

Reading Passage (242 words): 1950's View of Homosexuality

In the 1950's, homosexuality was not seen as a choice but as a mental illness. Homosexuality had been officially classified as a mental disorder in the American Psychological Association's first Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-1) in 1952. There it was designated as a "sociopathic personality disturbance." Viewing homosexuality as a mental illness was not controversial at the time as it coincided with prevailing societal attitudes.

Society was so worried about homosexuals that in 1953 President Eisenhower gave sufficient reason to fire any federal employees from his or her job if they were homosexual. The government even went as far as putting tracers on those who they suspected as being gay. Homosexuality was something that no one wanted to admit or dare to talk about. Moreover, commercials were produced warning men of homosexuals and their disease.

Not surprisingly, homosexuality was not seen in any books or movies. If there were supposed to be an appearance of a homosexual, they would immediately remove it. For example, in the play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* by Tennessee Williams, the main character named Brick had homosexual feelings towards Skipper; these feelings can be found by reading between the lines. For the movie adaptation of the play, anything that could be used to question Brick's sexuality is replaced with the affair between Maggie and Skipper and the lack of his father's affection. In effect, the movie removes all references to homosexuality.

Summarize the main points of the lecture showing how it is different from the main points in the reading passage.

Lecture (355 words): Current Views Regarding Homosexuality

The current views regarding homosexuality have changed dramatically from the 1950's.

Since the 1970s, the consensus of the behavioral and social sciences and the health and mental health professions globally is that homosexuality is a normal variation of human sexual orientation, while there remain those who maintain that it is a disorder. In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder. The American Psychological Association Council of Representatives followed in 1975. Thereafter other major mental health organizations followed, and it was finally declassified by the World Health Organization in 1990. Consequently, while some still believe homosexuality is a mental disorder, the current research and clinical literature demonstrate that same-sex sexual and romantic attractions, feelings, and behaviors are normal and positive variations of human sexuality, reflecting the official positions of the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association.

In addition, in a recent interview, United States President Barrack Obama told a reporter:

I have to tell you that over the course of several years as I have talked to friends and family and neighbors when I think about members of my own staff who are in incredibly committed monogamous relationships, same-sex relationships, who are raising kids together, when I think about those soldiers or airmen or Marines or sailors who are out there fighting on my behalf and yet feel constrained, even now that Don't Ask Don't Tell is gone, because they are not able to commit themselves in a marriage, at a certain point I've just concluded that for me personally it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same sex couples should be able to get married.

Finally, society is not nearly as worried about homosexuality as it used to. And what about Hollywood and the media? For several decades, Hollywood has shown its overt support for homosexuality. Brokeback Mountain was nominated for Best Picture for its unabashedly sympathetic portrayal of a doomed gay relationship. Newt Gingrich's half-sister officiated at a gay wedding on "Friends" in the 1990s. More recently, late night talk show host Conan O'Brien officiated at an actual gay wedding.