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Between Tales and Tellers: Literary Renderings of Gender Fluidity in Comparative Study

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Abstract

The study pertains to the literary explorations of non-normative sexualities to look into the hypothesis that narratives of transsexuality and intersexuality embody the processuality of the interaction between literariness, the nature of the texts and experiences of non-normative sexualities, as the content of the texts. The scope of the paper comprises three texts – *The Danish Girl* (2002), *The Pregnant King* and *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* (2010). A comparative study is attempted to locate into the divergences and convergences in the texts based on: firstly, firstly, the functionality of literariness in the textual articulations of gender fluidity or the possibility of locating a similar (not same) literary value in the textual articulations of gender fluidity; secondly, whether (and how) the writing of gender fluidity influences literary forms/practices, the modifications and the re-creations, thus, entailed. The insights derived from the above comparative study about the literary aspects of narrating non-normative sexualities, may be used to enhance theoretical insights into the same i.e. experiences of non-normative sexualities or gender fluidities.

Keywords: Sexuality, transsexuality, *The Danish Girl*, *The Pregnant King*, *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*, gender

Introduction

‘The increasing availability of narratives about non-normative sexualities which are of the fictional, autobiographical or other varied nature vindicates the literary evolution of the “new sexual subject” (Purvis 2006). Specifically, in the field of Comparative Literature, Higonnet (1995) in “Comparative Literature on the Feminist Edge”, categorically referred to the idea that “gender studies ... should always be comparative” (155). Higonnet’s *Borderwork: Feminist Engagements with Comparative Literature* (1994), anthologizes variously authored essays to “propose a new relationship between comparative literature and feminist criticism” which “engage a debate over the totalizing, psychologizing, and individualizing of literary and cultural difference” (5). The relationship between non-heteronormativity and literary forms or literary history has also interested comparative studies: *Comparatively Queer* (2010), anthologizes Susan Lanser’s study of sexuality in the multifarious discourses on Enlightenment in seventeenth century England where she locates “Sapphic modernity” as the “use of female same-sex desire to herald a new age” (70) in the seventeenth century England; Bianca Jackson deciphers alternative sexuality and diasporic identity as merged into a marginalized subjectivity and expressed in the beast metaphor used in the animal fable form used by Suniti Namjoshi and Vikram Seth.

This paper concerns itself with contemporary literary texts of gender fluidity in terms of transsexuality and intersexuality, examples of which include Rose Treiman’s *Sacred Country* (1992), David Ebershoff’s *The Danish Girl* (2000), Eugenides’ *The Middlesex* (2002), and a number of autobiographical accounts like Kate Bornstein’s *A Queer and Pleasant Danger* (2012). In the Indian context, which this paper will refer to, there is an increasing visibility of the hitherto

stigmatized sexual identities, in novels like *The Pregnant King* (2008) by Devdutt Pattanaik, and autobiographical writings like *The Man Who Would be Queen* (2011) by Hoshang Merchant or A.Revathi's *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* (2010). All these texts can be construed as literary in nature, as opposed to political or social or theoretical discourses on gender fluidity, given that the articulation of gender fluidity, here, is in terms of the more personal and quotidian aspects of the experiences of alternative sexuality. It can, thus, be hypothesized that these narratives also embody the processuality of the interaction between literariness, as the nature of the texts and experiences of non-normative sexualities, as the content of the texts.

The scope of this paper shall be limited to three texts, namely *The Danish Girl* (2002) by David Ebershoff, a fictionalized account of the life of Lili Elbe, reportedly, the first intersexed individual to undergo sex-reassignment surgeries, Devdutt Pattanaik's *The Pregnant King* (2008), a contemporary retelling of a few tales of non-normative sexual identities from the epic of *Mahabharata* and A. Revathi's *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* (2010), an autobiographical account of what it is to be a transsexual in India. A comparative study can be convened to analyze the convergences in these three narratives, in spite of their ostensible variedness, in terms of the treatment of gender fluidity and the formation of literariness. Therefore, two specific points of comparison in this study are: firstly, the functionality of literariness in the textual articulations of gender fluidity or the possibility of locating a similar (not same) literary value in the textual articulations of gender fluidity; secondly, whether (and how) the writing of gender fluidity influences literary forms/practices, the modifications and the re-creations, thus, entailed.

