The left side of the slide features a vertical gradient of stripes in shades of gold, tan, and grey. Overlaid on these stripes are several yellow circles of varying sizes, arranged in a descending pattern from top to bottom.

Patrick Hopkins

ON HOMOPHOBIA & HETEROSEXISM

Oppression & Justice (Fall 2013)

Laura Guidry-Grimes

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is homophobia?
- Why are some people homophobic?
 - What are the conditions that make homophobia acceptable in certain social circles?
- What is the interrelation of homophobia, heterosexism, and gender norms?
- What can be done to combat homophobia?



WHAT IS HOMOPHOBIA?

- Loose term for “physical violence and strong verbal, economic, and juridical abuse” against non-heterosexual population (234)
 - Exhibits anger or fear not explainable by heterosexist norms alone
- “the fear and abhorrence of homosexuals is often taught as a moral and practical virtue” (ibid.)
- *What are some examples of homophobia that you have observed?*

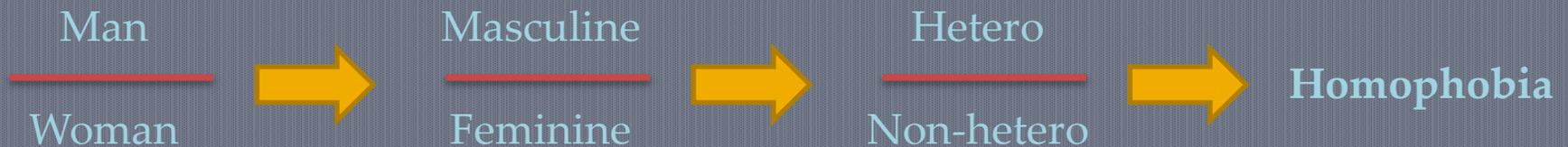


WITHIN HETEROPATRIARCHAL SYSTEM

- Binary sex and gender identities, norms
 - “Real men” prove their masculinity and non-femininity
 - Requires that there be “identifiable, performative, behavioral, and psychological characteristics that allow for clear differentiation” between male/female identities (232)
- Non-heterosexuality as a threat to personal identity for those who buy into heteronormative system
 - Destabilizes categories around which persons, groups, and institutions function
- **Gender traitor:** “anyone who violates the ‘rules’ of gender identity/gender performance” (233)
- *Is there a moral duty to be a gender traitor? How do heterosexuals satisfy this duty (if there is one)?*

WITHIN HETEROPATRIARCHAL SYSTEM

- “Heterosexism constructs the field of concepts and behaviors so that some heterosexuals’ hierarchical view of this binary will be reactionary, for a variety of reasons, thus becoming homophobic” (234)



- Moral costs of buying into binaries:
 - One perpetuates the other
 - Sets the stage for some to have dangerous, reactionary responses to those who try to break this system



HOMOPHOBIA...WHY?

○ Repression Hypothesis

- Overcompensation, trying to prove own masculinity and sexual orientation...because secretly in the closet
- Expression of internalized self-hatred
- Problem: oversimplified, not always the case

○ Irrationality/Ignorance Hypothesis

- “tends to characterize homophobia as learned but completely irrational, unfounded, arbitrary, ignorant, counterproductive, and dysfunctional” (237)
- Problem: functional traits in heteropatriarchal systems



HOMOPHOBIA...WHY?

○ Political Response Hypothesis

- “Rational” response to threats from LGBTQI community to overhaul heteronormative systems, norms
- Problem: does not explain most cases; overrationalizes homophobic behavior/attitudes

○ Hopkins’ conclusions

- Any of these hypotheses could be applicable, depending on the homophobe in question.
- Eliminating the binaries is necessary to end homophobia
 - Make it unintelligible!



DISCUSSION

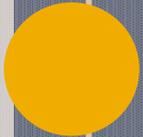
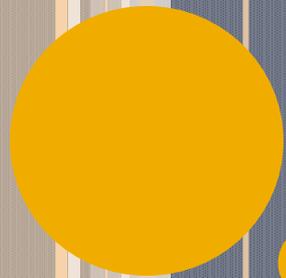
- *For each of these hypotheses, what are the implications for the moral responsibility of homophobes?*
- *What are the responsibilities of bystanders in recognizing and combatting latent homophobia?*
 - *Do you think institutions or organizations can be homophobic, or is it just individuals? If the former, what are our obligations in reforming or overhauling them?*
- *Do you agree with Hopkins that constructing positive masculinity will do very little to end homophobia?*



FOR CONSIDERATION

- ABC's *What Would You Do?*: "Gay Parents Bashed"





QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?