, Sexuality, Social Justice, Tom Hanks

Disciplines

Civic and Community Engagement

Comments

Surge is a student blog at Gettysburg College where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com. Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

STOP PRETENDING TO BE LIKE ME

April 13, 2018



I was scrolling on my Facebook feed when I saw a post that appeared to be a proposal featuring two women captioned: “She said yes!!!!!!” My first thought was how wonderful it was to see a happy, loving gay couple, and how heartening it is that they can be open and out about their relationship. As a queer person, it is always nice to see people who share that part of myself being visible. However, upon closer examination it was obvious that it was two straight best friends, joking.

Yes, the post those girls posted, was not about me. I know nothing of their motivations of posting it. However, the image of one girl kneeling and kissing the hand of the other is an obvious display of what would appear to be a romantic relationship between two people of the same gender. As someone who has been made uncomfortable because of my sexuality, and has at times feared being open about it in public, it gives me an uncomfortable feeling in my stomach to see two straight people “playing” queer.

They have never worried about being persecuted because of their sexuality. They will never feel like a sideshow act, everyone staring at you and your partner because it's "so hot seeing two girls together." They will never receive unwanted attention, and become a focal point of the party because of who they're attracted to. They will never be videoed for making out with their partner because of their gender. They will never feel the fear that someone might decide they are unnatural and try and physically hurt them merely because of the gender of their partner.

If they have never felt any of these things, why should they portray themselves as such on a social media platform? Why should they showcase themselves as gay, even though they will never feel any of these very real, potentially dangerous aspects of being queer?

This phenomena of "playing queer" seems to stem from something larger. Historically, most people that play "queer" characters in popular media productions are not queer individuals themselves. In the groundbreaking series *Queer as Folk* the main character, a promiscuous gay man is played by a straight man. In *Dallas Buyers Club* Jared Leto, a cis man, plays the transgender role of Rayon. In *Deadpool* the "pansexual" character Deadpool is once again played by a straight man, Ryan Reynolds. Laura Prepon, who has become an icon for queer fan-girls is a straight woman. Even one of the most recent iconic gay movies to come out "Call me by your name" still showcases straight actors in gay roles. This all seems to come from the concept of "gay for pay" that is pervasive in the culture of Hollywood. There has not been any openly out queer person that has won an Oscar award, yet many straight actors have been awarded with Oscars for "playing gay" (Tom Hanks in *Philadelphia*, Sean Penn in *Milk*, etc).

These actors might initially be asked questions about their sexuality when cast in these roles, but they can easily dismiss or debunk rumors about them. They will not face the same consequences as someone that actually is queer, and neither will those girls that were "playing" queer on my social media feed. This is part of an overall larger issue of the idea that one's sexuality is merely an act, something that can be recreated for entertainment purposes, something that is far from the truth.

Heterosexual people portraying themselves as queer perpetuates the idea that queer people are only playing a role as well, rather than recognizing that being queer is more than a "lifestyle choice" but something we are inherently born as. It's not okay for white people to pretend to play people of other races, so is it okay for straight people to pretend to be people of other sexualities?

My sexuality is not a commodity that you can use for likes on social media or an acting role Hollywood monetizes. It's hard enough being queer in a world where many people want to harm you for something you can't control. Don't make it harder by perpetuating these ideas that we are nothing more than a role to take on, please stop pretending to be like me.

Bri O'Boyle '18
Staff Writer