

opinions

Pissed off post-modernist

Nature versus Nurture? Is it even appropriate to place the two against each other? Are we to gain any insight into queer identity by doing so? Why do we feel compelled to accept this struggle in the first place? Are we "playing the game" by doing so and falling into the trap that patriarchal capitalism has designed? Are we going to play by those rules? Are we going to accept two very limited and absolute categories to explain our sexual orientation and our sexuality?

Not too long ago a friend called me a "pissed off post modernist". I liked it so much I've been using it ever since. I question and deconstruct categories wherever they rear their ugly heads and I must say I usually do it with the knowledge that these categories are part of what is oppressing us. As a result I'm usually not very happy about the whole process.

Essentialists and Social Constructionists have given us two options: our sexual orientation is genetic or it is the result of our environment. Not very good options as far as I can tell. I do not feel as if they either adequately or completely qualify or explain my notions and concerns surrounding sexual categories and

orientation. Interactionism, which combines the two and gives them equal consideration, may help to alleviate the problem but it is very new (of about the past five years I think) and unfortunately seems also to have its limitations.

What also concerns me is the fact that adhering to these explanations of sexual orientation com-

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partmentalizes sexual expression into categories of heterosexual and homosexual (and occasionally bisexual). We set up yet another binary system in which only two options exist and where your membership in one category excludes you from membership in the other.

So should we direct our focus towards determining absolutely the

basis for sexual orientation? Firstly, it is a bit naive to assume that we can ever absolutely resolve this conflict, although many people seem to think it is possible. A book I recently read did just that. It ended by concluding that we must wait for more conclusive evidence to persuade us that sexuality is biologically determined (obviously the author was slanted towards the Essentialist argument). Secondly, do we wish to wait for our lives to be determined or do we wish to take control of our destiny and lives?

It seems that we need to think of why it is that we feel obliged to categorize people according to sexual orientation. I think it is done for the purposes of oppression. It is difficult to oppress the queer population if you don't identify it first. Often queer people are quite content to allow this fragmentation and categorization. Gaining pride in their membership in the category "homosexual".

So do we need to question the origin of our sexual orientation or do we need to tell those in power that we are not willing to accept this alienation and separation? The message we need to send is all too clear to me.

Anthony Roberts BGLAD!

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