

# What parents need to know about the influence of Queer Theory on RSE in Wales



Queer theory is linked to forms of politics which **deliberately seek to break down the fixed boundaries between the hetero/homo, gender, and other binaries to multiply sexual categories and ultimately dissolve them.**

R. Johnson: Border Patrols: Policing the Boundaries of Heterosexuality

## What is Queer Theory?

Queer theory is a praxis driven philosophy that aims to break down social norms - including **CHANGING LANGUAGE!!!!**

## Queering

Fixed boundaries between categories are broken down through the process of “queering”.

e.g., When people say, “**Transwomen are women**”, they have “queered” the category of sex so men are no longer distinct from women.

**THIS IS SEEN AS PROGRESSIVE BECAUSE IT UNDERMINES SOCIAL NORMS.**

The **RSE Guidance** has new definitions for the words ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ that are not in the Oxford English Dictionary:

SEX: attributed to someone

GENDER: how someone identifies

Queering childhood' involves not just the queering of **sex/gender** and sexual binary oppositions such as **male (masculinity)/female (femininity) and heterosexual/homosexual**, but also the generational binaries ‘**adult/child**’.

**The heteronormativity of gender relations in the early years is certainly ripe for some ‘gender trouble’,** and some of this work is well underway and **radically disrupting a range of gender and sexual truths** in what might be more fittingly described as the ‘hetero/formative years’.

Professor EJ Renold (designer of **RSE Code** to be used in Welsh schools)

The **RSE Code** contains no references to the words, boy, girl, male, female, man, or woman but 17 references to the word gender. Queer theorists believe that:

*“the category of sex is a name that enslaves”.*

Monique Wittig

# Queering the adult / child binary opposition

*It is the construction of childhood as a time of innocence, and specifically sexual innocence as the ultimate signifier of childhood, that I want to explore in more detail below.... Indeed, the historical separation of children from the adult world (or 'othering' of children) has hinged almost wholly on children's exclusion from (adult) realms of sexuality.*

The idea that sex/sexuality is something peculiar to adults and adulthood or even 'older' teenage childhood is both short-sighted and dangerous.

Contrary to popular belief (or wishful thinking) there is now an increasing body of empirical research **(influenced by developments in feminist, post-structuralist, and queer theories)** deconstructing the myth of the **primary school** as a cultural greenhouse nurturing and protecting children's presumed sexual innocence.

Professor EJ Renold (designer of **RSE Code** to be used in Welsh schools)

**The RSE Code specifies that sexual pleasure can be taught to Welsh school children from age 11.**

*I really love some of our activities about really helping young people understand their bodies and **how they respond to things like arousal or desire...***

*Draw around a body and then think about where on the body it feels nice to be touched and how does that feel so for example having your head stroked and that might feel relaxing and **so just trying to kind of develop that vocabulary for talking about nice touch pleasurable touch and then also like allowing young people to talk about like different sexual practices** if that's what they want to talk about*

Ester McGeeney (co-designer of **RSE Code** to be used in Welsh schools)

In a report commissioned by Miriam Cates MP, Professor Renold and Ester McGeeney are mentioned many times.



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