

## Le règne de Narcisse: les enjeux du déni de la différence sexuelle

### *The reign of Narcissus: the risks of the denial of sexual difference*

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In *Le règne de Narcisse: les enjeux du déni de la différence sexuelle*, Tony Anatrella communicates his thesis early on, namely that by its very nature, homosexuality involves the denial of the importance of the difference of the sexes. Furthermore, he asserts that society's affirmation of this denial through acceptance of gay parenting engenders grave social consequences including the loss of the nature of true parenthood and the ensuing identity confusion among children.

Anatrella underscores the idea that in our development from infancy, we are first preoccupied with ourselves and our own needs, then by those similar to ourselves (the same sex), and finally by those different from ourselves (the opposite sex). For

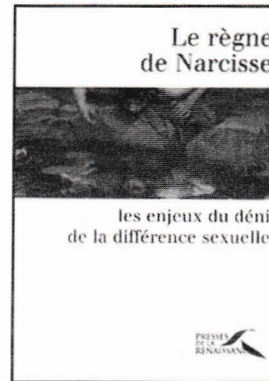


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Anatrella, the homosexual is stuck at a period of psychosexual development in which he is attracted to and seeks out individuals similar to himself. Therefore, central to Anatrella's thesis is the claim that by its very nature, homosexuality is narcissistic.

The danger, according to Anatrella, lies in our acceptance of homosexual activists' demands to participate in building a society in which we accord the same value to same-sex parenthood as we do to opposite-sex parenthood. Inclusion of such demands necessitates that we acquiesce to a philosophy of narcissism, which involves subjecting universal, societal

needs to individual, subjective ones. For Anatrella, the idea that we can construct a society on the notion that an individual's needs, based upon sexual impulses, are more important than society's at large is not only ludicrous, but also dangerous. He cites anthropological history as a testament that all enduring societies have been built on the concept of societal good taking precedence



over individual wants and desires.

Anatrella believes that civilizations continue because we value the innate sexual differences in being male or female and that the valuing of these differences leads to heterosexuality and thus continuation of the species. To support this notion, Anatrella emphasizes that as human beings, we all have different sexual impulses to varying degrees. He refers to homosexual feelings as *tendances partielles*

(partial/incomplete impulses) and underscores that all human beings experience various desires and impulses throughout the lifespan. Anatrella asserts, however, that we can never base the foundation of our society on just feelings and impulses. Our society must be based on the objective reality that we are either male or female and that these differences lead us to unity in marriage and later parenthood.

*Le règne de Narcisse: les enjeux du déni de la différence sexuelle* clearly illuminates the implicit, narcissistic nature of homosexuality and contributes to the reader's understanding that the homosexual finds himself in an unfinished stage of psychosexual development. Unfortunately, however, the author's scholarly support of that assertion is lacking. Anatrella consistently cites many of his own publications, and he provides few other citations for his principle arguments. For example, in discussing the possible developmental issues regarding the etiology of homosexuality, Anatrella states, "L'homosexualité se développe souvent à la suite d'un problème lié à l'identification et à une incertitude narcissique . . ." (p. 55). (Homosexuality often develops following a problem related to identification or to a narcissistic conflict.) Yet, he offers no scholarly support for this assertion. A review of the literature, however, yields ample scholarship related to psychoanalytic theories regarding the etiology of homosexuality. Likewise, in a large portion of the text in which he delineates the consequences of homosexuals adopting children, he provides only two citations. This lack of collegial support results in a text that reads more like a treatise rather than a scholarly work in psychology.

Anatrella states that his text is addressed to parents, educators, teachers, doctors and even elected officials (back cover). The problem, however, is that the complexity of his argumentation both from linguistic and philosophical perspectives does not render the text an easy read. Furthermore, the author writes in a clas-

sic European style, which consists of digressing to various sub-issues only to return to the thesis and principal arguments later, regardless of the explicit theme of the chapter. Many of the examples that he uses relate to France and French politics. Readers from the U.S. may find such examples culturally bound.

Finally, the psychological, sociological, and political issues he treats regarding such issues as gender, psychoanalytic thought, anthropology, and the political process are rather complex, and understanding them requires more than just a general education. If Anatrella intended to publish a philosophical work, based largely on his own experience as a psychoanalyst, which pro-

duces even more intellectual inquiry, then he has succeeded and his work can stand alone. If, however, he intended to convince his reader of the psychological/psychoanalytic bases for his argumentation, he has not succeeded, as his text lacks scholarly support.

I believe that the text would be quite suitable for a philosophy, philosophy of sexuality, or religious studies class that focuses on human sexuality and/or human rights. Because of insufficient scholarly support, however, the text would not be suitable for a psychology or human sexuality class unless Mr. Anatrella chooses to revise the text and include adequate documentation. ●