

Defining my own sexuality by Idril Miller

In a world so intrusive upon who I am supposed to be, I find myself having to define my own sense of self as a necessity before society defines it for me. I know I am not the only person with this issue, but overall my desire to write this blog and to share my experiences is to be the voice of many girls in the world whose voices are not heard, experiences are not shared, and bodies undervalued.

I never wanted to be straight even as a child I found myself put off by the concept of heteronormativity. No matter what, I did not want to be labelled as a “straight” individual because the word itself perplexed me, and to me implied that outside of that category a person was bent or in general not normal. Well one night when I went with my sister to her friend's house, I thought I had this sexuality terminology down, and so I stood on the table and declared myself Bi-curious to a room full of young women who attended a Catholic all-girls school in London. Besides monstrously embarrassing my sister, I felt liberated to know who I am and that I could not be placed in a box normally ascribed to the identities of black female Jamaican women. Note that all these experiences I am mentioning took place before I turned 13 years of age and moved to the USA. When my sexuality to me was defined and declared that night my choices made with my girl-friends during sleepovers were different. I would watch shows (peep through the hands of a relative during a sex scene) and see sex but not know what it was. So instead I would experiment on these girly nights and probably created a lot of confusion for my friends at the time about their own sexuality, and what they are willing to do with a girl when asked politely... The time building up towards my big move to the United States I spoke with my best friend about my sexual confusion and she told me “You will know once you move and you are settled”. When I got to the US I knew for sure that I was Bisexual I was sure of my sexual

identity, and pleased that the move had that effect on me to see myself for what I am and not what my life circumstances made me seem.

To conclude my rant about sexuality, a label means little or no meaning, I am a bisexual black woman but that does not mean that I prefer one gender over another. I am open to seeing women, but that does not mean that I can date a woman exclusively as of right now in my life. All of this can change, I can change my mind about this whole essay tomorrow but my issue with society and labels is that the existence of change, of difference, is not honored or made aware. So, to all other queer people out there who are still trying to figure it out, figure it out for you, on your own time, in your own “safe” space, because no matter what, society will continue to lack **acceptance** and uses labels to build tolerance which in Prof. Candace Waid’s words “Tolerance is the lowest bar”.