

Transgender Practices as Queer Politics: African a Variant

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Abstract : "Transgender" presents a complexion of ambiguity in the African context and it remains a contested topography in the discourse of sexual identity. The casts and stigmatisations towards transgender unveils vital facts and intricacies often ignored in the academic communities; the problems and oppressions of given sex/gender system, the constrain of monogamy and ignorance of fluidity of human sexuality thereby generating dual discords of "enforced heterosexual" and "unavoidable homosexual." The African culture voids transgender movements and perceive same-sex sexual behavior as "taboo or bad habits" and this provide reasonable explanations for the failure of asserting for the sexual rights in GLBT movement in most discourse on sexuality in the African context. However, we could not deny the real existence of active flowing and fluidity of human sexuality even though its variants could be latent. The incessant consciousness of the existence of transgender practices in Africa either in form of bisexual desire or bisexual behavior with or without sexual identity, including people who identify themselves as bisexual opens up the vision for us to reconsider and reexamine what constitutes such ambiguity and controversy of transgender identity at present time. The notion of identity politics in gay, lesbian, and transgender community has its complexity and debates in its historical development. This paper analyses the representation of the historical trajectory of transgender practices by presenting the dynamic transition of how people cognize transgender practices under different historical conditions since the understanding of historical transition of bisexual practices would be very crucial and meaningful for gender/sexuality liberation movement at present time and in the future. The paper did a juxtaposition of the trajectories of bisexual practices between Anglo-American world and Africa, as it has certain similarities and differences within diverse historical complexities. The similar condition is the emergence of gay identity under the influence of capitalism but within different cultural context. Therefore, the political economy of each cultural context plays very important role in understanding the formation of sexual identities historically and its development and influence for the GLBT movement afterwards and in the future. By reexamining Kinsey's categorization and applying Klein's argument on individual's sexual orientation this paper is poised to break the given and fixed connection among sexual behavior/sexual orientation/sexual identity, on the other hand to present the potential fluidity of human sexuality by reconsidering and reexamining the present given sex/gender system in our world. The paper concludes that it is obligatory for the essentialist and exclusionary trend at this historical moment since gay and lesbian communities in Africa need to clearly demonstrate and voice for themselves under the nuances of gender/sexuality liberation.

Keywords : heterosexual, homosexual, identity politics, queer politics, transgender

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