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Beautiful People and Queer Youth Developmentalism

This paper seeks to make sense of the increasing screen presence of putatively positive representations of queer young people. I argue that such representations can be usefully understood in terms of what I call queer youth developmentalism. Through the example of the UK television series, *Beautiful People* (BBC2, 2008-) I analyse the framing of queer youth developmentalism through connections to earlier media and academic framings as well as to contemporary theoretical work. Drawing on techniques from queer theory and theories of public pedagogy, I argue that contemporary anti-homophobic deployments of discourses of development in media representations of queer young people repeat with difference histories of homophobic uses of development (such as through ideas about homosexual recruitment and arrested development). I extend my analysis by exploring how these anti-homophobic or positive representations are implicated in contested political and educational and health policy frames of wellbeing and safety. I conclude with a consideration of the political possibilities generated by the broader appropriation and reappropriation of development as a trope in culture and education.