

Name

Course

Professor

Date

'Physical Disability is no Inability'

Sexuality and individual anatomy are sensitive areas that all people value: everyone would want to be treated respectfully no matter their sexuality or physical anatomy. How people view physically challenged individuals determines their level of interaction with the people around them and in turn their self esteem. Bogdan posits that the word 'freak' is a form of societal thinking and presentation of people. This author talks of the different types of freaks as being; Born freaks (people born with abnormalities), made freaks (individuals whose anatomy has been altered), novelty acts (in performance, especially in plays and shows), and gaffed (counterfeits) (Bogdan, 20). In his clarification of the term, freaks are as a result of a social construction. He says that freaks are not born, but made through a social reconstruction. He discusses how many people born with disabilities were treated by the people around: capitalists displayed them in street corners and in plays to where people paid to look at them in amazement. Such people would be referred to as novelty freaks while those who were real disable people who roamed the streets showing their disabilities for monetary sympathy would be born freaks.

Dreger clearly outlines the experiences of such people with disabilities and in turn portrays them as normal beings worthy of same treatment as normal people. They are also portrayed as people who can perform most tasks that a normal person would do: they go to

school, date, marry and end up with their own families. Through the presentation of Chang and Eng Bunker, Dreger brings to life the fact that physically impaired individuals can live real lives just like 'normal' people: these individuals follow their pursuits despite their physical impairment.

As Bodgan discusses, being a freak or not is a matter of a social construction and the perception of people. The two disabled individuals, Chang and Eng Bunker could be considered freaks due to their abnormal anatomies. A society that considers physical disabilities to be abnormality would look at the two as social misfits. The normal people in the society stigmatize such characters and even take advantage of them. Bodgan explains the situation in detail how these freaks were perceived as social misfits and how they could not have a place in the society. In Bodgan's view, being born with physical disabilities earns them the title of 'freaks' (Bodgan, pg 23). Bodgan would also say that the two people are real freaks as they deviate from the societal expectations: they struggle and live normal lives, going about their individual pursuits where one becomes an engineer. In fact, according to Bodgan, "Boasting about the normalcy of the freaks spouse was another technique of the aggrandized presentation. Many photographic portraits of freaks sold at exhibits pose them with their families against a sitting room backdrop with stuffed chairs and other symbols of middle class presentation" (Bodgan, pg 33). The fact that Dreger talks about the achievements of the Bunkers in its self stigmatizes them and makes them freaks as argued by Bodgan in the above quote.

People with disabilities are in most cases misunderstood. According to Dreger being a freak is not an inability: people wonder about the idea that freaks cannot live a normal life just because they are freaks. As Dreger puts it, "Indeed, so problematic were the Bunker's sexual biographies to those who did not know them personally "most of the people who knew

the bunker' wondered about the normalcy of their social life (Dreger, pg 22). They believed that these freaks could not be having a social side of life. Dreger is therefore not opposed to the idea that the two people were indeed freaks since they were expected by the society to live different lives compared to what the society considered as normal people. In his book, Dreger wants the society to accept the fact that physically impaired people like the Bunkers are just part of us and that they can indeed perform normal functions, despite the fact that they might be considered as freaks.

People with disabilities were treated unfairly by the people who live around them. This is evident in Dreger's work as she talks about the experiences of these individuals. From reading Bodgan's work one is able to get how these so called freaks were being treated by the society. The way they were thought of and also regarded as sources of income in Bodgan's book he explains how a Texas student was asked he wanted to be a giant. This student may be taking his life to be normal but someone else is thinking of him as a freak of nature. Bodgan has magnified what Dreger is telling us about (Bodgan, 28). Both these two books talk about how the society treats people with physical disability or freaks. Dreger has explained how the two Siamese twins were taken as abnormal people with the society and how strange their lives were to the people who saw them. Bodgan on the other hand has expressed in detail how societies see freaks as social misfits: furthermore, he posits that 'freaks' is a just a way of thinking and presenting people. The authors therefore advocates for a peaceful coexistence between the disable and normal beings.

Conclusion

People with disabilities deserve to be treated as normal beings. People have in the past years mistreated them, stigmatized them, and even used them for monetary gains due to the way in which the society used to look at them. 'Disability is not inability' as the old adage goes: it therefore follows that freaks also feel like other people in the society and should also be treated the same way as the normal man. Physical anatomy and sexuality are aspects of life that should be respected. By reading Dreger's book, one should understand the lives of the physically challenged persons and realize that they deserve the best treatment from the people around them as they can also perform tasks that normal people do.

Works Cited

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