

Article Response

Article 1:

Citation:

Katz, Jonathan N. The Invention of Heterosexuality. *Socialist Review* 20, 1 (1990): 150-161, reading 13.

Central Theme:

The central themes of *The Invention of Heterosexuality* by Jonathan Katz are heterosexuality and the historical processes by which it was perceived, imagined, and categorized through the social relations of different sexes. The development of this issue in different historical periods highlights the relationship between heterosexuality and social relations.

What was the article about?

According to the author, heterosexuality is as old as the time, and it is a universally unchanging concept. Despite heterosexuality laying a metaphysical claim to eternity, it has its pivotal turning points in the late nineteenth and twentieth century (Katz 151). Before projecting their views on heterosexuality and regarding them as the only right ones, people should first understand past sexual diversities.

During the period from 1820 to 1860, most middle-class white citizens idealized womanhood, manhood, and love and regarded these concepts as the only valid norms of living. During this time, society viewed procreation as the main, exclusive purpose of the human body

and did not consider the body as an instrument of pleasure or lust. However, from 1860 to 1892, sexual love as a form of pleasure began to emerge. Eroticism and sexual pleasure became the new norms of life.

In the late eighteenth century, doctors coined heterosexuality and homosexuality. During the period from 1900 to 1930, heterosexuality became associated with the human need for satisfaction and procreation. In preceding years, it was defined differently.

The period from 1945 to 1965 witnessed the dominance of heterosexuality in the form of non-procreative, premarital, and extra-marital behaviors and the increase of lesbianism and homosexuality. From 1965 to 1982, many people questioned heterosexuality and focused more on the problem of sexual repression of women in marriage.

Thoughts and feelings:

With regard to homosexuality and lesbianism, I do think that they have been in existence for many centuries though people did not practice them openly and there were no names for such practices. In addition, some countries have largely contributed to the widespread practice of homosexuality and lesbianism through passing same-sex marriage laws. For instance, I have witnessed homosexuality and lesbianism being openly practiced in some of my travels around the world.

Article 2:

Citation:

Harper, Phillip B. Racism and Homophobia as Reflections on Their Perpetrators. *Homophobia* (1992): 57-65. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon.

Central Theme:

The central theme in the article *Racism and Homophobia as Reflections on Their Perpetrators* by Phillip Harper is the outlining similarity between racism in the past and homophobia today. Comparing racism and homophobia, the author presents similarities between Fredrick Douglass's analysis of slavery and his opinion of homophobia with regard to their adverse effects on offenders.

What was the article about?

In this article, the author draws similarities between the struggles of slaves during the slave trade era and the struggles of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals in today's society. According to him, slaves struggled to achieve freedom from oppression. Similarly today, lesbians, gay males, and bisexuals are struggling to attain freedom in their gender differences.

The author also discusses Frederick Douglass's assertion that slavery had negative and dehumanizing effects on both the perpetrators and those who supported slavery. In other words, even kind-hearted mistresses and masters became hard-hearted and cruel to slaves because the power they held over slaves corrupted them (Harper 59).

Furthermore, the author of the article asserts that slavery is similar to homophobia in terms of its detrimental effects on the perpetrators. In addition, homophobic activity is a result of heterosexuals' fear of their hidden homosexual desires. Homophobes also openly demonstrate their hatred and hostility towards homosexuals, lesbians, and bisexuals in order to show that they are the most superior social group. As a result, this self-hatred corrupts a homophobe's humanity in the same manner that slavery corrupted white masters.

Thoughts and feelings:

After reading the article, I do accept Fredrick Douglass's analysis on the adverse effects of slavery on the offenders, but I do not support the author's claim concerning homophobia. In

my opinion, homophobia is justified because lesbianism, homosexuality, and bisexuality are the practices that affect society in terms of morals and social standing. Consequently, society should discourage these practices just like slavery. In addition, I do not think that homophobia influences the offenders negatively because its purpose is to help in uplifting society morally and socially. For instance, my experiences concerning homophobia have not corrupted my inner soul in any way.

Article 3:

Citation:

Lorber, Judith. "Night to His Day": The Social Construction of Gender. *Paradoxes of Gender* (1994): 54-63. Reading 5.

Hubbard, Ruth. The Social Construction of Sexuality. *The Politics of Women's Biology* (1991): 65-68. The State University: Rutgers. Reading 6.

