

Example of essay on final paper on two books

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



Queer theory had been popular since eighties taking the place of gender theory appeared to be more primitive. The ideas of queer theory are widely implemented by those who fight for human rights and freedoms. This paper is devoted to the research of two studies, namely: Wilchins, R. Queer Theory, Gender Theory and Sycamore, M. B. " That's revolting: Queer Strategies for resisting Assimilation".

Before discussing potential flashpoints between persons with non-traditional sexual orientation (gays and lesbians), and queers let us consider similarities and differences between them. At first sight there is no difference between queers and gays/lesbians.

Gay or lesbian is a sexual identity while queer does not necessarily apply to sexuality only. They are identified as people attracted to the persons of the same sex. Gays and lesbians had been known for organizing sexual minorities' rights movement setting up claims of equal opportunities for marriage, adoption, and military service. Thus, gays and lesbians aim at cultural assimilation to mainstream. Basically, being queer by nature they want the same opportunities offered for average heterosexuals. Equality and sameness is something they used to strive for.

Queer is a broader view of a social distinction than gays and lesbians identifying certain public spiritedness. A notion of queer does not embrace a sexuality component only. Queer can be a gender identity or a life style depending on a singular person's decision. Being a queer may not necessarily mean being a gay. On the contrary to gays, queers challenge assimilation and heteronormality claiming that equality and sameness are quite different notions.

The most disputable issue between gays/lesbians and queers is marriage institution. Gay and lesbians insist on legalizing this institution for marginalized groups. They consider that true love and voluntary union of two (or more) loving people has nothing in common with Church wedding ceremony or official marriage registration. Queers are more concerned about health care, employment discrimination and the right for a personal space (housing) rather than gay marriage, adoption, and military service.

Queers argue that people having sexual orientation different from straight do not have to accept the dogmas of the traditional society stating that marriage is a heterosexual institution. Queers claim that gay marriage legalization is the main issue to be addressed.

Sycamore protests against existing order of things imposed by social institutions for the purposes of freedom controlling: " Write yourself a ritual, throw yourself a party, out on a tux, stand barefoot in the Pacific, invite all your friends. But don't get all romantic about Church and State. They do not feel the same way about you" (p. 121).

Thus, gays and lesbians are social constructs being part of society machine while queers rag against it. Actually, gays' and lesbians' difference from the mainstream is their homosexuality. They assimilate with the mainstream sharing same point of view of " normal" people other than sexuality issue. However, Sycamore (2004) questions the normality of all people and criteria of normality set by mainstream supporters: " Good queers? Bad queers? Who decides?" (p. 147).

As the matter of fact queers and gays controversy boils down to the issue of social inequality that is typical for any society.

Interestingly, queer community is an entity ruled by true democracy. This is an ideal society where there is no any classification. Sycamore (2004) described it as follows: “ The queer community has never been a monolithic entity. They’ve always been division along racial, gender, age and, class lines” (p. 29).

The general idea of queer philosophy is that people come into this world to be happy and to make happy other people. For one, it is important to love people regardless of their gender not lying to oneself. It is a matter of everybody’s personal choice which way to choose: to live with someone you really love or “ wound up in an unhappy alcoholic stuck in a tiny, uninteresting world” being married to “ unhappy alcoholic and two unhappy kids shepherd around”? (Sycamore, p. 106). This example was taken from her own life.

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With this words Sycamore encourage people set free from any social limits and live full-fledged life.

Sycamore (2004) identified queer resistance as follows: “ Resistance takes place when like-minded people of color come together to talk, reflect, and take actions on issues that are pertinent to our lives without having to cut off parts of our experiences as opposed people” (p. 46). Also, he stated that queer resistance is vital rather than a matter of choice. For Sycamore (2004) queer resistance actually deals with any kind of discrimination whether it is concerned racial, age, cultural, class or other issues.

