

# Rethinking "moral" sexuality

In last week's paper, Elisa wrote an article identifying the harmful stereotypes assigned to sexual minorities. I want to thank her for introducing silenced issues into the University community. This article is an attempt to further the discussion.

The social structures of this campus have defined sexuality in very specific terms. There are rules which govern "normal" sexual practices. Desires, acts and persons are categorized and labeled. Expectations are established. Deviation from the constructed norm is understood as perverse, unnatural, immoral. Although we have not created these guidelines, we have consistently endorsed them. These marginalizing forces have been perpetuated dogmatically, leaving our own rules unquestioned. I think the regulations governing sexual practices deserve a critical look.

We should first ask why these oppressive customs have endured. I think the most popular justification for the regulation of sexuality would appeal to a moral order. Some people ground their moral condemnations of sexual minorities in religion. Others argue,

secular argument must be provided. Virginia state law declares that the sexual acts performed by some homosexual couples are "crimes against nature." The language of this moral claim is shared in many heterosexist arguments. I think this line of argument is seriously confused. Since when did it take two people to defy a law of nature?

More sophisticated accounts of sexuality do not draw moral distinctions between the different sexualities. In *Queer Science* (1996), Simon LeVay provides an account of sexual development based primarily on a biological model. His own research supports a link between sexual orientation and the size of certain structures in the brain. This indicates that the different sexualities are, at least in part, biologically determined. So, homosexuality is just as "natural" as heterosexuality. There is an alternative to the biological model. The psychoanalytic model of sexual development

all the arguments leveled against homosexuality and bisexuality. I know I have ignored some real gems. In any case, I do not think that the sloppy moral arguments waged against sexual minorities have singlehandedly perpetuated the rules governing sexual practice. There must be another factor lurking in the background.

We tend to believe that our moral judgements are unclouded by our own subjectivities. We maintain that our condemnations emerge from no particular perspective and apply universally. It seems to me that the platform against homosexuality serves as a particularly good example of personal psychology investing itself in moral evaluations. When you rip down the flyer advertising an organization addressing gay issues, when you yell "faggot," you attempt to draw a clear distinction between yourself and your targets. What might that violence, that revulsion,

actually signify? Perhaps your own sexual insecurity? Is it possible that you are trying to convince yourself that your own sexuality is fixed, stable and pure? We may wish that our sexualities fall into clearly defined categories but this is usually not the case. I



**MATT BRENSILVER**  
*Guest Columnist*

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claiming a secular foundation, that homosexual acts contravene the "laws of nature." Regarding religious arguments, I personally believe that Nietzsche still lives (in Graceland), but this is not the only possible response to religious claims. I can understand religion forming an individual's personal morality, however, it is unreasonable to assert that your personal beliefs are justified simply on the grounds of "religious authority." A

considers psychosocial forces in the development of sexuality. According to Freud, it is the resolution of the Oedipal complex that forges an individual's sexual identity. In this case, there is not a "normal" sexual development, but rather a combination of external factors which dictate one's sexuality. Again, no specific path of development can be morally elevated.

It has not been my aim to refute

think it is crucial that we pursue our own sexual identities more honestly. Only when we have stopped hiding from ourselves can we put ourselves in position to make more fair judgements about sexual minorities.

*Matt is President of Lambda Coalition, an on-campus organization to support and promote awareness of gay / lesbian / bisexual issues.*