

Establishing identity through literature task2

Literature



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Establishing identity through literature task 2 Otherness is the act of segregating individuals who are deemed different according to lack of similarity in cultural, social, political, gender and religious factors. Individuals perceive people who possess different qualities from them as the other. This principle of otherness makes individuals to classify themselves in groups of them and us. This leads to a negative perception of the other which is an incorrect judgment as the other may have very positive qualities. Otherness leads to discrimination as the other is seen to lack the right qualities. The other is identified to be different and this leads to grouping, boundaries, alienation and segregation. Otherness is an ignorance of the commonality of truth.

Otherness leads to consequences like: unequal economy, political and religious differences, subordination, and poor territorial relationships (Laplanche & Fletcher 1999). Otherness makes individuals or groups to view others as a threat to their own ideologies, opinions and beliefs and this makes the other to be perceived as dangerous. The other is very different from the outsider. The outsider has a greater possibility of acceptance to the group than the other. This makes the other to be always separated from the individual and groups.

In Mark Doty's "Firebird: A Memoir", the aspect of otherness is represented in his sexuality. Doty had homosexual tendencies during his youth and adolescence was something which was not accepted by his parents and the society as well. He had girlish tendencies something which even his mother used to remind him that he was a boy and not a girl (Doty, 2000). Doty had an admiration for boys rather than for girls. Otherness was brought out by the society by the fact that homosexuality was viewed negatively and

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homosexuals were segregated from the rest of the society. His family seems to have been segregated as they used to move frequently a sign of lack of acceptance. Doty's family members have been portrayed to having negative qualities which were not accepted by the society. His mother was an alcoholic and his sister was in a bad marriage and was imprisoned for burglary (Doty, 2000).

Mark Doty was the other in the Firebird. This is because of his sexuality which according to him was not the accepted one and his attraction was in girl's stuff unlike the other young boys of his age. He describes boy's stuff as boring and always admired his sister's belongings. He accepts that he was different from the others by his preferences. Unlike the other boys, he had a crush on boys (Doty, 2000).

The role of a teacher is very important to the growth of a child. As a teacher I must be very observant of my students. Performance of students should not be my primary concern. I should have a "third eye" to enable me notice any queer behavior among my students. Students tend to group themselves according to what they like. A student experiencing otherness will most likely segregate himself or herself from the others as they do not fit in any of the groups or gangs. The student will be likely to prefer spending time alone and have little or no friends. The student will be reluctant to mix and mingle with specific children (Laplanche & Fletcher 1999).

Assisting such a child will require me as the teacher to come up with ways that can change the child's beliefs and opinions. I will apply my counseling skills and to help the child overcome this otherness by trying to find out the root cause of this otherness. This may have been acquired from home and thus I will seek to have an appointment with the child's parents to be able to

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find a permanent solution. In the classroom setting, I will make sure I change my teaching tactics where I will encourage more group work in classroom activities to help the child in eradicating the feeling of otherness. Should my tactics not work, I will employ the advice of my fellow colleagues on the best way to solve this issue. I will also use the services of the institution's counselor for professional help.

References

Doty, M. (2000). *Firebird: A memoir*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

Laplanche, J., & Fletcher, J. (1999). *Essays on otherness*. New York, NY: Routledge.