# Seeing-Through Bias: My Own and Others 11/30/2016

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This semester has been a unique experience in terms of the material that was presented to me throughout the semester. I came into the class worried about how I would fare in a course built around sexual citizenship and belonging in the United States. Hearing this as the theme at the start of the semester prompted me into looking to change classes as I did not have any passion in the topic at hand. However, I am glad I decided to stay in the class and be surrounded by thoughts and ideas about the world that I usually would have strayed away from. To be able to analyze and make sense of the texts and opinions that were foreign to me brought new light into understanding the struggle that LGBT members go through daily, and how they feel misunderstood in modern society. On the contrary, to be completely honest I failed to relate to many readings such as “The Sperm and The Egg”. That text in particular struck a chord with me of skepticism and I felt alone in my thoughts on it as I heard classmates expressing their enjoyment of the piece and its arguments. I found the text to be completely biased in finding ways to make the process of fertilization, and how it is taught, to be sexist. What I’ve taken from the class is probably not what was intended, but I find it to be helpful in its own way to me. What I took away is that in various modalities the claims and views can be argued for, and data can even be cited to support evidence for the claim without the claim holding truth. This has made me more skeptical of things I read on the internet, see on TV, and in general in my daily life.

One thing that has stuck with me personally is when I was riding in the car with my Mom and brother. I do not recall how the topic came up but I clearly remember my Mom saying “I don’t care if either of you ever choose to be gay but just don’t be flaming gay”. Although phrased in an odd way, thinking about it I feel the same way towards my own children and the people I want to surround myself with. I have no problem being friends with someone that is sexually attracted to people of the same sex, but would have a problem if they expressed it so much as to make others feel uncomfortable. I enjoyed hearing Roe speak about her views in class as I felt she had been affected by society's negative views on the topic, but came across as an intelligent individual that did not press her views on anyone else. The only thing she expressed was the wish to be accepted, which is something I believe no one has the right to deny her. Just like what the students wanted in reforming TUSD’s sexual education policies. Roe helped, along with the class's content, reinforce the ideology I hold now. The same ideology of being accepting of homosexuality when it is not over-the-top, that my own mother oddly said to me when I was young and malleable.

My understanding of my own sexual identity has not changed, but I now have a greater understanding of how other peoples’ sexuality can be such a struggle in their life. Growing up I’ve always heard terms of “queer” and “gay” used in strictly demeaning ways. I couldn’t imagine the psychological stress of feeling attraction to people of the same sex as me and to have to shelter it away. The feeling of not fitting in or having a different view is horrible, and for most things in my childhood that I encountered I’ve been able to hide, or give up to fit in. For example in highschool I loved playing the game minecraft, a game that people often mocked kids in the library for playing. Luckily I was able to play the game at home, and stuck to not sharing my enjoyment of it with my peers. However this was simply a game I enjoyed playing, and it was not that common to hear negative things on the subject. In contrast, not only was homosexuality brought up in a negative light more often, it would be much more of a struggle to hide and to fit in. Thinking of this brings me great pity to the people that went through their childhood’s feeling misunderstood and alone. I’m glad I finally took the time to think about this and realize why pride parades and such mean so much to the afflicted people, something that I used to think of as over the top, and done just for attention.

Looking on the other side of things, I believe some people become too analytical of daily life and actively find ways to consider things to be sexist, or against their beliefs. This has led me to become a skeptic of everything I see in daily life. For example as we looked for ways the video explaining fertilization could be sexist against women, I looked for ways it could be sexist towards men AND women which lead me with a list of terms on both sides of the spectrum. Someone even brought up that the word fertilization is sexist because of the fact that it implies that the sperm needs to fertilize the egg. The fact of the matter is that, that is what exactly happens, and just as loaded language can be used to be sexist, it can be used to make something that isn't sexist, seem sexist. I wish we would have gone over content in class more as “is this piece sexist” rather than “how is this piece sexist”. I had to make sure, as it was my own belief that the video wasn’t sexist, that I didn't add terms to the male side that were unnecessary, just to skew the results towards my hypothesis, but doing so is very difficult. Every piece that we came across I tried looking at both sides, and many things brought to light did in fact bring to light policies that seemed unfair, such as TUSD’s policy on sexual education. This skeptical look on everything we came across helped me immensely in finding out when I was being biased, or when the text we were analyzing was. I found myself, multiple times, making a point in my head on why this certain thing was stupid, then realizing I’m wrong and thinking “oh, I am just biased here and the piece makes a good point”.

In essence the most important thing this class has done for me is reading more into my own biases, and becoming more aware of other peoples’ as well. I’ve learned to not take just what I am reading and to evaluate that, but to also think of who is writing it, who they are writing it for, and what context it is written in. My understanding of my place in the United States as a gendered and sexualized person has held, but my outlook on the lives of others changed. When I try to put myself in their shoes I get a better understanding of the hardship and struggle people that are genuinely good go through, just because they are attracted to someone that plenty of society doesn’t believe they should be. The movie showcasing the Loving V. Virginia case helped me identify with the struggles that went on earlier in time, and the struggles that LGBT members go through today. Overall I am glad I stuck through a course that I never would have chosen on my own, and got put in an environment that I otherwise would have never exposed myself too.