MEGHAN MARTIN, SUNY Brockport

An Impasse of Belonging: An Exploration of How Language Impacts Identity

This essay seeks to identify how the use of language inherently impacts identity. Through the use of historical and influential texts, the essay draws attention to how language as an entity over time has evolved and adapted to continuously perpetuate inequalities. In this essay specifically, the inequalities that are discussed at length are lived and experienced by bisexual women.

Introduction

In this essay I argue that bisexuality as an identity is often at an impasse in both heterosexual and LGBTQIA+ realms. The use of language when referring to bisexual individuals, specifically women, is then of the upmost importance because of the ways in which bisexuality is often excluded from those realms.

Bisexual women are at an impasse of belonging. In one regard, they live in a world that is and always has been perpetually heteronormative. Alternatively, they belong to and identify with a group that society has silenced and marginalized throughout history, and they continue to face disparities and inequality today. Being in this position puts bisexual women at risk of being erased or invalidated in their sexuality. This is, then, where the importance of language comes into play. Language is imperative in our everyday life. It establishes our societal norms, dictates our relationships and personal lives, and is the

foundation for what makes a society or community possible. The way in which we interpret language then creates a unique perspective that is often excluded or glossed over in conversation. Language matters. It matters because it helps to identify where and when in society this phenomenon of displacement or invalidation has occurred. It matters because it can help make an individual feel like they belong. It matters because language is an aspect of society that will continue to alter and shift the ways in which we view the world. It matters because language is the key to our society and will continue to dictate the ways in which we perceive and maintain our relationships with one another. When discussing bisexual women, it is important to have conversations about language and its implications on the everyday lived experiences of bisexual women.

What Is Language

To begin, it is important to establish what I mean by the term "language." To some, it may be as simple as saying *how I communicate* or *how I interact and express what I am thinking to someone else.* But I would argue language goes beyond the basic interpretation that flashes in your mind when the word is uttered. Utilizing the work of Carlos Santana (2016) in his piece *What is Language?,* I begin to dissect what the meaning of language is to someone who studies it as an entity.

In Santana's (2016) work, he delves into discussing language as a scientific study. "Language, the scientific concept, is thus descriptively whatever it is that linguists take as their primary object of study, and normatively whatever it is they should be studying" (Santana, 2016 p. 501). Santana continues by allowing language to take three main forms: language as (1) psychological, (2) social, and (3) abstract. For the purposes of this essay, I will be focusing primarily on Santana's argument of language as social.

Language as social is perhaps one of the most fascinating ways to consider language. Of course, all of us have the pre-disposed notion that language is inherently social; after all, we use it each and every day whether that be in a professional, personal, or private manner. Within Santana's work, it becomes apparent that perhaps the one imperative aspect of language when referring to it as social is deriving language from the "individual" and placing it in the "communal" sense "… which demonstrates the explanatory power of treating language as an imperfectly shared social convention, that is, by analyzing language at the level of multi-agent interaction rather than at

the level of purely individual psychology" (p. 509). In this excerpt, Santana is analyzing the argument of Lewis (1969), who, he writes, should be convincing enough for those skeptical of having language as a communal entity rather than an individual.

As Santana writes, a "social convention," he is reiterating again the fact at how dependent society is on the use of language to dictate its norms and regulations. It goes beyond the individual in that, while thoughts and emotions are personal and individual to each person, the ways in which we express and attempt to interact with one another is a social aspect that in turn, becomes a dominant force in terms of how relationships between human beings form and are maintained over time. This process can be defined more closely as socialization. The process of socialization refers to the various ways in which 'norms' or 'traditions are collectively created utilizing language and our interactions within societies (Lorber, 1994).

Further, it is learned practices that also translate directly to our institutions and systems in place today. "By analyzing contextualized language use and its implications, a discourse analytic approach allows us to examine our processes through which societal messages and cultural context influence discursive possibilities for individual narratives" (Jen & Jones, 2019, p. 3). Being able to define language as a social entity and recognize its importance when determining how its influence is pervasive in society is important when discussing identity, specifically bisexuality, because here, the very foundation and root of the problem is evident in language itself.

