**Gay or Black: Choosing an Identity**

There is a lot of homophobia in racially minority communities, particular in the African- American community. This is no secret to the world at large, and it makes things doubly hard for those who are both queer identified and African- American. Not only do we face hatred from society at large, but often from our own families and communities as well. So, how to handle this?

I have personally experienced extreme amounts of homophobia in my lifetime, but almost no overt racism. Said homophobia comes from my own family, my own blood relatives, many of whom despise homosexuals on the basis of religious belief. I have come to accept that this is just how they are, that they will not change, that I will not change, and we will be parting ways, hopefully permanently, very soon.

I have also been accused of putting my gay identity before my black identity. This is true, I do. The color of my skin has had very little impact on my life and who I have become as an adult, but my sexual orientation has had an enormous impact. Furthermore, I do not identify with many of the ideals within the African- American community. I am non- religious, while most African- Americans are devout Christians. I do not believe in separating myself from Caucasians, while many African Americans are extremely wary and racist toward other races, and look down upon the idea of dating outside one’s race. I also despise the culture of strict gender roles and misogyny, and the ideas about what it means to be a “real woman” or a “real man.” I could go on and on, but I think you get the idea. I have been cast out by the African American community, but embraced by the gay community and taken up a common struggle that I am very proud to be a part of. In short, being a member of multiple minority groups often means aligning oneself with the group that is least likely to hate the other minority groups to which one belongs. I have experienced little to no racism from queer identified people, but plenty of homophobia from African Americans. So, to that end, when my hand is forced, I choose to align myself more heavily with the LGBT community than with the African American community, for, at the end of the day, that is where I am accepted.