

Corrupted Realities



Recently, my wife expressed concerns about news reports that some school jurisdictions are now including in early childhood education explanations of homosexuality. I think her concerns are justified, not because it is inappropriate to teach tolerance to young children, but because the issue involves much more than simple open-mindedness about individuals who are different. It is, in fact, a very complex issue—certainly not the sort of thing that children ought to be required to wrestle with at an early age. What makes it complex is the attempt by proponents to redefine the nature of the behavior that is at issue. The ideology advanced by those proponents would have us believe that homosexual practice is simply a subset of "normal" sexual behavior. It is not. Homosexual practice is, by definition, abnormal behavior.

Now, before I proceed, I need to emphasize that the point I am making here has nothing at all to do with ethics or religion or psychology or sociology as they relate to sexual behavior. I am only concerned with how the behavior is defined in relation to what constitutes "normal" in the only domain in which that definition has any defensible relevance. That domain is the field of human biology.

The definition of normal sexual behavior is a simple consequence of the realities of human evolutionary biology. We exist because of normal sexual behavior—and we would not exist without it—whether that behavior was undertaken by our immediate ancestors or by our distant evolutionary forbears. By definition, to be normal, sexual behavior must involve the mating of two opposite types—whether male and female or some other identification in more primitive life forms—for the purpose of perpetuating the species. Sexual behavior in which that outcome could never be possible must be defined as abnormal.

Perhaps a parallel illustration—one that does not incite quite so much cultural reaction—will help demonstrate my point. Bulimarexia is a behavior characterized by binge eating followed with purging by self-induced vomiting. The behavior corrupts the use of a normal biological process—vomiting—and, as such must be defined as abnormal. Here is how a physiological textbook defines the normal process: "Vomiting, as a basic physiologic protective mechanism, limits the possibility of damage from ingested noxious agents by emptying the contents of the stomach and portions of the small intestine." Given those biological realities, most people have no difficulty agreeing that bulimarexia is abnormal behavior—and I expect that few people would support those who practice it if they attempted to organize into politically active organizations hoping to promote the redefinition of their behavior as normal.

I also expect that most would agree that people who engage in abnormal behaviors should not be discriminated against simply because that behavior is abnormal—as long as it does not infringe on the rights of others. But, I think we would also agree that a personal willingness to live peaceably alongside such individuals should not subject one to the requirement that their behavior be accepted as normal. Being willing to tolerate abnormal behavior does not mean that we have to accept a revision in its definition.

So, if the goal of those that advocate teaching about homosexuality to young children is to teach such revisionist ideology, they are asking that these children be taught something that is blatantly false. In addition, whatever their motives, it is far too complicated an issue to burden kids with at such an early age. They'll have plenty of time to sort through those complexities when they become better capable of judging for themselves when the realities are being corrupted.

Richard E. Ecker, Ph.D.