

Analytical Paper: Disability Studies and the Queer Theory

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The practice of disability and deviance studies has gained momentum in recent decades as scholars, the media and human rights groups are becoming increasingly interested in these two fields. Disability studies as associated with Goodley (2013) advocate for equality for the disabled – meaning persons with disability have the right to economic, political and social representation. On the other hand, Love (2015) argues that homosexuality is no deviant behavior, but a way of appreciating gender choice. A careful review of the two works reveals a common fight against discrimination and stereotyping. Personally, I support the idea that homosexuality is a social norm and not deviant behavior and further agree with Goodley (2013) that disability is being ignored as a social problem. Goodley (2013) and Love (2015) are fighting a common disease (discrimination) and so should I.

Goodley (2013) defines disability as a cognitive, physical and sensory impairment. To his dismay, scholars, politicians, religious institutions and activists are ignoring the fact that the disabled are under constant oppression in many dimensions – employment, political representation, self-esteem etc. – and calls for policies protecting such individuals to be placed under immediate review. Worth noting is the fact that Goodley (2013) chooses to discuss materialism, inter/trans-section, and ‘bodies that matter’ in an attempt to make his work on disability studies easy.

In materialism, Goodley (2013) mentions Marx’s respects the Marx’s work and his Materialist Social Model of Disability (MSMD). Marx proposed the MSMD to champion for the recognition of material needs for the disabled. Arguably, the MSMD has not helped that much as the disabled are still being oppressed. The material needs of the disabled in this case are social or economic equality. Marx blames the plight of the disabled on poor political and labor structures

on a global scale. Goodley (2013) maintains that unlike sexism and racism which are seen as serious social problems, disability is deprived of recognition.

Goodley (2013), in his inter/trans-sectionalism approach argues feminists, critical racists and the queer theory ignore problems faced by the disabled. While that could be true, I still feel modern institutions take disability seriously. What organizations and institutions need to do is to increase aggression.

In 'bodies that matter' Goodley (2013) suggest that disability is linked to the body. Both traditional and contemporary societies incorporate medical and psychological studies in disability studies to provide an all-round care service to the threatened group. In my point of view, directly connecting disability to medical and psychological care may appear offensive to some disabled individuals.

Equally important is Love (2015) work on queer theory. By definition, queer is whatever is at odds with the norm, the legitimate, the dominant. In other words, it is an identity without an essence. There is; thus, a mountain of evidence that the queer theory is in advocacy of deviance and dissent and call for a more accommodative society. Love (2015) suggests the following in relation to queer theory: First, the theory is opposed to conventional or mainstream behavior, which include sexual identity, ethnicity, disability and gender. Two, it argues against the essentialist nature of identity-associated theories based on dualistic oppositions such as gay/straight, lesbian/straight, male/female and further suggests that humans are humans and not objects of classification. Three, it does explore and challenge the manner in which heterosexuality is socially constructed as normal. Four, it laments the media's under-

representation of gay men and women and five; it maintains that sexual identity is flexible and fluid. Love (2015) perceives that gender is socially constructed and not the product of nature.

In contrast to traditional literature, Love (2015) perceives homo/heterosexuality as a normal phenomenon and not as deviance and dissent. It is also incorrect to believe in the rules of social conformity, so the idea of people feeling out of place and trying to conform to what the community demands has no place in the twenty first century (Love 2015).

I agree with Love (2015) that identity struggles are having negative impact on individuals' lives. People out to stop pretending to be somebody else. There is no need to bend to social pressure or the will of others to behave in certain way (Love 2015). As anticipated, Love (2015) work over-emphasizes sexuality – about gays, lesbians and straights – making it have academic and argumentative imbalance.

In conclusion, Goodley (2013) and Love (2015) are champions for equality. Furthermore, both researches suggest discriminatory behavior toward deviants and the disabled is caused by inadequate research and weak political, social and economic institutions. (Goodley 2013; Jetten & Hornsey 2014; Love 2015)

Honestly, disability is a very sensitive issue. The associated institutions should act appropriately and proportionately to protect the disabled. Here institutions are authorship, government, schools, religion, family and the society.

I think deviance and dissent are part of daily life. Jetten and Hornsey (2014) do not see why deviance and dissent are perceived as destructive. I also believe that, in recent decades the society has become more accommodative to homosexuality and heterosexuality – aspects of

deviance – than in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Jetten and Hornsey (2014) claim, the problems the world faces cannot be wholly blamed on deviance. In fact, deviance contributes to nation building.

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## References

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