

Good research paper on the laramie project

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [Exploring the Themes of the Movie](#) \n \t
3. [Theme Implications to Modern Living](#) \n \t
4. [Social Values Presented](#) \n \t
5. [References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Introduction

The Laramie Project is bounded upon the presentation of how and why hate crime is committed by individuals supposedly having particular negative disposition with regards controversial issues and culture that binds the society. The movie presents the case of Matthew Shepard being beaten to death because of being ' gay'. However, beyond this theme, there is more to the story that is shared in the movie. It mostly depicts the overall conjunction that distinguishes how social culture could dictate the ways by which humans would perceive the severity of a particular issue and how these matters would actually affect them as individuals.

Based on a true story, this play-turned-movie, represents how the changes in the society spurs about a sense of realization especially on how brutal beating woke up a relatively unknown town into becoming a phenomenal place that brought about a sense of realization that defines the concept of social perception on complex issues which includes hate crimes and homophobia. In the discussion that follows, a definite course of indication on

how social culture identifies with individual response shall be examined based on the story plot that the Laramie Project is grounded upon.

Exploring the Themes of the Movie

Although the topic is not being talked about so much in the town, homosexuality does exist, and residents in the area follow the same pattern of realization with regards the supposed reputation of ‘ gays’ and ‘ lesbians’ in the community as rejects or minors. Matt, the main character of the movie, was a homosexual. Unlike other gays in the town, Matt was more expressive and more definitive in the way he embraces his personality. He knows what he wants and he is not afraid to show it to the public. Laramie community is not that much open to such display of personal interest especially when it comes to determining the concept of sexual identification. This process of accepting one’s self and presenting one’s being as is to the public is what is noted as gender performance. The way one approaches the struggle of being himself is what identifies well with his gender performance. While some reserve such ideas to themselves, Matt is one individual who is not afraid of what others might say. He obviously did not care about the risks that might affect the way people respond to his attitude and his gender performance. The way one sees himself and values his being affects so much on how others see him as well. Relatively, this insists on the idea that redefines the way people perceive an individual based on his own perception of himself. However, there will always be someone who would disagree to the setup. Drafting one’s being and having the chance to develop a sense of realization on the part of what is understood as personal identity may not appear to be fully acceptable to others, especially to those who remain

skeptical about such type of identification. Homosexuality, being a taboo in the past years, may remain at such a status in the view of others. It is because of such perception that the creation of hate crimes occurs, which leads to the second theme that the story of this presentation aims to engulf into.

The second theme that the movie presents the public with is that of the emergence of hate crimes due to the implicative applications of social culture and how it directly affects the way individuals think and perceive matters (Långström, et al, 2008). Matt was never ashamed of his sexuality; in fact, he made it a point that others perceive him the way that he is. The self-acceptance he has gone through as he began to know who and what he really was, allowed him to see what is assumed as improved self-perception. Instead of seeing his position as someone who wants to impose change on the culture of the society he was living in, he simply wanted others to know what he knows about himself and how he wants to them to accept him as he is (Crew, et al, 1994). To further the sense of self-acceptance that he was intending to show to the public, Matt even joined the gay and lesbian club in school a week before he was brutally killed.

McKinley and Henderson, the perpetrators of the crime, are specifically not amicable to such an idea. Their manly being shows that they have inkling towards the concept of being a 'real man' and how the culture suggesting separately against such idea is not hat acceptable for them to give attention to. Although Matt was not clothed with women's clothing, he represented the modern gay man who would dress well and would have a definite interest in high-end fashion. Matt had the money and he did have the chance to buy

good things for himself. McKinley and Henderson knew about this and they have obviously been affected by the fact that they stand out differently from what Matt is standing up for. Not only did they see the truthful background about Matt being a confirmed and self-proclaimed 'gay', they were adamant about the possibility that Matt is already spreading the concept of acceptability, something that could change the whole perspective of the society towards what is meant by being manly.

The third theme that is presented in the movie is the conflict between social acceptability and personal identity. How should a person graze himself in front of the public? This was a question that strongly affected the being of Matt [and probably the other gays in Laramie]. Typical gay as he was, Laramie had the built of a male-weakling as the society would perceive it then. Gender identity, a very important aspect of one's being, as seen before, has been used in the story as the element of conflict between the victim and his attackers. Matt was represented as a tall and thin man who was incapable of showing male-characteristics. He was wholly a woman, someone who would handle himself in public the way he wants to and the way he wishes to be known. This is what got into the nerves of both McKinley and Henderson accordingly, thus pushing them to commit a hate crime that marked the history of Laramie and that of the history of LGBT community's social acceptability in the modern world.

The fact that McKinley and Henderson thought of homosexuality as something unacceptable especially in relation to the sense of manhood that they distinctively recognize as something important to their being, caused them to choose to murder Matt instead of simply accepting who he was and

not what he likely represented. This case did bring about a sense of realization on determining what really is meant by social constraints and social influence and how these elements affect the being of each individual especially in relation to how he perceives his identity (LeVay, 1991). The difference between Matt and his attackers created an internal conflict that caused the determinable course by which the crime has been committed.

