

The myth of myth-busting

normalcy discourse and bisexual politics

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In a recent blog post, a certain bi blogger dedicated a paragraph to what she referred to as the “obligatory myth-busting post that pretty much every blog on bisexuality provides”. And indeed, it seems near-impossible to encounter any English-language text about bisexuality without seeing these same myths countered in this same way. I thought I would take this opportunity to explore what this myth-busting and these myths mean, politically, and for us as a community.

Quoth the post:

- **Existence.** Yes – we do.
- **Monogamy.** Yes – we can.
- **Fidelity.** Yes – we can. And – we do.
- **HIV & AIDS.** No – it’s *not* all our fault.
- **Confusion.** No – we’re really not.
- **Indecision.** No – that’s not what fluidity means.
- **Greed.** Yes, we can have just one piece of cake.
- **Pants.** Yes – we’re as capable as anyone else of keeping our various bits in them.
- **Choice.** No – we cannot choose to be straight; we cannot choose to be gay; we did not choose our sexual orientation in some thoughtlessly frivolous moment of rapacious abandon. Who does?

Let’s walk through some of those, shall we? No, we’re not promiscuous. No, we don’t sleep around. No, we’re not infectious. No, we don’t choose to be the way we are (SRSLY, why would anyone choose that?). Yes, we’re normal. No, we don’t threaten your sexual identification. Yes, we are just like you. No, you are not in danger of being like us. No, we don’t threaten your beliefs, your society or your safety.

Needless to say, all this is aimed towards the ubiquitous (all-existing, all-domineering) Straight White Middle Class. The one we *don’t* threaten, yes?

No myths, no busting

“I want to have adventures and take enormous risks and be everything they say we are.”

– Dorothy Allison, lesbian activist

Bisexuality is stereotyped as a subversive, hypersexual agent of change and social chaos – precisely *because* it threatens the current social structure. Each stereotype reflects a section of social anxiety which bisexuality threatens, thus exposing the subversive and revolutionary potential of bisexuality in changing and opposing said structure, culture, society and system.

Let’s walk through them again, a little bit more slowly this time:

- **Existence:** society always loves to eradicate those who present a threat. The attempt to eliminate bisexuality’s existence is the attempt to eliminate the revolutionary potential that it holds.

- **Monogamy:** along with heterosexism, is patriarchy's favourite way of keeping us organized in neat little docile units. Of controlling us. Of disconnecting us from each other, of maintaining capitalism and keeping resistance to a bare minimum.
- **Fidelity:** I love the metaphor of the bisexual as the traitor. We do. We betray monogamy, we betray patriarchy, we betray the government through our refusal to obey to government-sactioned coupled-arrangements, we betray our countries with non-binary, open-boundary possibilities. We betray war. We betray sex and we betray gender. We betray the "LGBT" (GGGG) community for normalizing and promoting the assimilation of our communities. We are traitors to anything that confines us, and anything that stands in our way.
- **HIV and AIDS:** the "queer" disease which so physically embodies the straight population's fear of being infected by our queerness. Bisexuality destabilizes the clean-cut border between the diseased queers and the healthy hets. And if queerness is a contagious disease, then I am all too happy to be a carrier.
- **Confusion:** that is, instability. That is, doubt. That is, an agent of change: We doubt. We distabilize. We change.
- **Indescision:** a refusal to fit neatly into boundaries dictated by society. A refusal of the very categories we are instructed to choose between. A collapse of binarism, of separation, of isolation. A call to diversity, solidarity and love.
- **Greed:** this is Western society's fear of sexuality. Of anything not heterosexual-cisgender-coupled-monogamous-vanilla-missionary-position-intercourse-in-bed. Bisexuality is hypersexualized under the presumption that sex is bad, that wanting too much of it is bad, that wanting any of it is bad, that wanting people of more than one gender is bad. That wanting more than one person is bad. Bisexuality means sexual revolution. It means sexual independence for women. It means exploring and enjoying our bodies, our sexualities, our various genders and our sexual interactions, no matter who we are, no matter who our partners. In a society based on sexual fear and a culture of rape, taking our sexualities into our own hands is a revolutionatary act.
- **Pants:** it's often said that "a bisexual is the kind of person who can reach down someone's pants and be happy with whatever they find". Could this be fear of sex and gender liberation? Could this give space to more than just two sets of sexed bodies?
- **Choice:** yes! Because we lead awesome, exciting, fabulous, shiny, liberating, revolutionary queer lives full of love, rage, solidarity, pride, struggle, friendship, pain and joy. If you had the option, wouldn't *you* choose it?

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