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Queering: Empowerment or Threat

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ABSTRACT

This research paper aims at exploring the disposition of queering as an act of empowerment that accommodates all deviations, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual, as well as the threats posed by it to conventional social/familial structure and morality. The paper extensively analyses queer theory and unravels the terrain through which it denies the normalcy of heterosexuality by blurring the gay/straight binary opposition and celebrating the plurality of responses which are made available. Consequently, it moves a step ahead in exposing structural exclusions in the Western system of knowledge and resists this stigmatization. Furthermore, this paper addresses the proposition that gender is not a natural construct; hence it should be viewed as fluid and variable. Gender is not a definition of who one is and is instead, seen in relation to one's behavior in different situations at different times, thereby becoming performative. This is a qualitative study based upon hermeneutic theory of textual analysis. For a better comprehension of the taken stance, the key concepts of queer theory are applied on Laura Loomis' 'Mirror Poem' and Katy Perry's lyrics 'I Kissed a Girl'. Queering as a practice and notion opens up numerous possibilities for human beings to perform subjectively and boundlessly, with regard to various sexual inclinations. On the contrary, queering is also subject to religious, legal and cultural variation and in many cultures is considered as a threat to moral order.

Keywords: gender trouble, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexuals, performative

Introduction

The history of the Western system of knowledge is defined by a wavering belief in man as an individual. In the Western World, whether Medieval Christian Europe or Modern Secular West, this process of doubt was completed in multiple stages. Copernicus took away a conviction in man's central position in the cosmos, Darwin found man's ancestral connections in the ape family

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and Freud made the lineage of ape-man subject to the whims of an unconscious. As a result, the arrival of the twentieth century resulted in a realization of the disempowerment of man, followed by an effort to restore his lost sense of worth. Therefore, the most important issue brought under limelight by theorists and philosophers in the Western World was the issue of identity. What defines an individual and how he sustains his identity? Can man mould the standards himself or is he subjected to some external framework which defines and confines him? Whether an escape from such imposition is possible or not? Queer theory developed in the mid 1980's, is one such theory which seeks to identify, question and subvert the concept of identity by taking sexuality as its focal point. Rooted in the feminist definition of gender difference as social confinement, through which individuals are subjected to the binary opposites of man/woman, where men form the higher position in the hierarchy, they focused on the sexual difference defined through the heterosexual/homosexual oppositions. Furthermore, it unveiled that sexual difference further reinforces a gender difference in the society; hence the common stereotypes of the feminine gay man and the masculine lesbian.

Foucault (1978) explains in *The History of Sexuality*, two hundred years ago there was no linguistic category for gay male. In its place, the term applied to sex between two men was sodomy. Over time, the notion "homosexual" was created in a test tube through the discourses of medicine and especially psychiatry. What is predictably understood to be the same practice was gradually transformed from a sinful lifestyle into a matter of sexual orientation. Foucault argues that preceding this discursive conception, there was no such thing as a person who could think of himself as basically gay. Thus, after the formation of the term "Gay", started the queer movement which accelerated the queer theory and many people came forward to work on this school of thought.

Foucault (1978) argued that for the moderns sexuality became normative in nature. After the sexual repression of Victorian bourgeoisie for whom sex was a forbidden terrain, sexual identity became directly related to power. By tagging individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation, subject formation by classifying them as either acceptable normal or the unacceptable deviant took place. Alternatively, by placing sex in a system of knowledge the society put into motion a new wheel of discourse. The normalization of heterosexual identity led to a control of the perversions. This creation of a norm can be illustrated through Althusser's (1972) 'concept of interpellation' which suggests that ideology contributes to a subject formation. This ideology silently seeps into society in a manner which deceives individuals into thinking themselves to be the real creator of their identity. One such self-deception faced by individuals is the way they perceive their bodies which develops further into a 'homophobic interpellation'.

