

Queer Culture 101

Making headway against discrimination

Good morning class. Welcome to Queer Culture 101. I know you are all excited about the upcoming semester. We will be discussing a wide range of subjects — from the politics of outing, to homosexual identity as a social construction.

Before we can discuss such complex issues, I think it is important that we hit on some of the current issues facing gay, lesbian and bisexual people in our society.

One of the major issues would be that of anti-gay discrimination. There are currently seven states that have enacted laws that outlaw anti-gay discrimination.

Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Connecticut, New Jersey, Vermont and California all have policies to prevent anti-gay discrimination in housing or employment or both.

On the negative side, Colorado and Oregon will be voting in the general election on anti-gay rights initiatives that would pre-empt any attempt to ban anti-gay discrimination in their states.

There is also a bill on Capitol Hill that would enact a federal anti-gay discrimination policy if passed. This bill currently has more than 100 sponsors in Congress but has not been introduced onto the floor of the House or Senate.

In Nebraska this past year, an anti-gay discrimination law was introduced for the first time into the legislature.

Legislative Bill 1270 was introduced to the Judiciary Committee by Sen. Hall of Omaha. There was an open hearing on the bill with testimony from many people but the bill never left committee. The bill is slated to be reintroduced again next year.

Another issue of importance to gays and lesbians is the criminalization of our sexuality in several states.

Currently 25 states still have anti-sodomy laws on the books. These laws outlaw consensual gay sex by individuals in the privacy of their own homes.

Though seldom enforced, these laws are still constantly used to legitimize discrimination against gay, lesbian and bisexual people. These laws were upheld as constitutional in 1987 in *Bowers v. Hardwick* when the Supreme Court relied on the Bible to justify its decision.

Nebraska does not currently have an anti-sodomy law. It was removed during the 1970s.

Another important issue: Queer families are seldom recognized as legitimate families. In 1989 Den-

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with the exception of the right to adopt children.

In the United States there are just a few cities where people can register their domestic partnerships, but this doesn't necessarily grant these couples any rights.

This failure to recognize queer families as legitimate creates many problems for gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

If your partner is in the hospital, you can be denied access to visiting him or her because you are not considered immediate family.

If your partner should die, the person's family automatically has more control over the funeral arrangements even though you may have been with that person for 20 years.

Because same sex couples have

no automatic rights with each other, gay, lesbian and bisexual people must make expensive legal arrangements to take advantage of rights that heterosexual people take for granted.

Well class, we have talked about the enactment of anti-gay discrimination laws, the criminalization of same-sex sexuality and the legitimacy of queer families. These are only a few of the issues most gays, lesbians and bisexuals must deal with on a daily basis.

I hope that this information has provided you with some sort of framework that will enable you to be more aware of the conditions of queers in our society.

— Paul A. Moore is an openly queer senior, speech communication major and Diversions Contributor.

Internalized homophobia

Self-discrimination worst of enemies

Many gay, lesbian and bisexual people must combat a hidden enemy before they are able to come to an acceptance of their same-sex orientation: internalized homophobia.

Judy Allen, a psychology professor at Drake University, in a presentation at the Iowa Bisexual/Gay/Lesbian Student Conference in February 1992, presented research on the effects of internalized homophobia.

Her research found that most people had few good things to say about homosexuals. It was hard for people to associate positive terms such as trustworthy, lawful and creative with the term homosexual.

She said that growing up in a heterosexually dominated society, we are bombarded, from an early age, with negative terms and feelings that society associates with homosexuality.

This causes us to create a schema in our thinking process that makes us associate these negative terms with homosexuality.

As we mature and our natural homosexual tendencies begin to surface, the only experiences or schemas we have to draw knowledge from are the distorted, twisted, sick images that our parents, media and religions have given us.

We begin to see ourselves as wicked creatures that will never be

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happy and are destined to burn in hell. We are forced into hiding, hoping that these feelings will someday disappear, yet knowing that they will forever be an important part of us.

Given this information, it is easy to see why, according to a report by the Department of Health and Human Services, teens questioning their sexuality commit suicide at three times the rate of their straight counterparts.

Combating these negative images accredited to homosexuals will not be easy. We must encourage integrity within the lesbian, bisexual and gay community. We must show people that being homosexual isn't

just sex, the way you dress, or the way you talk.

We must demonstrate to the public that homosexuals can have a healthy sense of self, lead productive lives, and be an asset to the community. We need to set healthy role-models for our youth, letting them see homosexuals in positive terms.

By doing this we can hope that someday when people hear the word homosexuality, they will draw from their schema the many positive aspects of what the word means.

— David Bolkovac is a sophomore sociology major and a Diversions contributor

1992-93 WEEKLY MEETINGS

GLSBSA STUDENT ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER
 21st—Relationships
 28th—Lesbian and Gay Assertiveness

NOVEMBER
 4th—Parents of Gays and Lesbians
 11th—Bowling
 18th—Multicultural Panel

JANUARY
 13th—Discussion with other Gay and Lesbian Groups
 20th—Roller-skating
 27th—Gay/Lesbian Parenting

FEBRUARY
 3rd—No meeting (Film Festival)
 10th—Self defense
 17th—Homosexuality 101/History of Lincoln
 24th—Legal Issues

MARCH
 3rd—Bisexuality
 10th—Religious/Spiritual Topics
 17th—Movie Night
 24th—Lesbian Inclusion in the Feminist Movement
 31st—The Two Types of Activism

APRIL
 9th—Gay/Lesbian Prom
 14th—Chancellor's Office on Gay/Lesbian Issues
 21st—Gay/Lesbian Suicide
 28th—Pot Luck



I AM
A Poem By Paul Moore

I AM
 who i am
 why can't i be
 who i am
 I AM
 news, movies, books from libraries
 why can't they be
 who i am
 I AM
 choice, preference
 just a phase
 why won't they believe
 who i am
 I AM
 'queer, faggot the medical; homosexual
 why must they label
 who i am
 I AM
 walk, talk appearance of "man"
 why must i hide
 who i am
 I AM
 excellence, perfection
 highest of expectations
 why must i prove
 who i am
 I AM
 friends, family society of oppression
 why can't they under-

stand
 who i am
 I AM
 love, commitment
 honesty and truth
 why can't they accept
 who i am
 I AM
 catholic, lutheran
 all organized religions
 why must they condemn
 who i am
 I AM
 father, parent caregiver to children
 why can't this be
 who i am
 I AM
 caring, loving
 wouldn't hurt anyone
 why can't they respect
 who i am
 I AM
 rejection, violence
 loss of life
 why must i fear
 who i am
 I AM
 mother, father
 will they call
 why can't they love
 who i am
 I AM
 who i am
 why can't i be . . .
 I AM

Brian Shellito/DN