This Matters Now, It Mattered Then

To better support this essay and its accusations against language, it is important to discuss history and how language perpetuated and created the various stereotypes that surround women. This discussion, while not directly pointed towards "bisexual women," does take a look at the intersection of bisexual women as women, thus creating a necessary exploration. History itself has been exclusive of identities that derive from the norm of heterosexuality. Whether that be to the lack of knowledge and vocabulary to describe those types of relationships, or simply that hetero-sexuality prevailed (and still to this day does) and those identities that fall under the umbrella of "unnatural" have not

had the same platform for normalization as heterosexuality.

Additionally, bisexuality as we know it is very much a Western idea. Jen & Jones (2019) perfectly highlight how the term bisexuality cannot be utilized in a universal way: "For example, in India, traditional emphases on marriage and reproduction as well as more diverse understandings of gender including hirjas (a third sex/gender) mean that the term and identity 'bisexual' are little used" (p. 2). This demonstrates the necessity for this exploration of history to further this argument of language as a predominant downfall for women.

Religion and Its Impact

Religion is a huge influencer of our social and political lives throughout history, specifically with the creation of Christianity, a religion founded on the premise that all who want to practice it are welcome. This created a new opportunity for women to participate and engage within the religious realm, which was often a sphere that women were excluded from since women were placed in the private sphere versus the public sphere. This new and "progressive" religion, however, did not come without its ridicules and pointed fingers towards women. In *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature*, Rogers (1966) identifies how the "fathers" of Christianity viewed and treated women. First and foremost, these fathers blamed women for the infamous "fall," which refers to the ultimate sin committed by Eve in the Garden of Eden. In the work, *Women: From the Greeks to the French Revolution*, Susan Bell (1985) discusses the fall alongside an analysis of the work of Rogers (1966) that we have already touched upon. Bell attempts to put into words the ways in which the Fathers of Christianity have assigned the damnation of men to women. Utilizing her own work as well as that of Rogers (1966), Bell writes,

> Adam transgressed the law of God, not because he was deceived into believing that the lie was true, but because in obedience to a social compulsion he yielded to Eve, as husband to wife, as the only man in the world to the only woman (p. 88).

Here, we can see how the event of the fall was simply a social pressure that Eve created for Adam, thus he gives in to the act of eating the apple. It was defended repeatedly by the fathers to not be Adam's fault simply because he was doing what any man in society would do, he was facing pressures that the world didn't even know existed at the time, and that pressure was women.

According to the Fathers of Christianity, Eve gave into temptation when she ate an apple from the garden, after God himself had explicitly told Adam and Eve that fruit from Eden was forbidden to be eaten. This event in terms of Christianity and its teachings can be found in the book of Genesis in the Christian Bible. Bell analyzes this event and hints that the fall is best described as the moment from which human beings went from being an exact "image of God" to human beings as we know it today: selfish, greedy, and individually motivated for their own benefit. To continue on the work of Rogers (1966) who is cited and analyzed within the work of Bell, she writes about Tertullian, a father of Christianity, who claims "The judgement of God upon women, that is, labor pains and subjection to men, endures even today; and so does their guilt" (p. 85). Tertullian here illustrates how, because women have committed this act, they have brought upon themselves the inequalities and grievances that come with being a woman. They will face consequences for their actions until the end of time, since they have committed the ultimate sin that has in turn, impacted all human beings. Here, we see this use of language as a justification for why women are seen as inferior to men. This justification, as seen in this religious example, is an accurate depiction of how language can influence public sentiment and behavior towards a given entity, in this example, women.