The conception of body is based around three categories i.e. body as nature, body as social construct and body as embodiment. The essentialists present the concept of sex and gender to be innate i.e. an individual is born as a man or a woman, thereby perform functions peculiar to them. On the other hand, the social constructionist theories argue that the behavioral roles for each sex are learnt. Therefore, gender varies from sex in being a role performance ingrained in human psyche through social and cultural practices arising from meanings given to female and male

bodies. For example, Judith Butler argues that ‘the body is not a “being” but a variable boundary, a surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a signifying practice within a cultural field of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality. The specter gains reality only through intermittent series of performances which she defines a ‘gender performativity’. The act brings into being the interrelation of sex and gender. She argues that “repetition” and “ritual” of “gender performances” have an ongoing outcome. According to Pilcher and Whelehan, (2004) “rituals” and “performatives” contribute to the “naturalising” of bodies, making the “cultural fiction” of gender appear credible and real, rather than being... a corporeal (or bodily) “style” or “enactment”, a constitution of meaning’. The third perspective of body as an embodiment argues that a body is both natural identity as well as a cultural and social product. Here, Connell (1977) places all those discursive practices which tend to over emphasize the differences or negate the similarities between male and female bodies. For example, Clothing and accessories contribute to widen the male/female gulf by over exaggerating their differences and developing into a masculine or feminine entity. A similar conception of body is presented in the concept of ‘Corporeal Feminism’ by Grosz (1997). She argues that the material body cannot be separated from the social, cultural or historical representations of it rather ‘these factors actively produce the body as a body of a determinate type’. This suggests that the ‘concept of “embodied subjectivity” means that identity arises from the “corporeal” (the body), as this is itself inscribed by the cultural, within changing time and shifting space’. Therefore, body as unfinished entity evolves and changes. Furthermore, the theories of sexuality argue that these indeterminate bodies interact with each other by establishing a sexual contract with each other. Pateman (1998) considers the social contract of individuals to be gendered in nature (1998). This contract is sexual in being patriarchal in nature thereby establishing political hegemony of men over women as well as by creating a patterned access by men to women’s bodies in the form of heterosexuality. These contracts appear to be as a result of free consenting individuals but in reality are secured through strict act of policing. Name is another such social contract according to Lacan (1998) which shows the simultaneous agreement between different subjects to identify the same object. According to Barry (2009) this naming is a sexual contract according to which the phallogocentric homophobic center brands homosexuality as a social threat. In order to escape this restrictive ideological imposition, Queer theory challenges the essentialist doctrines of gender formation and its resultant sexual orientation by blurring the boundaries between ‘self and other, subject and object and lover and beloved’. Therefore, fluid bodies with fluid orientations assert the presence of multiple and transgressive selves. Yet this expression of desire due to its rejection of the confining and smothering norms becomes a threat to the structural hegemony in the society and becomes a cause for ‘gender trouble’ in Judith Butler’s celebrated phrase. The term queer is a rejection of the binary opposite man/woman, and a celebration of multiplicity and instability of identity. Mottier (2008) quotes the sociologist Diane Richardson who has defined it as: ‘We are, it is suggested, post such identities: post woman, post man we are transgender; post lesbian, post gay, post heterosexual (perhaps?) we are queer.’

Another important aspect of the Queer theory is the issue of visibility and invisibility. Where gender and race are apparent the sexual orientation of a person is the hidden aspect of his

personality, the former are a part of the public realm and the latter of the private realm. Furthermore, when the norm designates homosexual orientation to be abnormal this side to personality is pushed back even further or in other words it is closeted. Therefore, the Queer criticism concerns more with the hidden than the exposed. Bertens (2004) argues that the search is for the muted rather than the expressed relations within a narrative. Sedgwick argues in *The Epistemology of the Closet* that 'such absences, constituting the apparatus of the closet', linger despite external suppression 'as an array of indirections, substitutions, and textual vacillations that call for a specific kind of reading' (2008). Therefore, Queering is an act of exposure which breaks the repressive surface of language in a text. Sedgwick deconstructs these texts through Derridean deconstruction of opposition in the homo/heterosexual pairs. She believes that where the first part of the pair being associated with procreation represents fecundity, naturalness and healthiness and thereby is considered life affirming. On the other hand its opposites stand for the artificiality in the form of sterility, sickness and death. These binary opposites are further entangled in an array of contradictory categories of secrecy/disclosure, private/public, masculine/feminine, majority/minority, new/old, canonic/ noncanonic, wholeness/ decadence, same/different, active/passive, in/out, cognition/paranoia, utopia/apocalypse and sincerity/sentimentality. Through a process of scapegoating of the same-sex desire the heterosexual values that empower patriarchal structures are crystallized. Here, Love (2007) argues that queerness is an 'antidote' to the 'shame and legacy of the closet'. It is a reaction to the 'denigration' through an act which is both 'object and exalted' where homosexuality is taken as a 'stigmatizing mark' as well as a form 'romantic exceptionalism'. As a result it can be argued that the need for evoke the theatrical, confrontational and provocative to create a vivid declaration of their sexual orientation is to bring the confined marginalized being out of the closet. Sedgwick (2008) further elaborates the Queer in a text as the 'open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically'. Similarly, Bertens quotes that for the British Literary theorist Sinfield, in these texts sexuality becomes a 'faultline: 'Sexuality is an unstable construct in our societies, and hence produces endless textual work. Such an awkward issue has continually to be revisited, disavowed, rediscovered, and affirmed. Closure, by definition, is always potentially unsatisfactory' (2004).

