

How might a
constructionist
approach to gay,
lesbian, bisexual or
trans persons d...



Constructionist approach, a biological essentialist and a religious essentialist approaches to gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans persons. Every person is free to choose the type of sexual orientation to identify with. This also includes the freedom to undergo some medical treatments in order to shift to a preferred sexuality. However, there are still many controversies as pertaining to gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans persons and their rights in many societies. The approach that is used by a society to understand the issue of sexual orientation greatly determines the attitude held towards such individuals. This paper analyses three approaches used to understand these sexual orientations, namely constructionist approach, biological essentialist and a religious essentialist. Sexuality is an instinct or a natural drive that becomes inevitable a person's biological make-up and seeks fulfillment through sexual activity. All essentialist approaches take the view that all genders, both male and female, have an essential nature as opposed to differing by various contingent or accidental features that result from social forces. These include biological essentialist and a religious essentialist approaches. From the perspective of the essential nature of a person, it is taken that the sexual preference of a person is natural and important/essential to the personality of the person. The essential nature entails caring and nurturing. This means that being a gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans person is a sign of aggression and selfishness (Clare 28). Biological essentialists take sex as a natural instinct required for reproduction purposes. This means that there is a relationship between the biological sex/gender and the sexuality of a person. This approach therefore considers being heterosexual as normal but considers gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans persons as unnatural and deviant. For the

religious essentialists, one has to be either a male or a female and a deviance from this is considered as sin. This means the persons are not fit to worship. From the above explanations, essentialists do not give priority to the free will of a person, instead, it expects that every person should fully accept the gender they were born with. In other words, essentialists believes in natural identity. Clare et al (36) state that a constructionist approach to gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans persons opposes the view of natural identity. Rather, it advocates that every meaning is constructed through discourse/debate or communication. Social constructionists believe that there is no existent subject. Instead, meaning is created through social theory. From this perspective, constructionists argue that it is not right to take gays, lesbians, bisexuals or trans persons as subjects or people having an objective reality. Instead, it is important that we understanding them in terms of their social contexts. The biological essentialist and a religious essentialist approaches have a limited understanding of free will as compared to the constructionist approach. They do not give consideration to the social and historical factors that shape sexuality. Instead, they believe that no sexual orientations is a choice. This means individuals who may want to obtain hormones or undergo surgery to change their sexual identity have to choose "sickness" as the reason for their actions. Contrasting to the above view, a constructionist approach allows such individuals to choose "authenticity" as the main reason behind their choice to reconfigure their bodies. From the biological essentialist and a religious essentialist approaches, people in a society should be intimate with particular sex or gender identity as opposed to the constructionist approach which advocates

for intimacy with particular persons or behaviors. Therefore, the constructionist approach can be said to carry the greatest understanding of free will. Works Cited Clare Victoria, Ellis Sonja, Peel Elizabeth and Riggs Damien. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Psychology: An Introduction. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 2010.