To continue on the sentiments and preaching of Tertullian who wrote many literary works within the approximate time vicinity of 155AD and 220AD, Tertullian was a Christian Father who was thought to have had a major influence in the ways in which Christianity spread across the West.[1] While we are unsure which works or teachings Rogers was utilizing in her work when discussing Tertullian and his many thoughts and opinions on Christianity and women, we know that Tertullian lived roughly during the dates provided above and wrote many literary works to contribute to the founding and firming of Christianity as it is seen today. In Rogers (1966), readers are also introduced to how religion views

[1] Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. (n.d.). *Tertullian*. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Tertullian. To know which work by Tertullian is being referred to, through Rogers, is unknown. His writings and teachings are not exactly pinpointed, as his death/age/birth are approximate.

women's sexuality. We have covered how women were responsible for the "fall" and how that has condemned them to a life of inferiority, but women also are responsible for the sins of men in terms of sexual acts. The act of sex is heavily condemned and banned from the world of religion. It is seen as impure, an act of animal-like instinct, a "giving in" to temptation or sin. Women are to blame for any acts of sex that occur. "Although they believed theoretically that sexual relations were equally defiling for both sexes, the Fathers naturally, as men, emphasized the corrupting influence on men rather than men's on women" (Rogers, 1966, p. 86). Tertullian in Rogers' work describes women as vile creatures, whose only real contribution to society is their ability to procreate. Tertullian condemns any form of makeup, inappropriate clothing, and any kind of "unnatural" behavior for women (Rogers, 1966). The language utilized here by the Fathers of Christianity is powerfully charged to have negative implications towards women. Religion is a tremendous example of how society is willing to adapt and conform to whatever laws the Church lays down. To have language such as Tertullian speaks, about women and their "filth" and ability to "seduce" men into sinning, undoubtably had a lasting impact on how society has regarded women. These ideas have become structuring lenses for understanding gender in many societies across the globe. It has set the precedent for a justification of inequality and mistreatment of women, especially in regard to sexuality.

Through the use of religion as the precedent, we can accurately attribute these teachings to the ways in which bisexuality in particular is viewed by society today. Religion as previously stated, set a precedent for language usage to describe and condemn women as inferior to men. Bisexual women identify as women. The language degregation that has been implemented into society through language inherently then impacts bisexual women through the intersectional lens that looks at the gender aspect of their identities.

Into the Enlightenment We Go

The enlightenment is taught as a time frame where progressive thoughts and actions were formulated and created to alter how society is viewed. A leader of the progressive era in terms of thought is Jean Jacques Rosseau. A critique of someone of his stature and influence helps to identify the root cause of the inequalities that prevalently exist today while also highlighting how the language

used at the time has influenced society even today. When we learn about the enlightenment in as early as Middle School, we are taught "the greats" with the likes of Jean Jaques Rousseau (1755/2004, 1762/2014) in a positive manner. Rousseau himself has written countless works that contribute to the idea that human beings are equal and free while also noting that belonging to a society means an individual must offer up a piece of their own personal sovereignty to be governed by the state that rules over them. These ideas of sovereignty, freedom, and equality are equally dispersed and discussed frequently throughout the works of Rosseau and can be seen in a variety of his literary essays. Through these various essays and literary pieces, we are taught that Rosseau is an individual who paved the way for society as we know it today. While I am not discrediting Rousseau and his brilliance, I would like to take a moment to educate the readers on the truth behind Rousseau. This is not something I learned about until I was twenty years old. I hope I can shed some light on the shadows of the enlightenment and call to the table some of the inequalities that these "greats" allowed to perpetuate. "Freedom" has different meanings depending on who you were and what social group you belonged to, a phenomenon that continues to operate today.

Perhaps the most intriguing thing about Rosseau is the number of times he contradicts himself in his work in which Rousseau begins with establishing the idea of "nature." Human beings in nature, Rousseau (1755/2004) claims, are able to live and sustain themselves completely on their own, including women. Women are arguably more sustainable than men in his argument. They are responsible for raising children on their own, gathering food, and making shelter as some examples. In this very basic model of "nature," Rosseau explains there are no societies, just nomads who may encounter another human being once in a blue moon, and when they do, they engage in sexual activity for the sole purpose of procreation. After this, they go their separate ways, and the woman is able to provide for the child as well as herself in this natural setting. The change is when the ideas of societies are introduced. The creation of societies and a communal necessity to establish different jobs/tasks in order to maintain a communal survival of society as a whole, even though unknowingly, has suddenly put women in a category of "unable." They are placed in the role of the home

where they will be subordinate to their male counterparts.