Therefore, the queer critical analysis tries to establish parameters through which a lesbian/gay text can be defined. Here, the sexual orientation of the author is also brought to limelight but in the absence of any such tendency the task becomes a complicated one. The alternative for the critic is then to find the relationships hidden and implied i.e. which are obliquely suggested in the text to dismantle the canonical sexual structure of the society. Then, it needs to be determined whether the lesbian/gay tendencies are the dominant concerns of the text or sidelined as compared to other concerns. The common themes that can be identified in these texts is a feeling of nostalgia, regret, shame, despair, resentment, passivity, escapism, self-hatred, withdrawal, bitterness, defeatism, and loneliness. These feelings are inevitably tied to the experience of social exclusion and to the impossibility of entertaining a same-sex desire. The

element of confinement and fear of engulfment by the others are also deconstructed to reveal guilt of entertaining a socially unacceptable desire. Stylistically, for Terry Castle such lesbian/gay writing challenges realism: 'Even as it gestures back at a supposedly familiar world of human experience, it almost invariably stylizes and estranges it – by presenting it parodistically, euphemistically, or in some other rhetorically heightened, distorted, fragmented or phantasmagoric way' (Bertens, 2004). In the same manner, Judith Butler finds Queer as a signifier with a wide range of possibilities in a text. She locates the act of "queering" in Larsen's novel 'Passing' (1929) to all those episodes where there is an 'eruption of anger into speech such that speech is stifled and broken', the 'threatening absorption', and takes faltering or 'something short of proper conversation, passable prose' as a 'sudden gap in the surface of language'. Larsen argues that the meanings of Queer include 'of obscure origin, the state of feeling ill or bad, not straight, obscure, perverse, eccentric'. Furthermore, as a verb it signifies 'to quiz or ridicule, to puzzle, but also, to swindle and to cheat' (1929).

Another concern of the literary critics was a realization that limiting the word merely to the realm of the sexual relationship reduces the possibilities that this term may carry. Furthermore, as a political movement for the resistance of organized exclusion, it itself seemed to work by exclusion of all other relations apart from of the sexual import. Therefore, Adrienne Rich's (1980) 'Lesbian Continuum' and Sedgwick's exploration of the homosocial relations between men came into existence. In her *Between Men*, Sedgwick (1985) argued that in a patriarchy the real relation exists between men and men while women function only within this homosocial bond between them. This link includes a spectrum of male relationships from father and son, buddies, love rivals, sports opponents and team-mates, club members and so on which might be extended from perfectly straight men to include the homosexual relations. For example, the comradeship between Lord Warburton and Ralph Touchett in 'The portrait of a Lady' written by Henry James (1881), displays this kind of association. They are friends, rivals for the love of the same woman Isabel Archer and confidants. Their love of the same woman becomes a source of the strengthening of the bond between them. Warburton also takes care of the ailing Ralph Touchett in their trip to Venice. Isabel Archer never manages to find a female comrade with whom she could share a similarity of opinions, concerns and passions. Women either impede her quest for self-development or deceive her in the process. Therefore, she stands alone in the spectrum of homosocial patriarchal bonds around her. The lesbian continuum in response, establishes the presence of female-female bonds in the form of mother-daughter, sister-sister or friendly associations to display the self-sustainability of women in collaboration with each other. According to Rich the phrase came from 'a desire to allow for the greatest possible variation of female-identified experience, while paying a different kind of respect to lesbian existence – the traces and knowledge of women who have made their primary and erotic and emotional choices for women'. An instance of this can be taken from Toni Morrison's (1987) novel 'Sula' where Sula and Nel two women supporting, trusting and comforting each other are described as a reflection of each other.