Central Theme:

The articles "*Night to His Day*": *The Social Construction of Gender* by Judith Lorber and the article *The Social Construction of Sexuality* by Ruth Hubbard deal with the exploration of gender social processes and the development of human sexuality through social constructions. In addition, these articles discuss the ways in which society contributes to a person's sexuality from birth through socially accepted forms of expression.

What was the article about?

According to the authors of these articles, the first processes of gender development starts with the identification and assignment of a sex group to a child depending on primary sexual characters. In the process of sexual identification, a person observes the experiences of other

people sexually and places them according to socially significant categories. By such observation, a person can determine through experience if he/she is heterosexual, lesbian, or gay.

Furthermore, many people who live as heterosexuals once had strong and active ties to a person of the same sex. As a result, they identified their sexuality through socially associating with such persons (Hubbard 67). According to such argument, there is no evidence proving that heterosexual appetite between people is connected to natural feelings or hormones. Instead, it manifests through social interactions. Society, therefore, helps in determining how men and women should act through their gender attributes. In addition, a person does gendering through his or her whole life.

The authors also contend that sex, color, or stages of development of a person are not the sources of social status of gender, but instead, social statuses form through the processes of constant teaching, training, and enforcement. In such processes, people discover that they are sexually attracted to same sex persons through social associations. As a result, gender plays a limited role in the process of sexual identification.

The articles further discuss the problem of gender inequality. The authors stress that in most societies the social status of women is inferior in comparison to that of men. Consequently, inequality is also not the result of physiological and biological differences between people but the result of an identifiable social process built purposely and deliberately into the general social structure (Lorber 61).

Thoughts and feelings:

I do agree with the opinion of the authors that gender develops through socially constructed statuses. I also believe that sexuality is a natural feeling that exists from a person's

childhood and manifests itself through social constructions as the authors claim. The reason for this is that as I developed from childhood, my parents and community guided me through various ways of acting and behaving like a man. It, therefore, means that society helped in shaping my gender attribute despite my inward sexual orientation. It is also true that inequality aims at making women less equal than men. My experience concerning this is in the way my parents held me in higher regard than my sisters as I grew.

Article 4:

Citation:

Sexual Orientation. 165-183, chapter 10.

Central Theme:

The central theme in *Sexual Orientation* is sexual orientation within social organizations and structures of particular human societies. In addition, this article discusses ways in which multi-cultural communities increasingly accept and integrate varied lifestyles and orientations.

What was the article about?

According to this article, sexual orientation is a human attribute that is naturally and biologically programmed and culturally linked to practices. Sexual orientation is also the patterned way in which people express and view the intimate part of their nature (167). It also refers to people's heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and asexual natural habits. In addition, people project the sexual component of their sexual personality through gender identity.

The article also discusses the process of expressing one's true self in terms of sexual orientation. In this process, people change from one social status to another. In this process, a person may experience grief for the loss of a former identity. In addition, the pain may be

experienced because of anxiety linked to unpredictable future consequences. In most case, family and friends need to embrace them in order to prevent disaster or tragedy.

Furthermore, this article discusses changing patterns and views on sexual orientation over different periods and its political organization. For instance, understanding of the social construction of sexual orientation increased in the mid-twentieth century. With regard to this, attitudes about sex differ over time and with socioeconomic status and region.

The article also suggests that heterosexuals, homosexuals, lesbians, and bisexuals do not pursue romantic relationships, marriages, and social connections to satisfy sexual needs and fantasies. In addition, the article contends that sexual identity is a primary status though it is not necessarily accurate.

Thoughts and feelings:

I believe that sexual orientation is a natural and biological attribute programmed and linked to rules and habits. For instance, while I grew, I was able to comprehend my sexual orientation through different practices. In addition, I do believe that heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals, and lesbians pursue marriages, social connections, and romantic relationships to mostly satisfy sexual needs and fantasies in contrast to what the article suggests.

Questions I had from the articles:

1. What is the difference between the concepts of heterosexuality today in comparison to its interpretation in the past centuries?
2. Does homophobia indeed have dehumanizing effects on the perpetrators just like slavery had many years ago?

3. Would gender still be manifested even without social processes and structures and is it mostly responsible for the development of various sexual orientations, such as lesbianism, homosexuality, and heterosexuality?
4. How have societies embraced the different sexual orientations of people?