Through Susan Okin's *Women in Western Political Thought* (1979)*,* we are introduced to Rosseau's *A Discourse on Inequality* (1755/2004)*,* where readers get a first-hand glance at the real words and justifications that Rosseau wrote during that time period. After Rousseau begins with establishing this nature and society, he continues, "Women do wrong to complain of the inequality of man-made laws; this inequality is not of man's making, or at any rate it is not the result of mere prejudice, but of reason" (p. 240). Here is an example of a famous Rosseau contradiction. Before, he would have argued that societies, the need to survive in a cohort (due to the ease of distributing tasks), were unnecessary. The individual (regardless of sex) could and would survive on their own. Societies are where inequality is introduced. Yet women are still in the wrong for "complaining" about their social positioning because it is not a "man-made" concept, even though Rosseau himself only a few pages prior had spelled out the creation of societies and communities with man.

In all seriousness, Rosseau doesn't stop there. Rousseau's controversial creation of "Sophie and Emile" in his essay, *The Social Contract* (1762/2014), is enough to get the blood boiling. Rosseau creates a "perfect pair" in essence. Sophie and Emile are compliments of each other and are, by Rosseau's standards, what men and women should be mirrored after. Emile and Sophie both receive an education, which looks like progress, until we learn that Emile is educated in the "sciences and important matters" and Sophie is educated in the "social graces." Sophie's purpose is to support and be an explementary partner to Emile. While they are, by design, supposed to be compliments and "equals," we know from Rosseau's use of language that this is untrue. Again readers are introduced to women's sexuality, and once again women are told how to behave and be proper while their husbands are not held to the same standard. We see this in Rousseau's words: "… but the faithless wife is worse; she destroys the family and breaks the bonds of nature; when she gives her husband children who are not his own, she is false both to him and them, her crime is not infidelity but treason" (cited in Okin, 1979, p. 240). By attributing a woman's infidelity to treason, women are automatically put in a position where their sexual freedom is not accepted or allowed. By utilizing such harsh and consequential language, women are not permitted to have the

same kinds of sexual freedoms and experiences as their male peers are engaging in (even though it is still technically frowned upon). Even still, women are labeled as the "problem" the "seductive and tempting" entity in terms of sex.

To have these words such as "seductive", "tempting", and even "problem," we can see a correlation of a hypersexualization of women during the enlightenment era and how bisexual women are portrayed today. Bisexual women are often sexualized by society because of their interest in both men and women. To be labeled as a hypersexual and even provocative entity echoes similarly to the teachings of Rosseau and his opinion on women.

Fast Forward

To provide a bridge into the more modern sense of how we view sexuality and sex specifically in regard to women, I analyze the work of Marie Stopes (1958). While not up to our progressive standards today, Stopes, originally a paleobotanist turned eugenicist, writes one of the first works outlining sexuality FOR women. Writing in the early 1920s (published officially in 1958), shortly after WWI and the push for more women in the home and raising children, Stopes took it upon herself to write

pieces that advocated for women and their sexuality, an unspoken topic up until this point, especially when talking about women. Yet Stopes outlines important concepts like orgasms for women, foreplay, and other aspects of sexual activities that were never before written about to the public, let alone to a female audience. In her work, we see Stopes mention the idea of same-sex relationships for women, however they are only referred to as lesbian, with no possibility of being bisexual. While at first you may be thinking, "yay progress," I ask that you please remain seated because this isn't the part where it gets positive. In *Enduring Passion*, Stopes (1958) is discussing the importance of female pleasure and orgasm with sexual acts. She begins writing about "solutions" to sexual frustrations and comes up with this response when discussing "lesbian" relationships:

> The other, and quite correct name for what is now so euphemistically called lesbian love is a homosexual vice. It is so much practiced nowadays, particularly by the 'independent' type of women that I run the risk of being attacked because I call the thing by its correct name (p. 41).