Glover & Kaplan (2000) refer to the work of Leo Bersani, a French literary theorist who has argued that the same sex relations work through a principle of 'self-shattering' by 'privileging

of sameness' because now the desired subject is similar to oneself the 'other' no longer exists and man becomes 'a desiring subject for whom the antagonism between the different and the same no longer exists'. Therefore, sameness 'absorbs' and 'neutralizes' difference. He believes that 'the gay man's deployment of signifiers of the feminine may be a powerful weapon in the defeat of those defensive maneuvers that have defined sexual difference'. In this manner, a man identifies with a 'woman's otherness'. Therefore, drag art or the gender parody is another way to shatter the alienation of the other gender. Butler argues that it's a political maneuver to prove that bodies are the result rather than cause of discourse. The theatricality of drag art brings out the performative nature of genders which take on the appearance of truth over time and define individuals. It acts as a method of cross identification which contributes to visual and literary pleasure and becomes symbolic of the flux in subject positions. Judith Butler believes that men taking part in a drag performance are of special interest to the Queer theorists because 'they simultaneously position themselves on the 'wrong' end of two axes (or oppositions): on the gender axis they identify with the feminine pole, in spite of their maleness, and on the axis of sexual orientation (with its hetero/homo opposition) they take up the homosexual position.

In doing so they first of all blur the boundary between gender and sexuality.' Therefore, drag art becomes an act of open defiance. Furthermore, the cross dressing can be extended to the process of cross writing where a male writer uses a female character as his alter ego or the female writer presents herself through a male voice. Therefore, one can also assume that in the long run all writers create a female voice and consciously or unconsciously subvert the concept of gender by displaying that through imagination they can become a part of both genders at the same time. Brecht's ability to stage the drag art in the form of Shan Teh and Shui Ta in 'The Good Person of Schwann' and bringing out a woman's otherness is an instance of this cross identification.

Research methodology

This academic research is a qualitative-exploratory study based upon hermeneutic theory of textual analysis. The primary source and the sample of study comprises of Laura Loomis' 'Mirror Poem' and Katy Perry's lyrics 'I Kissed a Girl'. Close textual analysis of the poem and lyrics within the theoretical framework of Queer theory is done to revive the spirit of hermeneutic school of thought that emphasizes on the in-depth interpretation, understanding and exploration of focused strains within one's sample of study. Taking Butler's concepts about gender trouble and fluidity of identity as writing mechanics and technical tools at the hands of Katy Perry and Laura Loomis, the point is established that gender is not a biological organ or an objective reality that is innate or firmly and immutably rooted in the human body. It is an ever-changing act, a performance that features what one does at certain points in given situations; it is not about who one is.

The critical material for the research was collected from relevant avenues of literature, mainly, theoretical concepts and critics. In addition, numerous academic journals, online interviews available on writers' blogs and even video sources also made up the secondary sources of the research paper. Many solicited internet sites were referred too and online articles were read and quoted in order to enhance the validity of the arguments being presented and to enrich the quality of the research. Moreover, inter-textual and intra-textual references and inferences are

developed to substantiate the arguments presented in order to promote an incisive understanding and to make it a plausible study.

Discussion

Judith Butler (1990) quoted David Halperin in her book *Gender Trouble*, “Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without essence”.

