

Seeing eye to Queer Eye: More than a makeover

[Jasmine Onstad](#) dives into Netflix's latest bingeable delight, finding plenty of social commentary along the way

Thursday 10 May 2018



Image: Netflix

For those who have been living under a wifi-less rock for the past couple months and haven't heard about Netflix's successful reboot *Queer Eye*, it's a makeover show where five gay guys (The Fab Five) drastically turn around the life of a man who has lost direction in his life. Interior designer Bobby revamps the homes of the "heroes"- the term used to describe the participants in the show. Doncaster-born Tan styles the men and preaches the wonders of buying clothes that actually fit you. Antoni is the foodie of the show, though he somehow manages to not once use a stove or an oven over the course of the whole series. Karamo is in charge of "culture" (whatever that means) and mainly performs the function of a human motivational insta-quote. Finally, there is the fabulous Jonathan, the grooming expert, who is a fountain of quotability (can you BELIEVE?!?!) and joyful energy.



Image: Netflix

Much more than a gimmicky makeover show, the reboot has been such a runaway success due to its genuine and heartfelt core. Yes, it may be superficial and silly at times. Yes, it sometimes panders to straight audiences at the expense of queer culture. And yes, it may attempt to solve the problems of

loneliness and toxic masculinity with neoliberalist consumerism. But, despite all this, it tackles loneliness, masculinity and race relations while remaining lighthearted and not getting too preachy. There is a lot more to learn from this series than how to make an avocado and grapefruit salad.

What comes to mind when you hear 'white cop from the deep south'? Violence? Racism? Ignorance? How about if I add that they also voted for Trump and owns Make America Great Again (MAGA) merch. In liberal circles the person described above may seem like a nightmare incarnate, someone that should be reviled and their opinion ignored.

This was similar to the initial reaction of "culture guy" Karamo in the third episode of the series which features Corey, a NASCAR loving cop from a small town outside Atlanta. With his youthful days of outrageous partying and wearing gym shorts every day seeming to have stretched into his middle age, he was looking for help reconnecting with his wife and family; pre-*Queer Eye* his idea of a romantic date with his wife was walking around Target for an afternoon.



Image: Netflix

As the only black member of the cast, Karamo found it especially hard to put all of his assumptions about Corey to one side when filming. After making the effort to properly talk to each other however, they found some middle ground (in their love for the Wu-Tang Clan) and even managed to become friends. Their open dialogue culminating in respect and understanding was extremely cathartic to watch, mainly because experiencing these sorts of conversations are such a rarity in the media. Apart from spats over twitter, opposite sides of the ideological spectrum are interacting productively less and less.

The MAGA cap has been a symbol of bigotry and ignorance (also more recently Kanye West) to many. A prime example of the complete lack of communication between opposite sides of the political battlefield is the reaction to Kanye West's twitter outbursts this week. After tweeting his love for Trump as a brother and donning the MAGA cap, many big names came out against him and the likes of Rihanna, Kendrick Lamar and longtime friend John Legend have ceased following him.

While everyone is entitled to curating the media they wish to see, *Queer Eye* shows the importance of engaging with the views that you might find scary or impossible to relate to. This could be the only way of healing the gash that has opened up between each polarised side of the political spectrum. So yes, it is much more than a makeover show.



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