In this excerpt alone, I see three words that really stick out to me. Can you see them? Vice. Independent. Thing. Those

three words utilized in just these few sentences really capture an idea for the language that was used during this time to describe sexual relationships outside of the 'norm' of heterosexuality.

Stopes continues to describe these "unnatural" relationships, to which she defends by saying the female body must be nourished by male semen, therefore, these same-sex relationships do not hold any real value, as they are not intended, biologically-speaking. Stopes' work provides a bridge into the next section of this essay because it is important to demonstrate how attitudes towards women and sexuality have never been a linear pattern. While the relationships demonstrate patterns and firmly held beliefs, the language society utilized has ebbed and flowed for centuries. This is why it is so important to discuss our language used today when discussing sexualities and women such as bisexual women.

From Then, To Now

The discussion of society today and its language usage of women, namely bisexual women, should come as a breath of fresh air. However, I warn that while we as a society have improved our acceptance and understanding of bisexuality, with it comes new obstacles, new hurdles, and new situations in which language, as well as acceptance, are discussed in a much different light than what we have previously discussed and seen throughout history.

The discussion in this paper shows history has perpetuated the belief that women are inferior to men in many aspects. We also have explored how sexuality "outside of heteronorms" is shunned and seen as unnatural. With these two foundational pieces of information in mind, I digress. In the next few parts of this essay, I seek to explore where those topics of "inferiority," "unnatural," and "women" come together to create the bisexual experience as we know it today.

Julie Hartman's *Creating a Bisexual Display: Making Bisexual Visible* (2013) introduces readers to a much more modern sense of bisexuality. That is, how can it be determined or comprehended outside of the bedroom or within sexual encounters? Hartman describes a window of visibility for bisexuals in particular. She describes how often bisexuals are at a point of invisibility when dating partners of the opposite sex (they are seen as heterosexual) or when dating partners of the same sex (they are seen as homosexual). It is in these context that we are able to see how the bisexual identity is often clouded and erased

when discussing sexual encounters or dating. Hartman seeks to explain how the identity of the bisexual can be redrawn and recreated by society to be viewed in a more permanent manner versus simply being dependent on who and what their partner's gender identity is. Hartman begins by creating a term, "bisexual display." Hartman states

 …through the use of gender displays and other visual and verbal cues, bisexuals engage with cultural assumptions about straight and gay/lesbian styles and appearances to try to create a unique bisexual style based on hybridity, a concept I shall call "bisexual display" (p. 40).

Right away, verbal cues and cultural assumptions are the two main words I was drawn to with the creation of this concept. Verbal cues and cultural assumptions are both demonstrations of how language and society directly impact the ways in which bisexual women behave and act to validate their identity.

To continue, the concept of 'doing gender' or 'doing heterosexuality/ homosexuality' as a performance is something eerily familiar to the work of Judith Butler (1990) describing the act of gender performance. However, Hartman (2013) utilizes the work of Miller (2006) to identify a crucial understanding of how bisexuality, when compared to heterosexuality or homosexuality, requires a further discussion of building that identity to fit each individual. Utilizing Miller (2006), Hartman (2013) argues,

For bisexuals, gender cues cannot securely be used to convey to others a bisexual sexuality in ways that gender cues may convey a heterosexual or homosexual sexuality. Instead, Miller contended, bisexuals must rely on other verbal or overt visual cues to perform identity (p. 42).

Reiterated again here is the fact that bisexuals often are forced to pave the way to validate their identities. Society has implemented such limiting and damaging language on the bisexual identity that bisexuals themselves have to find ways in which they can validate their sexuality, while at the same time maintain relationships with partners whose gender identity is often utilized by society to identify the sexual orientation of that bisexual individual.

