

not insignificant... The majority has no inherent 'right' to get more options than anyone else."

Just like in real life, there are a few attitudes that we'll have to help change along the way, but we've at least been acknowledged. Even Ken Levine, lauded for his work with the "Bioshock" series once said, "Writers don't have a responsibility to make exclusively noble gay characters, they have a responsibility to portray human gay characters."

The Internet and social media have made developers and publishers increasingly transparent. Bioware's ending to "Mass Effect 3" caused an incredible outcry from gamers who disliked it for one reason or another, and that outcry led to the developer creating an alternate ending. If GLBT gamers send a strong message of what they want to developers, it's entirely possible that they'll listen.

Another consideration is narrative. RPGs in particular are driven by strong narratives and character development, and are the perfect genre for GLBT characters. The best characters, though, won't be the ones who burst into the room in an explosion of glitter with the "We're here, we're queer, get used to it" attitude. A character's sexuality should not be the focal point of that character because it creates a caricature instead. Perhaps the best example of how to handle sexuality is seen in the character Kanji, from "Persona 4."

Characters in the game face their alter-ego — physical manifestations known as shadows — in an alternate dimension within the television known as "The Midnight Channel." These shadows represent facets of their personalities that they suppress. Kanji acts anti-social, macho and works at his family's textile shop, but his shadow is the opposite — flamboyant, scantily clad and inhabits a steamy bathhouse. You eventually help Kanji face his inner turmoil and he accepts his alter-ego as part of himself. His character never comes out and declares his sexuality outright, but in a world of continually straight characters, his sexual identity conflict stands out. Here we have a character with many attributes — strength, dependability, dedication — that also happens to not be absolutely straight. Maybe not everyone can relate to Kanji's specific struggle, but there isn't a person alive who hasn't struggled with the disparity between whom they appear to be and who they actually are. ■

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