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Homosexuality: Choice or Chosen

For decades scientists and researchers have questioned whether being homosexual is biological or psychological, whether it is innate or acquired. Based on the articles that I have read for class such as, “The Last Mile” a chapter of a book *The Gene* by Siddhartha Mukherjee, “The Innate, Immutable Argument Finds no Basis in Science.” by A. Dean Byrd, “Everything you Need to Know About Being Gay in Muslim Countries,” by Brian Whitaker, ‘God Made You This Way,’ Pope Is Said to Have Told Gay Man, “Born or Bred,” by Newsweek Staff and many more, I believe that homosexuality is primarily biological. According to the articles that will be included in this paper, while some people believe that it is genes that lead to this feeling others believe that it is a choice based upon how one was raised in their family. Although there are factors that lead to the belief that homosexuality is a choice many studies such as the twin studies show that being homosexual leads more towards genetics.

The excerpt “The Last Mile” a chapter from *The Gene* an Intimate History by Siddhartha Mukherjee, published by Scribner 2016 and “Homosexuality: Born or Bred?” published by Newsweek Staff helped aid my belief/decision that homosexuality is primarily biological rather than psychological. In the excerpt “The Last Mile”, researchers Dean Hamer, J. Michael Bailey, and Richard Pillard show the effects that genetics have on homosexuality. Dean Hamer, a

researcher at the National Cancer Institute who “...had never been particularly intrigued by the genetics of any form of identity, sexual or otherwise.” was influenced by Darwin and Richard Lewontin’s books of genetics in regards to sexual behavior (Mukerjee 371). This influence inspired him to “... give himself a crash course on the genetics of sexual behavior.” (373). In Hamers Protocol #92-C-0078 study, he attracted 114 gay men and collected information about their family members. With that information, he built family trees for each of the men. Based on the information in the family trees, he noticed that “gay men tended to have gay uncles-*but only on the maternal side.*” If a man is gay then one of his uncles on his mother's side is potentially of definitely gay. Hamer noticed that the gay gene had to come from the X chromosome because it was carried from the mother and men don’t pass on the X chromosome. Hamer conducted another study with forty gay siblings. He found that out of the forty siblings, thirty three of the brothers happened to share a small stretch of the X chromosome, Xq28. Somewhere near the Xq28 strand of the X chromosome was a gene that would determine male sexual identity. Showing that being homosexual is genetic (376-377).

J. Michael Bailey, a professor of psychology and psychiatrist Richard Pillard studied the genetics of sexual orientation by using a twin-study experiment. In Bailey-Pillard’s experiments they gathered a total of 110 male twins “in which at least one twin was gay” (Mukherjee 373). When looking for the concordance of gayness among the twins, he and Pillard noticed that “Among the fifty-six pairs of identical twins, both twins were gay in 52 percent.” If one identical twin is gay then the other identical twin would be gay too in 52 percent of the cases (Newsweek Staff 5). Two twin brothers who were separated at birth, one raised in Canada by their birth mother and the other raised in America by an American family, ran into each other by accident in

a gay in Canada (Mukerjee 374). The twin studies that were conducted provided undeniable evidence that genes influence homosexuality more than genes influence certain diseases for instance like type 1 diabetes.

Two identical twins, one had a revelation. Similar to the Bailey-Pillard twin studies, Doug Barnett, 28 years was straight until his identical twin brother told him that he was gay. Thinking that if his identical twin brother was gay maybe he would be gay too because they have the same genetic makeup. This thinking caused him to “...try sex with men” and when he did ‘The bells went off, for the first time. Those homosexual encounters were more fulfilling.’ than heterosexual encounters (Newsweek Staff 1). Simon LeVay, a neuroscientist at Salk Institute in La Jolla, California knew from the age of 12 that he was gay. In his research he found “that a tiny area believed to control sexual activity was less than half the size in the gay men than in the heterosexuals” (Newsweek Staff 2).

