

# Breaking Boundaries: The Representation of Queer Teens in “The Lost Boys” (1987)

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**Abstract:** *This review explores the representation of queer identity in the 1987 horror film "The Lost Boys" directed by Joel Schumacher, by examining the portrayal of queer vampires and their relationships with the main characters.*

## Annotation:



When someone thinks of "The Lost Boys," they might initially think of Peter Pan and fairy tales. However, Joel Schumacher's 1987 film has very little to do with fairies and pirates, and much more to do with queer vampires. The film has become considered a cult classic in the horror genre since its release. The story follows a mother and her two sons, Michael and Sam, as they move to a small coastal town in California. As they attempt to fit in with their new surroundings, they soon discover that their quaint little town is infested with vampires.

Michael becomes the target of a group of all-male vampires and is drawn to their leader, David (played by Keifer Sutherland). David uses his androgynous, charismatic, and mysterious aura to seduce his victims and Michael is his most recent prey. Michael's younger brother, Sam, resists the vampires and teams up with a group of young vampire hunters friends to try and rid

the town and his family of the vampire threat. As Michael becomes more entangled with the vampire gang, he slowly realizes that he must make a choice between embracing his new life as a vampire and joining the group or fighting against them to try and save his soul.

This movie is well-known for taking a unique perspective on vampire mythology and exploring themes of teenage rebellion and queer identity. It challenges traditional gender and sexuality norms and showcases the complexities of identity formation in adolescence. Overall, "The Lost Boys" is a must-see for anyone interested in horror, queer identity, and the intersections of both.

### **Review:**

This film explores teenage rebellion and queer identity through the journey of Michael, who becomes drawn to David and seduced by him from their first encounter. The interactions between the two characters have strong homoerotic undertones, with one scene where David takes Michael flying while holding him tightly can be interpreted as a metaphor for sexual attraction and the thrill of forbidden desires. Michael and Sam are also very close with each other's, and some have argued that their relationship has homo-affectionate undertones.

The vampire gang in the film also helps to explore queer identities. Made up of attractive young men who ride motorcycles, dress in leather, and have punk rock hairstyles, they exude an aura of sexual danger or transgression. The group is portrayed as rebels who reject societal norms and rules, attempting to live by their own code of conduct. This can be interpreted as the group being marginalized from mainstream society, which often has ties to marginalized groups of queer people. Vampires have routinely been considered "the outsiders", and this gang is feared and mistreated by members of the town, showing the oppression of marginalized queer

groups. They eventually try to seduce Michael, a young boy named Laddie, and a young lady named Star to convert and join them in their vampire escapades.

These aspects of queer identity can become intertwined with teenage rebellions as the gang members reject authority and embrace a dangerous lifestyle. Michael's obsession with David and his gang can be interpreted as his own desire to rebel against the cultural norms of his upbringing and society. His transformation into a vampire can even be seen as a coming-of-age ritual. Michael even fights against societal norms by fighting with his brother Sam, who is attempting to enforce the status quo.

The film's portrayal of queer identity is not explicitly stated or shown, meaning these interpretations are left open for the viewer. However, the producers of the movie may have missed an opportunity to be more progressive by making these queer identities more overt. Another issue is that the main character, who is a straight male, is the one carrying these queer depictions. This can be associated with tokenism, where the film uses queer identity as a plot device rather than being fully developed and thought out.

Associating queer people with a vampire gang is problematic as it gives the interpretation that "queerness" is problematic, dangerous, and subversive, as gangs are typically not held in a positive light. Overall, while "The Lost Boys" is not explicitly queer within its narrative or characters, it has several elements that make it important for both the teenage rebellion genre and the queer vampire genre. The exploration of queer desire and the portrayal of the vampires as outsiders have influenced a variety of articles, fictions, and how queerness is represented within popular culture. The portrayal of teenage rebellion mixed with queer identity has also helped society challenge the traditional notions of heteronormativity and masculinity, making it important for those exploring the representation of gender and sexuality.

This film is rated R due to its gore, violence, references to sex, and use of alcohol and drugs, but would be suitable for older teenagers. Therefore, "The Lost Boys" is a must-see for anyone interested in exploring the intersectionality of horror, queer identity, vampires, and teenage rebellion.

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