

Dane Ness
Prof. Brobro
2/27/2014
Class 2:20 TT

Paper #1: Topic A

The issue of homosexuality has been examined and argued over for many years. According to the Catholic Church, homosexuality is a sin and is condemned. The Vatican has created a set of laws and scriptures to follow by and defend the Catholic argument. Examining this view on homosexuality opens up complex issues that can be followed up by counter arguments. The Vatican's argument does cover most of the issue; however it still leaves room for these arguments to be made.

According to the Catholic Church, homosexuality is seen as a "moral disorder" and is a failure to follow the natural law. The natural law theory suggests that innate laws of nature govern humans. The natural law theory is also not from any religious standpoint, making it universal in means of argument. The Catholic Church argues that homosexuality is not effective towards this natural law. Natural law theory claims that a man and a woman are naturally compatible due to their ability to mate and produce offspring. The male body is sexually made for the female body, therefore vaginal intercourse is the only way to fulfill the natural means of life. According to the church, the only use of this sexual activity is to procreate under marriage. Besides the natural law theory, the church uses their religious scriptures to defend their standpoint. Any law that comes directly from the will of God is divine. This divine law suggests that homosexuality is a sin according to the scriptures in the Old Testament. In the biblical passage of Genesis 19, the city of Sodom commits "abominable things" and the lord burns down the city. These "abominable" acts in the passage are argued to refer to homosexual behavior. In another passage of the bible, it clearly states that the act of sleeping with a same sex partner is punishable by death. "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination... If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them" (Lev. 18:22, 20:13). In a whole, Catholics argue that homosexual activity is unnatural and is condemned by God. However, this argument would be hard to persuade to someone who believes that they are born homosexual. The Catholic Church also argues this aspect by explaining that homosexuality is a learned behavior rather than biological. Homosexuals often argue that they have not chosen to be gay but have naturally been born in this way. The Vatican argues this claim by stating that because something was not chosen, does not mean it was inborn. The church explains that some desires are created by habituation and conditioning instead of by choice. For example, if someone has a hereditary disposition to alcoholism in their family, no one would support the inborn urges to become an alcoholic.

Professor John Corvino of Wayne State University has argued these Catholic claims on homosexuality. In his paper titled "Why Shouldn't Tommy and Jim Have Sex? A Defense of Homosexuality", Corvino argues on three major arguments used to condemn homosexuality. These three arguments include the "nature argument", the "slippery slope" argument and the "harm argument". Corvino explains that "rationality" can conflict with human emotion. To take on the nature argument against homosexuality, Corvino first defines the term "unnatural" and what it is used with. Corvino uses five approaches to describe unnatural; "What is unusual or abnormal is unnatural, what is not practiced by other animals is unnatural, what does not proceed from innate desires is unnatural, what violates an organ's principal purpose is unnatural, what is disgusting or offensive is unnatural." (Corvino 310). He finds that each of these five approaches to describe "unnatural" fails to be effective in arguing against homosexuality. The first approach states what is abnormal is unnatural, however statistically most things are unusual and therefore not wrong. The second approach states that what is not practiced by other animals is unnatural; this claim can be proved wrong because animals do display homosexual activity. The third argument is invalid because humans have innate desires that we do not believe should be catered to. The fourth argument fails because we don't know the principle purpose of each organ, there are many uses. The final argument fails because people engage in many "disgusting" things. The harm argument is centered on how homosexuality can be destructive to others' lives. Corvino uses common examples of claims people make that homosexuality is destructive to society. These examples include; homosexuality threatens children, homosexuality spreads STDs, homosexuality causes mental illness, etc. The slippery slope argument suggests that if homosexuality is permitted then all sorts of bizarre sexual practices will be acceptable. Corvino discusses how other practices such as bestiality and incest have nothing to do with homosexuality. He claims that homosexuality is completely separate from other forms of sexual practices.

These two arguments on homosexuality are both very good. The Vatican's argument on this issue using natural law theory makes more sense to someone who isn't religious. Using this theory helps get a more rational argument for defense. John Corvino's argument is more emotional based. This emotion also gives a more personal approach to the argument.

