

Rethinking Queer Multiethnic Portrayals: From Alex Sanchez's *Rainbow Boys* to Rigoberto Gonzalez's *Mariposa Club*

In his 2008 article “The Trouble with *Rainbow Boys*,” Thomas Crisp argues that “when [the protagonists of *Rainbow Boys*] serve as the only representations, these token tropes serve not to present ‘authentic,’ positive homosexual characters, but may actually work to limit readers’ understandings of what it can look like (and what it means) to be gay” (219). A decade later, *Rainbow Boys* is canonized, used in teacher education programs and taught in college young adult literature courses as a preeminent LGBTQ YA text; however, critics—including Crisp—overlook that it is supposedly a queer multiethnic text. Jason, one of the protagonists, is Latinx, but he is, as Crisp explains, privileged: masculine, popular, athletic, and attractive; his Latinx identity is whitewashed to focus on his burgeoning queer identity. As a result, Sanchez’s novel is not only problematic from a queer perspective but also from a critical race perspective. Other novels that better explore these intersections stay relatively unknown, and, therefore, as Crisp argues with regards to queer portrayals, “limit readers’ understandings” of what it can look like to be nonwhite and queer. The promotion of activist mindsets requires readers to see the wide variety of experiences and to question the representations they are presented with. I argue, through a comparative analysis of *Rainbow Boys* and *Mariposa Club*, that the latter should serve as an intersectional model in a reevaluated queer canon and the former’s problematic whiteness inhibits readers’ understanding of the nonwhite queer experience.