Both text, the excerpt from “The Last Mile” by Siddhartha Mukherjee published by Scribner 2016 and the article “Homosexuality: Born or Bred?” by Newsweek Staff on February 23, 1992 both showed how genetics play a role on homosexuality. With Hamer finding that if a man is gay, an uncle is potentially gay and noticing that the gay gene had to come from the X chromosome which is carried over from the mother shows nothing but genetics. Being able to find the gene, Xq28 proves that it’s genetics/biological over psychological. Proves it’s not a choice. Within the Bailey-Pillard study, proving that if one identical twin is homosexual the other would be too because the genetic makeup is the same also leads to nothing other than biology and genetics.

Simon LeVay, a neuroscientist at Salk Institute in La Jolla, California knew from the age of 12 that he was gay. LeVay grew up “bookish” in England and fit “the ‘sissy boy’ profile limned by psychologists..”. LeVay was inspired to conduct a study on the hypothalamus of homosexuals after being “impressed by a study done by a UCLA graduate student, Laura Allen,... showing that a portion of the hypothalamus in the brains of males was more than twice as large as that of women.” In his research he found “that a tiny area believed to control sexual activity was less than half the size in the gay men than in the heterosexuals”. With these findings it was the first direct evidence that proved that homosexuals do not choose to be “different” but are instead born the way that they are (Newsweek Staff 1-4).

Some people believe that homosexuality is a choice and primarily psychological. They believe that with the right help one can be changed. In Muslim countries, being gay is deemed as wrong. Families disown their children and many are often killed “punishable by death” or “prosecuted under other laws” if no specific law is made against homosexuality (Whitaker 3). With families pressuring their children to get married, major problems are being caused for homosexuals. Because they are not accepted in their own countries, some “Postpone the issue by prolonging their studies and/or going abroad. Some give in to the pressure and accept a marriage for which is ill-suited... Some bite the bullet and decide to come out.” (Whitaker 4). A. Dean Byrd says that “There is ample evidence that homosexual attraction can be diminished and that changes can be made”. He believes that homosexuality is psychological and able to be changed. Byrd says that “Homosexuality is an issue of ethics and morality”..... (3-5). Annette E. Brenner whose son came out to her at the age of 17, at the age of 28 now “brings his lover home for visits.” Brenner says that if she had “known that [she] was to have a gay child, [she] would

probably not want to have a gay child.” (Newsweek Staff 10). Although she knows her son is content with how he is, she still feels this way.

If homosexuality was primarily by choice and environmental, homosexuals would easily be able to give up the desired feeling of wanting someone who is the same sex. People who believe that homosexuality is primarily by choice are wrong because if this were true the impact of rejection that society, family and religion play on them would be so much greater and cause homosexuality to die out but instead the numbers keep steady. Families who disown their children would cause homosexuals to die down if it were such a choice, but instead the children resort to fleeing away, engaging in different lifestyles because they are unable to change. In Muslim countries, if it were so easy to change, I’m sure people would rather live than die, but it isn’t so. They choose death instead. If it were such a choice they wouldn’t prolong their studies or go abroad because their families and their cultures are not accepting. They would just change and no issues would be caused (Whitaker). If Berner’s son read what she said about not having him had she known that he would be gay and he did not change after hearing such hurtful words from his mother why would he still be gay if it were primarily by a choice. No one wants to hear that from their mother so if it were primarily by choice to be gay, i’m sure he would have changed to have his mother feel good about him but, he hasn’t. If the Pope told Juan Carlos that God made him gay and loves him as he is, that shows that it’s innate (Horowitz). God made you as you are and makes no mistakes. Some say that being gay comes from having no father at home, but there are many males who grow up with a father and are gay, there are also many males who grow up without a father and are not gay. The same thing goes for males that are straight. If being gay was environmental (nature), homosexuality would most likely have died

out since many families and religions are against it. Doug Barnett and his identical twin brother from “HOMOSEXUALITY: BORN OR BRED?” grew up with nurturing parents and still turned out to be homosexuals. Proving that it is not nurture, it’s nature.

Based on all the text and evidence used, it shows that being homosexual is primarily innate and biological. Although people may choose to be homosexual, one cannot be forced to like the opposite sex. It will cause issues within one's life. Homosexuality causes a major debate in how life is however there is more evidence that shows how it is biological rather than psychological.

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