

Popularizing Perversion

The sitcom *Will and Grace* seeks nothing less than the marginalization of traditional relationships and the exaltation of homosexuality.

by Jennifer A. Gritt

When television performer Ellen DeGeneres, a lesbian activist and alleged comedienne, “came out” as a homosexual on her sitcom *Ellen*, “millions of Americans were forced to look at sexual orientation in a more open light,” observed Vice President Al Gore. Unfortunately for the cause of normalizing homosexual perversion — a cause Gore enthusiastically supports — Ellen’s “coming out” ended the commercial viability of her sitcom, which rapidly lost its audience as it became a weekly half-hour “gay rights” sermonette. By “forcing” — to use Al Gore’s word — its audience to deal with “gay” issues, *Ellen*’s producers had triggered a gag reflex. Those responsible for the sitcom *Will and Grace* have found a way to make the pro-homosexuality message more palatable for the masses.

Executive producer David Kohan and co-creator Max Mutchnick (a homosexual) have developed a show that, to considerable surprise, avoided the heated controversy provoked by Ellen DeGeneres’s “coming out” series. *Will and Grace*, which stars Eric McCormack as Will and Debra Messing as Grace, began as an obscure new comedy that gained popularity in spite of its premise of a “gay” man and a straight woman living together as best friends in New York. When asked why he thought the show did not spark the expected controversy, Eric McCormack replied: “we’re under the conservative radar just enough that we don’t bug them.”

Entertainment critics say that the popularity of the show stems from the “deep and

meaningful relationship that Will and Grace share,” a relationship that gives both people the connection they desire without the responsibility that commitment brings. In doing so, it subverts the traditional relationship between men and women by conveying the message that relationships between men and women can achieve a greater level of satisfaction if formed within the unnatural boundaries of homosexuality.

Alyssa Katz, in her review in the November 2, 1998 issue of *The Nation*, agrees that the spark that ignited the popularity of this show is the radical concept that a more meaningful relationship can be found with homosexuals: “Whatever it is that she finds in Will that makes him the most important man in her life, his ability to look at her as something other than a sexual conquest can’t be the least of it.” Producer David Kohan also acknowledges the importance of the unorthodox relationship between Will and Grace. “Look at all the TV shows, and outside [*Seinfeld*’s] Jerry and Elaine, I can’t think of a man and woman who are a couple and who are close and compatible where the inevitable question isn’t ‘will they or won’t they?’ Here they won’t.”

Reduced to its essence, the message of *Will and Grace* is that heterosexuality is an impediment to a healthy relationship between the sexes. This message is bundled within a more accessible one, namely that homosexuality is not only acceptable, appropriate, and an ever-increasing part of the societal norm — it is actually *superior* to heterosexuality. In promoting these two artfully subversive notions, the sitcom builds upon the wildly successful 1998 theatrical film *My Best Friend’s Wedding*, in which Julia Roberts portrayed a jilted woman who found platonic consolation in the company of a homosexual friend, played by openly “gay” actor Rupert Everett, who was depicted as the ideal man.

Both *Will and Grace* and *My*



ImageDirect

America transformed: The sitcom *Will and Grace*, starring Eric McCormack and Debra Messing, aims to normalize the homosexual lifestyle.

Best Friend’s Wedding follow the propaganda blueprint created by homosexual activists Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen in *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90s*. Kirk and Madsen urged the homosexual revolution to use the mass media — especially popular entertainment — to indoctrinate the public, bit by bit, into acceptance of homosexuality. Kirk and Madsen argued, for instance, that homosexuals should be portrayed as “pillars of the community,” people representing the very best of humanity. This message is relentlessly promoted by Hollywood.

In his Oscar-winning portrayal of an AIDS-carrying homosexual lawyer in the 1993 film *Philadelphia*, actor Tom Hanks — who is perhaps the most likeable and bankable contemporary movie star — created a character who was in every way a saint (apart from the vice that was destroying both his body and his soul). Actor Greg Kinnear, who played a homosexual in the Oscar-winning film *As Good As It Gets*, remarked that his only difficulty with the role was dealing with the burden of playing someone who is “perfect.” Where just a few decades ago it would have been career suicide for an actor to play a homosexual, the new propaganda cliché of the saintly homosexual has made “gay” roles among the most coveted in Hollywood.

Reduced to its essence, the message of *Will and Grace* is that heterosexuality is an impediment to a healthy relationship between the sexes.