The use of language strikes once again in the work of Hartman as she continues to dissect and compare the usage of the two words "performance" and "display." She utilizes these terms to help capture the meaning of the ways in which bisexuals in particular often have to display their sexuality rather than perform them.

Display is distinct from performance in that, unlike performances that require an audience to perceive and interpret a performance, display is focused on the meanings that cues have for the actor rather than on interpretations of those cues by the audience" (Hartman, 2013, p. 43). This distinguished difference between the two terms is a good example to highlight how language, even when referencing how an individual may carry themselves and their identity, is imperative to understanding how society perceives a sexual orientation like bisexuality, and how that individual relies on the use of language to display their sexual orientation to be visible to those within that given society

Let's Hear it from the Bisexuals Themselves

After laying the foundation both historically and in a modern aspect, let's consider what it is that bisexual women today do to display and validate their sexual orientation. As we have seen in previous discussion, bisexual women are often at an impasse of belonging and often have to display and create their identities to feel validated in their sexual orientation. To begin, Hartman (2013) based her work on a study of fourteen self-identified bisexual women. This study was designed to examine how each woman, who all are involved in a long-term relationship with men, attempt to validate and keep their bisexual identity alive, while being in a relationship that society would deem as 'heterosexual.' The first question that Hartman posed to her participants was, "What does a bisexual look like"(p. 49)? The responses recorded indicated that, while there is usually a stereotype for a 'straight' or 'homosexual' individual (whether that be butch, femme etc.), there isn't exactly a stereotype for what a bisexual *looks* like. This lack of stereotype can directly relate to the reason why bisexual women are often invisible: there aren't any stereotypes that prevalently exist to identify bisexual women out of a given crowd. A word, however, that was populated from this study to identify what a bisexual *might look* like was "androgyny" (p. 50). Here a direct word is positioned to shed some light as to what a bisexual might *look* like, if there was to be a word associated with this sexual orientation. Here is a great example to illustrate the point of this essay. Bisexual women, reporting on bisexuality, came to a common consensus that the word androgyny is often utilized when describing how someone of their identity may *look* or be perceived by society through that

specific display. It is important to note that while this specific study of bisexual women utilized the word androgyny to describe a bisexual identity/portrayal, androgyny in itself cannot be considered a descriptor specifically of bisexuality.

You may have heard of the pride flag, pronoun pins, and other items of 'propaganda' that are utilized by the LGBTQIA+ community. However, are you familiar with any of the specific bisexual markers, such as the bisexual flag, colors, symbols etc.? Hartman hones in on the fact that while these symbols and 'propaganda' type items are popularly used by the bisexual women within her study, they don't exactly drive the point home as being useful in validating or supporting that woman's sexual orientation.

> Although pins and propaganda were discussed in all the groups as an effective way to make biidentity visible to others, the lack of familiarity with symbols that are specific to bisexual pride rather than broader lesbian and gay pride creates a feeling among some women that these pride symbols are a limited way of expressing bisexual identity because they are not recognized by others (Hartman, 2013, p. 51).

Right away, we can see here that Hartman has identified the use of symbols and 'propaganda' as a way a bisexual woman may be attempting to validate or 'call to attention' her sexual orientation, however it is unsuccessful if there is lack of knowledge surrounding these physical identity markers. Thus, this reiterates the fact that display and use of language are often stronger ways in which bisexual women can attempt to display their bisexuality and validate their identity through language use rather than a physical symbol.

To continue on the use of the term androgyny, many bisexual women in Hartman's study commented on how being bisexual meant they felt as if they could combine the two types of style predominantly used by men (masculine) and by women (femininity). Since bisexuality can be described often as fluid or open to a wide variety of options in terms of portrayal and because of a bisexual woman's identity, they feel as if it is easier for them to be more fluid in how they dress. Here, we can see both hybridity as well as the terms 'masc' as masculine and 'femme' as feminine come into play in terms of identifying bisexuality. These terms, while each have a strict meaning within society, connect here in a way that actually helps to validate the bisexual identity with these women. These women feel as if their style and look can be interchangeable

with both of these terms (creating that hybrid element). This is important when recognizing how bisexuals choose to portray and carry themselves in a society that demands more of a display from them for validation rather than a performance.