Theme Implications to Modern Living

Unlike in the days of Matt, people at present are more open towards accepting facts and determinable indications of change especially in relation to sexual preferences that humans tend to embrace. This is what identifies well with who Matt represents in relation to personal identity. Considerably, Matt's case has been one of the instances that created a sense of realization among human individuals as they try to accept the being of those who are able to perceive themselves differently than the usual ways of representing who they are and what they want to be. Homosexuality has become a common issue, at some point, even a common trend among both the male and female population of the world. Practically, the world has become more open to the idea of having the need to accept such personal rights to individual representation of one's being.

Nevertheless, although the acceptance of such matter has already been considered effective and definitive of the fact that people change and social norms adjust to such personal changes, hate crimes still occur. The separation of gender identities and the emergence of traditional thinking about gender presentation and performance still persist and somehow, it is because of this matter that the emergence of adjustments to the law is also

being undergone by enforcers. In respect to individual and personal rights, it could not be denied that modern systems of living continue to thrive in past beliefs and traditional basis of perceived understanding of what is acceptable and what is not.

Social Values Presented

Minorities, marginalized groups and other members of the community who are accepted at a lesser level of recognition remains to be among the most affected members of the society when it comes to analyzing the case of Matt and how he has been brutally killed and massively displayed on a tree [after being murdered] in Laramie. The people of the community as well as from other neighboring areas got the message clearly. Up to this day, this same case of hate crimes occurring in the society continue to affect the overall being of the individuals who aim to simply live their lives the way they wish to, the way they want to perceive themselves because of their personal preferences.

Notably, at present, although traditional vision about members of the LGBT community has already adjusted, the emergence of social stratification and marginalization against the said individuals continue to perceive. It seems as if even though the sanctions of several administrative laws have already differed the identification and acceptance that these individuals get, the thinking and the perceptions of the community may not be easily changed. Religious groups and other social institutions continue to share beliefs and ideas about members of the LGBT community in a way that they would be perceived differently. Some organizations continue to complain about their attitudes thus singling them out from the systems by which these

organizations exist in. Notably, it could be understood that determining how a particular group of individuals would perceive people understood as members of the LGBT would depend on the thoughts and ideas being fed to them by such organizations and religious affiliations. This is the reason why complete acceptance on the emergence of the new culture of living and sexual performance promoted by the members of the LGBT community may not be perceived as fully feasible especially in communities that are remotely directed to follow traditional beliefs and understanding with regards personal perception and individual identity.

Sexual performance among members of the LGBT group may not be fully recognized as normal, especially among those who are guided to think differently about the matter. While some tolerate the emergence of gay culture, there will always be a group or groups of individuals who will think otherwise of the situation. Most likely, people coming from such point of realization lack the capacity to accept social changes and adjustments as they happen. Notably, it is the desire of each person to become more effective in handling his personal dealings based on his personal understanding of who he really is that will define how others would perceive him as well. Matt's case opens the door towards the real process by which the course of living of gays are being directed by social norms that are expected to define the being of an individual, not based on what he wants or how he wants to be perceived by others but on how much he wants to be accepted by the society he aims to belong to.

Conclusion

References

Långström, N.; Rahman, Q.; Carlström, E.; Lichtenstein, P. (2008). " Genetic and Environmental Effects on Same-sex Sexual Behavior: A Population Study of Twins in Sweden". *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 39 (1): 75–80.

Robinson, B. A. (2010). " Divergent beliefs about the nature of homosexuality". *Religious Tolerance. org.*

Harrold, Max (16 February 1999). " Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity". *The Advocate.*

Marguerite Johnson, Terry Ryan: *Sexuality in Greek and Roman society and literature: a sourcebook* p. 4.

Younger, John G. (2005). *Sex in the ancient world from A to Z* (1st published. ed.). London [u. a.]: Routledge. p. 38.

Marc Wolinsky (1993). *Gays and the military : Joseph Steffan versus the United States* ([Online-Ausg.]. ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. pp. 49–55.]

Murray, Stephen O. (2000). *Homosexualities*. Chicago [u. a.]: University of Chicago Press. p. 394.

Bagley, Christopher; Tremblay, Pierre (1998), " On the Prevalence of Homosexuality and Bisexuality, in a Random Community Survey of 750 Men Aged 18 to 27", *Journal of Homosexuality* (no. 2: Haworth Press) 36.

Crew, Louie; Norton, Rictor (1994), " The Homophobic Imagination", *College English* (3, Nov 74) 36 (3): 272–90.

LeVay, Simon (1991), " A difference in hypothalamic structure between heterosexual and homosexual men.", *Science* 253 (5023): 1034–7.