An important element in the crafting of *Will and Grace* was the casting of Will. In Eric McCormack — unknown, straight, and married — an actor was found who could provide the necessary components needed to ease the idea of homosexuality into common society. First, he is not “gay,” which distracts from the homosexuality of his character. It allows the audience to feel that it is okay that McCormack *plays* a “gay” character, just like it was okay to watch a man perform a woman’s role in a Shakespearean play. The audience knows the truth behind the character and as a result is more willing to suspend their belief for the sake of comedy. Second, McCormack fits the stereotype of what is most desirable in a male. Aside from being tall, dark, and handsome, he appears as sensitive and understanding towards women. He is a man who is in touch with himself and seeks to share his existence with that special someone. Max Mutchnick affirms this ploy in his reasons for casting McCormack: “First he looked exactly how I pictured Will, with a great head of hair and a million dollar smile.” And what makes the strategy fall into place is the enthusiasm McCormack himself has for the role. When asked if he was concerned of any implications portraying a “gay” man would have on his personal and professional life, his only reservations lay in the possible failure of the experiment. “My biggest fear,” he says, “was that the gay community wouldn’t accept me playing the part.”

A true test of the show’s premise — that relationships between homosexual men and straight women are better than traditional relationships — came when NBC decided to put *Will and Grace* up against the popular sitcom *Dharma and Greg*, featuring a traditional married couple. When informed of the new time slot, David Kohan expressed concern over ratings. “It’s going to be a battle. My hope is both shows don’t suffer as a result.”

The results of the ratings battle proved that the clever casting and deceitful representations of the gay lifestyle have not only furthered the success of the show, they have advanced the “gay” agenda as well. With the incorporation of two flamboyant and audacious supporting characters — Jack, played by Sean Hayes, and Karen, played by Megan Mullally — *Will and Grace* takes its advocacy to the next level, with its

message that being “gay” is not only acceptable, but popular as well. It also deceives today’s misguided youth with a behavioral model that postulates: Act like this and you will be cool, included, and revered.

Supporting characters Karen and Jack represent another threat to the cultivation of healthy, adolescent gender identities. Karen is a hard drinking, wealthy, powerful woman who lacks a sensitive side in her dealings with other people. Jack is effeminate, prefers to be nurtured, and is the more emotional of the pair. This “gender blurring” plays an integral part in the softening of homosexual behavioral patterns.

The crossing of gender boundaries is not new to the socio-political arena where success, power, and peer respect are the primary driving forces behind behavioral choices. However, in the cultural domain, incorporating feminine and masculine characteristics to define personal identity is key in the establishment of being male or female. In the September/October 1999 issue of *Utne Reader*, Judith Rich Harris declares “Gender identity — the understanding that one is a boy or a girl — doesn’t come like a label attached to the genitals.” Rather, it is determined by how children “feel inside.” Others hold that such gender differences “must somehow be transmitted to them by the adult culture.” The deliberate dismantling of gender boundaries is the aim of the “adult culture” portrayed in *Will and Grace*. For today’s youth, this encourages questioning their sexual identities at a time when they are struggling to define themselves within a morally ambivalent society that often presents conflicting guidelines.

With the success of the show, creators Kohan and Mutchnick can attempt to bring about a further transformation in American society. While continuing the emphasis on the mock husband/wife relationship between the show’s stars, Mutchnick reveals that the show will begin to focus more on a same-sex bond. “We’ll see him [Will] on lots of dates.... We’re depicting a very honest gay man, and it’s hard to find ‘the one’.” As to the show’s long-term cultural impact, Eric McCormack sums it up best: “I would love to get to the point where grandmothers in Kansas are saying ‘I hope that Will finds a nice man.’ We’re not a political show, but that would be a real coup.”

Yes, Mr. McCormack, it would. ■

Looking Forward to Retirement?



- Retirement Income Planning
- Estate Planning
- Investment Analysis & Planning
- Tax Planning

Retirement Planning Specialists

Registered Investment Advisor
1509 South Commercial
Neenah, Wisconsin 54956
(920) 722-4039



**TOM'S
MYRTLE CREEK
DAIRY QUEEN**

ORDERS TO GO
BLIZZARDS • SHAKES
SUNDAES • CONES
TACOS • BURGERS & FRIES

151 S. Main
Myrtle Creek, OR
(503) 863-3478