Hartman sheds light on the ways in which bisexual women often feel and what they must do as more fiercely independent than heterosexual women to validate their identity as well as make it visible within society. In tieing these threads together, it is important to remember what we have already discussed within this essay.

Women throughout history have been made to be inferior and dependent on their male counterparts. Through the lens of early Christian Fathers, Rosseau, and Stopes, women had roles to fulfill in order to be a balanced and perfect partner to men. Here we are seeing that same patterned kind of language, except it is to describe heterosexual relationships and the attitudes that women in heterosexual relationships withhold. It is this discussion with queer women, who identify outside of that heterosexual norm, who are arguing that in order to validate their identities and their sexual orientations, they often must portray themselves in a way that derives from the "norm" of a typical cis-heterosexual woman. Hartman (2013) finds, "An underlying belief seemed to be that bisexual women are often more confident and independent than heterosexual women. Projecting such confidence and independence was, for them, part of displaying their bisexual identity" (p. 55). This is yet another concrete example that, in order to validate an identity that is almost always erased in some capacity between both the LGBTQIA+ realm and heterosexual realm, the ways in which a bisexual woman portrays herself, through language and display, are able to find a sense of individual belonging even when they might not always have been accepted within society. In order to gather a better understanding of how bisexual women individually narrate their own identities and navigate through the complexities of society and the invisibility they inherently acquire, it is important to hear their voices and their own words for how, through language and display, they can be seen.

Conclusion

In this essay I have argued that language is imperative in understanding how women, specifically bisexual women, are often at an impasse of belonging when referring to both heterosexual as well as LGBTQIA+ realms. This impasse of

belonging is attributed to the use of language and how language over time has constructed a skewed and unequal view of women in comparison to their male counterparts. This inequality has carried over through many societal changes and continues to exist even in today's modern world. This foundational inequality rooted in society then, in turn, exacerbates the issue of invisibility for bisexual women. Bisexual women will continue to face this invisibility until the language surrounding them changes. To alter language and the ways in which society views its importance will be a change that takes time. It is something that will require a revolution of sorts. A revolution that places language, identity, and validation at its forefront.

References

Bell, S. G. (1985). *Women from the Greeks to the French Revolution*. Stanford University Press.

Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. (n.d.). *Tertullian*. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from https://www.britannica.com/biography/Tertullian.

Hartman, J. (2013). Creating a bisexual display: Making bisexuality visible. *Journal of Bisexuality*, *13*(1), 39–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2013.755727

Jen, S. & Jones, R. L. (2019). Bisexual lives and aging in context: A cross-national comparison of the United Kingdom and the United States. *International Journal of Aging & Human Development*, *89*(1), 22–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/0091415019843661

Lorber, J. (1994). *Paradoxes of gender*. Yale University Press.

Okin, S. M. (1979). *Women in western political thought*. Princeton University Press.

Rogers, K. M. (1966). *The troublesome helpmate: A history of misogyny in literature*. University of Washington Press.

Santana, C. (2016). What is language? *Ergo, an Open Access Journal of Philosophy*, *3* (501-523). https://doi.org/10.3998/ergo.12405314.0003.019

Stopes, M. C. (1958). *Enduring passion: Further new contributions to the solution of sex difficulties: Being the continuation of married love*. Hogarth Press.

Rousseau, J.J. (2004). *A discourse upon the origin and the foundation of the inequality among mankind.* Project Gutenberg. https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11136 (Original work published in 1755)

Rousseau, J.J. (2014). *The social contract and discourses.* Project Gutenberg. https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/45333 (Original work published in 1762)