Abstract

South Africa, also known as the 'Rainbow Nation' a phrase which translates the intersection of multiracialism and diversity such as queer rights, was the first country in the world to include a sexual orientation clause in its Bill of Rights in 1996. Using critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis this study examines how text and visuals on QueerLife magazine's '4men' and '4women's'sections (de)legitimise certain accounts of queerness. This research defines the term 'queer' in accordance with QueerLife magazine's definition. This is 'queer' as encompassing Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex individuals. The research aims to analyse representations of queerness in order to reveal the hidden dynamics of marginalisation that occur in personal accounts of queer experiences. The dynamics of exclusion or inclusion that this research engages with include race, class, gender, (dis)ability, body, age and beauty. My theoretical framework encompasses quare theory, intersectionality, representation theory, gender theory and critical diversity literacy. These theories help flesh out ideas such as the social constructionist nature of identities and how these ascertain particular intra-group privileges. Qualitative research methods are employed. Data is sorted using content analysis and finally analysed using critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis. An important part of this analysis is how it is fused together with historical accounts of how differences have continued to be constructed across generations in South Africa and the world. Findings suggest that, although QueerLife provides an alternative space for a queer community to share their experiences of queerness, some accounts of queer experiences and expectations in queer relationships are highly gendered, raced, classed, aged and abled. These byzantine dynamics dialectically intersect with each other in different ways. Through this research, I seek to open up dialogue on the (re)emergence of centres of power within the margins of gender and sexuality.

Keywords: *queerness, gender, sexuality, race, class, body, age, beauty, disability, representation, QueerLife, power*