The crux of Halperin’s (1990) statement is that there is no such thing as essence of gender. Butler (1990) argues that sexual desire is not an organ that is planted in the body immutably or unalterably. She also argues that sexual desire and sexual orientation are also not innate, but are created as social constructions. In this sense, categories like ‘male’ or ‘female’ or ‘homosexual’ or ‘heterosexual’ are not innate qualities of human beings but categories created by culture to lend notions to gender behavior. She declares that what seems to be a natural coherence of sex, gender and sexuality (for example, masculine gender ought to result in heterosexual desire in male bodies) is culturally constructed through the repetition of stylized bodily acts in time. These stylized physical performances, through their recurrence, ascertain the manifestation of a fundamental gender. This is to say that there is no natural or biological coherence between gender and sexuality; it is a cultural construct. In other words, a male’s heterosexual desires are not caused by his being a male and similarly if a woman has heterosexual desires, it is not because of the fact that she is a female. According to Butler (1990), there does nothing biological, innate or ‘natural’, pertaining to the physical composition of a human being, about a man desiring a woman or a woman desiring a man. Similarly, there is nothing natural or innate about a woman desiring a woman or a man desiring a man either. However, in contrast to what Butler believes, the repetition of stylized bodily acts lead to the construction of the gendered, sexed, desiring subject as a ‘regulative discourse’, borrowing from Foucault, in which it is decided in advance what possibilities or attributes of sex, gender, and sexuality are socially allowed to appear as coherent or natural. Butler’s approach, partly inspired by Foucault, proposes that the links between gender and desire should be deconstructed so that both can be seen as flexible and free-floating and not caused by other stable factors. In fact, it is to be understood that the belief in stable factors is propagated by social taboos and endorsements that condition one’s beliefs about what is natural in both subtle and blatant ways of coercion. This can also be called compulsory heterosexuality, in which the individual’s consciousness is manipulated by social sanctions ultimately establishing an apparently natural cohesion between gender and desire, which is propagandized to be the only permissible possibility of behavior.

The frame for Butler’s (1990) argument has been provided by Beauvoir’s distinction between sex and gender. Beauvoir’s observation that sex can be seen as natural while gender must be regarded as a social, cultural, and linguistic construct serves as Butler’s (1990) line of contradictory argument in *Gender Trouble*. Beauvoir’s (1984) thinking of sex/gender offers Butler a counterpoint which regulates the central discussion in *Gender Trouble*. Butler works to show that perhaps even sex cannot be regarded as natural. For Beauvoir (1984), women represent a deficiency against which men found their distinctiveness. Butler (1990) argues, however, that gender is performative: no essential identity exists behind the behavioral acts that apparently convey gender and these acts make up the misapprehension of the established gender identity. If

the appearance of 'being' a gender is thus an effect of culturally influenced acts, then there exists no solid, universal gender: constituted through the practice of performance, the genders 'woman' and 'man' remain contingent and open to interpretation. It becomes thereby a subjective term and cannot be reduced to the confines of a single definition. Therefore, Butler (1990) discourages the fact that the prevalent views on sex are being sustained through behavioral conditioning. The fact that behavior has to be conditioned through repetition, however, creates a paradox in that something that needs to be conditioned can thereby not be natural or innate but only a social construct. But it remains questionable whether there are limits to such social constructs constrained by biology. In this way, Butler provides an opening for behavior or actions that lie outside the realm of socially constructed normalcy. She calls for 'gender trouble', for people to problematize the categories of gender through performance.

Gender Trouble (1990) basically concludes therefore that gender is a set of dramatic effects that are produced by an individual's performances in different situations at different points of time. The term performance here signifies what the person does, that is his or her behavior. Gender is subject to change, according to Butler (1990) in this book, and is not an immutable entity with an essential identity. In this manner, Butler leaves the reader on the note that the boundaries of any identity have the capacity to be reinvented by the person it belongs to.

Having thus established the components of Butler's contribution to gender studies and queer theory, with reference to her book *Gender Trouble*, one now proceeds to an application of Butler's (1990) propositions to art and literature. To begin, streaks of Butler's claims about gender and desire being created as social constructions can be evidently traced in two parts of a poem titled, 'Mirror Poem' by Laura Loomis. This poem has been published in a book titled *Queer Collection: Prose and Poetry*, edited by Gregory A. Kompes (2007). The beginning and the end of the poem both signify the presence of social constructs and behavioral conditioning with regard to the prevalent perception of what is normal in sexuality. The poem opens with the stanza:

*"I am notthat person
you would have made me into..."*
and ends with:
*"...you would have made me intothat person.
I am not."*

Bearing in mind the title of the poem, the beginning stanza and the final stanza are both mirror images of each other. Before proceeding with a more thorough explanation, at this point one would like to establish that from this point onwards, for the purpose of the discussion that is to follow, one chooses to use the pronoun 'she' to refer to the speaker. This is not to place limits on the possibilities of interpretation or universality of the speaker's voice but to simply refrain from being redundant in emphasizing that the speaker could be a he or a she, irrespective of the fact that the writer is a female. One feels this is too obvious for a discussion of this standing and that one's target audience can gather this in her own capacity as a mature reader.