For Sycamore (2004), gays and lesbians feel excluded from the mainstream being deprived of the possibility to marry a person of the same sex. Being queers by nature they aim at sharing values of people who, by definition, are quite different. There is no logic in this since a same-sex marriage is an attempt to have freedom of choice. On the contrary to the mainstream gays and lesbians, queers defend freedom in principle stating that traditional values are not applicable to the idea of total freedom and human rights in their pure form. This is the reason why gay and lesbian marriages are heavily opposed in a traditional society. Claiming their rights for being able to get the benefits “ normal” people have, gays and lesbians attract excessive attention to trivial issues while significant challenges still stay unresolved. It handed grounds for queers to accuse gays and lesbians in indulging in social machine. Interestingly, gays and lesbians strive for their rights made people supporting traditional marriages feel excluded rising strong resistance from their part. Queer theory is becoming more and more popular referred by many disciplines and studies. It is sometimes not clear if there is something queer about it or not. Having narrow implications and becoming somewhat outdated it gradually supersedes gay and lesbian studies.

The main idea of queer resistance is excellently reflected in the following citation: “ I will not accept being accepted- for something I’m not”

(Sycamore, p. 104). Who knows what would happen if all of humans all over the world protect their interests like queers do? Being queer is precious experience that is inaccessible to someone straight, white or rich. On the other hand, everyone is queer to some extent but not everyone presumes to accept this queerness. Even less people are ready to fight for their rights. It

is not about resisting everything that is equal to nihilism. It is about saying one's family about one's unusual orientation the way no one could object one's decision. It is easier to stay unhappy and never express one's thoughts. Openly expressing one's opinion is much more complicated task. That is another matter when it comes to survival.

More contradictions between queers and gays' and lesbians' views root in queer and gender theories' main concepts.

Thus, gender theory aimed at definition of gender and gender classification while queer theory attempted to introduce criticism rather than define an identity. Queer theory incorporates gender theory giving broader definition of identity.

In gender theory gender is held as a cultural and social construction of femininities and masculinities having certain inherited functions which are to be observed by all members of the society in exchange of certain social benefits. The state of being entirely male or female is totally ignored.

Queer theory emerged as a radical trend in gay politics associated with non-assimilationist and separatist position inside of the movement. Human identity is seen as a flexible entity which cannot be categorized or labeled in accordance with social norms. Identity consists of various components, thus it cannot be fixed in the longevity. Under the terms of queer theory identity can be divided into two parts: the self and the role. The self means what a subject actually is. The role is self explanatory meaning external appeal of identity.

Another researcher Wilchins argued to the point that " Almost all of us have stories, but because gender is such a personal thing, we think our

experience reflects our own personal shortcomings. We were ridiculed for being a geek or a fag or for throwing “like a girl,” or we were too aggressive and athletic or too old to be a tomboy. When these things happened, we assumed the problem was us, not the gender system” (p. 19).

But the most significant contribution of Wilchins studies is that she aimed at encouraging queer people to be socially and politically active. She wrote: “In this, we realize that postmodernism is still lacking any vision of constructive social engagement and political action. Indeed, it is innately suspicious of mobilizing communities for political action. For activists whose task is organizing for political change, this is a serious shortcoming.” (p. 101). This is a point of view represented by the person who experienced the hardships and rejection being queer. Besides, she applies to the categories of sex, gender, and race stating that these categories cannot be clearly classified as male and female. Also, she rejected the universality of these categories. She reflected postmodernism writing that it “is unable to propose any notion of group action that is positive and rewarding. Such freedom as postmodernism envisions is the purely negative freedom found in isolation and separation, in strictly private acts and meanings” (p. 100).

Wilchins had greatly contributed into queer theory by bringing down outdated stereotypes related gender identity. In her book she wrote: “This is a movement whose time has come. Join us. If you’ve read this far in the book, it’s an issue that speaks to you too. Don’t let gender rights stay “just theory.” Get involved. Because gender rights are human rights, and the time for them is now” (Wilchins, p. 157). Queers advocate the idea of loving people for who they are. By doing that queers challenge the mainstream,

homogenization, sameness and stereotypes as the cornerstone of outdated gender policy. It is important to stay honest with oneself and accept oneself as he or she is without feeling blame for not meeting artificial standards set by society. They promote total freedom of choice and self-identification showing exemplary attitude when fighting their human rights. Every human is individual and has the right to identify him- or herself the way he or she prefers regardless of what is accepted in the society. Traditional gays and lesbians gradually give in adapting to the mainstream rules becoming the victims of total homogenization. Every person has a unique individuality which has to be respected as it is. It is more important to enjoy communication with people having been identified differently rather than just seeking differences in other people. A unique human personality cannot be framed either gender identity or sexuality.