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The Importance Of Knowing The Language

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The Importance of Knowing the Language

Alejandra Palafox

My educational journey has changed the way I understand my life and the perplexity of my oppressions. Through this journey my goal was to educate myself so I could learn the language that describes what I was going through. The language gays need to know in order to stay true to themselves, to their own persons, to who they are. The language that offers an analysis of their positionality in this world.

I needed the language to talk to my mother about who I am and most importantly to be able to stand up for myself whenever I find myself being oppressed. I wanted to learn the language so I can then grow, so I can then, explain more than just my experiences, but critically analyze why these experiences pushed me to understand the language heterosexuals didn't need to know. I recognize that internalized oppressions, such as homophobia, exist. I know about self-silencing so my family wouldn't get shamed on my account.

I had trouble understanding this language at first because the terminology was all very new and difficult to fully understand. It was far beyond my vocabulary. That frustrated me because I recognized it. The reason I pushed myself to understand this language was so I can go back home and explain it to my mother. Explain to her who I am and what experiences I have gone through and still continue to go through. I want to have a conversation with her about that topic we never brought up again; the topic of my "coming out." I want to have the conversation and be able to do so with more depth. I want to ask so many questions, questions I never got the chance to ask. I also want her to ask me questions, the ones she is always curious about.

Every time I go back home I realize I have made progress on who I am, however, I re-experience some oppressions I thought I had overcome already. Going back home I realize that that oppression hasn't fully gone away. At home I was able to get my mother to think more critically about some of my experience of oppression. She didn't quite understand what I meant until she started watching this show called, Los Casos Cerrados. In this show this lady is a judge and she defends gay people from heterosexuals because heterosexuals are so stubborn and refuse to understand that queer people exist and will continue to. After watching this show, she then understood what I meant by coming back home and having to deal with some oppressions I thought I had already dealt with and resolved. In that moment, I saw that she understood now, that she could see it now; she was allowing herself to be open and see these oppressions in our community.

Getting an education is important for my self-improvement and growth because without education I would continue to be experiencing my life without actually understanding why it is that my experiences lead me to feeling this way. I feel like I need to police myself so I stop experiencing homophobia, and unwillingly conform to my gender roles. As for the language I needed to learn, I learned in English; now I need to translate it into Spanish because my mother only speaks Spanish. This is something I am currently working on. In class we were asked what meta narrative we connect to, what well-known story mirrors our own story? I have not found a meta narrative that describes my story.