To return to the poem under discussion, in the first stanza of 'Mirror Poem', Loomis's speaker asserts that she is not who she might have been made into. In the last stanza, only the order of sentences is changed as the speaker once again asserts that somebody who has been identified as 'you' would have made her into the person that she is not. What does the speaker mean by this?

One deduces that perhaps she is, in fact, referring to the very idea of compulsory heterosexuality that has been rejected by Butler. The use of the word ‘made’ implies that something has been constructed or forcefully altered. This is in accordance with the earlier made assertion that attitudes about sexuality are socially constructed and it is decided according to these social constructs whether a particular sexual possibility or behavioral tendency is permissible or not. However, the apparent cohesion between gender and desire is far from being natural, according to Butler. As stressed earlier, it is not necessary that a woman will only be attracted to a man or a man will only be attracted to a woman, a member of the opposite sex. No human being is born a heterosexual, or a homosexual or bisexual for that matter. Gender is not a biological organ or an objective reality that is innate or firmly and immutably rooted in the human body. It is an ever-changing act, a performance that features what one does at certain points in given situations; it is not about who one is.

However, society conditions people to think that only heterosexuality is a normal way of being and individuals are manipulated into believing that bisexuality and homosexuality are taboos. What is important to remember though is that taboos are created as a result of the needs of certain groups of people to believe that the way they perceive truth is the only way that truth can be perceived. Many people are poke fun at or are threatened by ideas that they do not understand or that frighten them because they think they are capable of doing exactly what they condemn because they are only human. The transgression of what appears to be the only natural form of sexuality are existing realities such as homosexuality and bisexuality and perhaps the majority of the world is not yet ready to accept them as such. However, the needs of certain people to believe in the traditional view of the relation between gender and desire, do not take away from the blaring fact that there are individuals who exist who do not feel that gender is fixed and immutable. There are people who truly believe that gender is subject to change and as expressed by the speaker, there was a possibility that she might have been made into the person that she is, in fact, not. Despite of all the taboos and sanctions placed on sexuality by society, she feels that she is who she is and that she does not possess a fixed gendered identity. Despite of social conditioning towards a standard and accepted sexuality, the speaker feels that she does not fit into the category that has been drawn for her.

In this light, ‘Mirror Poem’ by Loomis (2007) can be seen as an application of Butler’s points about gender and desire to literature. Another illustration of Butler’s ideas can be found in the song lyrics of ‘I Kissed a Girl’ written by Dennis (2008) and sung by Katy Perry:

*“This was never the way I planned, not my intention
I got so brave, drink in hand, lost my discretion
It's not what I'm used to, just wanna try you on
I'm curious for you caught my attention
I kissed a girl and I liked it
The taste of her cherry chap stick
I kissed a girl just to try it
I hope my boyfriend don't mind it
It felt so wrong, it felt so right
Don't mean I'm in love tonight
I kissed a girl and I liked it*

*I liked it
No, I don't even know your name, it doesn't matter
You're my experimental game, just human nature
It's not what good girls do, not how they should behave
My head gets so confused, hard to obey"*

These lyrics express a severe sense of repression of desire and a great contradiction between enjoying a forbidden experience and thinking of ways to make it seem justified. Fuelled by social constructs of normal sexual behavior, the speaker starts out declaring that she never planned for what happened and that she was under the influence of alcohol and lost her good judgment and ended up doing what she did. These have been presented as justifications for her action that is to follow. She further says that whatever she did was due to curiosity and a desire to try something new and thereby exciting. The phrase “*wanna try you on*” creates the picture of a person trying on clothes or costumes, referring to the idea that gender is a performance in which a person can wear any costume and play any character. After laying down the grounds for her action, the speaker then clearly identifies what exactly she has done. She has kissed a girl and has discovered that she liked it. There is an element of surprise in this discovery, implying that she did not expect that she would enjoy kissing a member of the same sex. At the same time, she expresses a concern regarding her boyfriend and hopes that he will not object to this act. This is illustrative of the fact that the speaker, who is a female, had not known before kissing another female, that she had the capacity for bisexuality. Up until this point of discovery that she could be inclined towards both males and females, she had a male sexual partner, thereby being previously convinced that she is a heterosexual. This is what Butler means. The speaker was under the illusion that her gender is fixed and natural as a heterosexual. However, gender is performative and mutable, concerning what one can do in different situations and not who one is. The speaker’s performance, so to say, in the act of kissing a member of her own sex substantiates Butler’s claim and deconstructs the notions of gender and desire as naturally cohesive.

However, even after admitting to herself that she enjoys both male and female partners in sexual behavior, the speaker finds a conflict within herself regarding her act. She states that it felt wrong and right (simultaneously) to kiss a girl. Then, as if to relieve herself of any moral burdens, the speaker divorces emotional attachment from an act of drunken stupor and says that it was just a kiss and it does not mean that now she is in love with the girl she kissed. The final verse follows this thought and the speaker confesses that she does not even know the name of the girl she kissed but it does not matter because it was only an experimental game and it is in human nature to explore with different possibilities of sexuality, thus lending substance to what Butler claims as well. One must note though, that here the speaker has objectified the girl she kissed and has called her a lab rat in other terms. One feels that this derogatory representation of the desired subject has been depicted as a result of repressed feelings of guilt and doubt that are springing up in the speaker’s consciousness when she looks back upon this instance. Since sexual experimentation is frowned upon and is not permissible according to socially constructed modes of sexual behavior, the speaker might be experiencing feelings of guilt and might be questioning her action, because what she did is not what good girls do and now her mind is confused because she finds herself torn between admitting that she enjoyed the homosexual experience and obeying the norms of right

and wrong with regard to appropriate sexual behavior. Since she has already expressed her capacity for more than one sexual inclination or desire, it is clear that Butler's theory about the fluidity and variability of gender has been authenticated through this illustration.

Conclusion

The purpose of conducting this research is to see how queer theory argues about embracing the fluidity rather than fixity. Conclusively, this theory despite aiming to empower the marginal being or the third sex has its shortcomings. By creating a separate domain for the closeted homo/bi/transsexuals, it itself declares their identity to be based on their sexual orientation. Furthermore, the bringing together of lesbian and gay criticism within the same criteria of Queer threatens the lesbian critics with the formation of another kind of hierarchy i.e. of male homosexual norm. Sheila Jeffery (2014) believes that any association with the butch/femme construction of relationships is itself a form of reenactment of patriarchal power. Others argue that lesbianism puts into background the real cause of developing a feminist perspective i.e. victimization and exploitation of women. Tania Modleski (1990) criticizes the dissolution of the concept of essential female or the coherent identity because it denies the credibility of female politics itself and the presence of a group called women. Even Judith Butler (1990) has her doubts with 'lesbian theories, gay theories,' because 'identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalizing categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a libratory contestation of that very oppression. This is not to say that I will not appear at political occasions under the sign of lesbian, but that I would like to have it permanently unclear what precisely that sign signifies'.

The researcher's final note, therefore to reiterate that Judith Butler's most prominent contribution to gender studies and queer theory is her proposition that gender is not a natural construct. Unlike the argument propagated by fixed masculine/feminine gender binaries, Butler (1990) believes that gender should be viewed as fluid and variable. It is not a definition of who one is and is instead, seen in relation to ones behavior in different situations at different times, thereby becoming performative. Butler has, by advancing this theory, opened up numerous possibilities for human beings to perform subjectively and boundlessly, with regard to all sexual inclinations.

One cannot overlook the cultural implications of this theory since queering is subject to cultural variation and might not be acceptable in many cultures. With changing culture the identities also experience metamorphosis. Brah (1996) writes, "Identity is subjective and social and is constituted in and through culture". In this regard Alan Sinfield (2003) proposes, "in this post-modern age in the midst of rapid globalization, we are indeed in a "post-gay" phase, a phase in which monolithic identities are no longer sufficient to characterize individuals or groups and thus, in his view, "gayness" as an identity needs to be both deconstructed and revised to include an understanding of the different social forces at work."

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