Locating 'Literary' in Narratives of Gender Fluidity:

Here, the concept of 'literary' does not pertain to any specific definition, though it involves the very basic aspect of writing words, which provides a flexibility of expression, with varying degrees of readability. It, hence, makes it possible to assume that this flexibility and this readability will cater to the articulation of non-normative sexualities. While narrative-motivations may be in disregard gender norms, literary texts also require depiction of individualized perceptions of gender and sexuality and cannot merely theorize about resistance to heteronormativity. Therefore, the 'literary' in texts is symptomatic of description of non-normative sexual experiences and gendered behavior and renders the simultaneity of creating and disavowing knowledge structures about gender and sexuality. Moreover, sexual experiences have a distinctive personal aspects; the idiosyncratic and individualized expression of the same in certain acts of wording can be used to qualify as 'literary'. Concurrently, therefore, the 'literary' nature of the texts can be understood as a process of facilitation in articulating non-normative sexualities, not as the attainability of certain standards: "Rather than a subcategory of cultural production, literature is a process of invention that involves the human mind in its most basic yearnings and capacities to represent" (Cochran 2007). This indicates that literariness is textual flexibility and accommodativeness, arising out of the act(s) of representation(s) necessary to narrative experiences. Laurent Dabruel (2007) posited: "Literature does not exist before but rather *after* itself" and "it is addressed to a beyond" (45). Such observations supports this attempt to locate 'literary' as accommodating both comprehensibility and incomprehensibility of being in narratives of gender-fluidity.

The comparative perspective about the text, based on this ideation of 'literary' quality of the text locates a certain connectivity between the three narratives of gender fluidity: *The Danish Girl* tells the story of Einar, an acclaimed painter who transformed into "little Lili". Substituting as

a female model for a portrait by Greta, his painter-wife, Einar begins “to enter a shadowy world of dreams where Anna’s dress could belong to anyone, even to him” (12) and Lili begins to emerge from thirty-five years of Einar’s uncomfortable male existence. This culminates in an arduous process of surgical sex-change and emotional upheavals till Einar exists only as Lili’s past, a past that she refuses to remember. Similarly, *The Pregnant King* is about King Yuvanashva, who gave birth to a son and also nursed the new-born, and wanted his motherhood to be acknowledged, though he had fathered another son. Supplementing Yuvanashva’s story, are other gender-fluid existences: Somvat who transformed into a woman and her husband Sumedha, burnt to death for their transgressions, the tale of the warrior Arjuna who became an eunuch for a year, Krishna who transformed to Mohini, to be a bride for a night and Shikhandi, a girl-child brought up as a man as per the whims of her father, who became a man for his wife as also the priestesses of Bahugami, men who castrated themselves in the service of God. Revathi’s text also shares this concern of gender fluidity, in writing what it is to be a transgender in that India of the poverty-stricken spaces, with numerous paucities, like that of education or healthcare. The details of her life in the hijra community, procedures of gender-reassignment, prostitution and marriage, as also living as an independent single woman, though non-fictional, are functionalized, like the two other texts, by the need to articulate experiences that are sexual in nature and non-normative.

Now, this comparative study refers to the recurrence of gender fluidity as a narrative-concern in all the three texts, so as to subsequently and effectively emphasize the other contrasting elements in narrative-motivation of the texts. These contrasting elements are (due to) the individualized literary values of the texts. The simultaneity of variable motivations of narration and a degree of inter-relatedness in the same qualifies as the ‘literary’ nature of text(s) which allows the scope for articulating the commonality of disavowal of heteronormativity and the individualized nature of such disavowal in gender-fluid characters. *The Danish Girl*, for that matter is not only the story of Einar’s quest for his womanhood but also Einar and his wife, Greta’s love story problematized by Einar’s non-conformity to gender roles. Greta’s thoughts on Einar and hers infrequent love-making, her support towards her husband’s initial dressing up as a woman and subsequent procedures of gender-reassignment and finally, the withdrawal of her loyal companionship to Lili so that Lili can have a life, a love life for that matter without interference are all tinged with a little resentment and sadness, but cannot supersede her love. Lili, in turn, inspires Greta’s life-less paintings and brings her the elusive acclaim and all the while “she loved and resented Greta for caring so much” (266). Given the factual content of this fictional piece, it can be rightly proclaimed the text transforms “transgender history” into “one of the most passionate and unusual love stories of the 20th century”. In the process a story about troubled conjugality, of tragic consequences, is narrated: “Greta didn’t know exactly where Lili was headed .. but she could imagine . . . she watched Lili slip across the bridge . . . the tail of her scarf . . . waving goodbye” (277). This perusal of conjugality as a troubled space for a narrative can be considered as conventional and the narrative proceeds in the familiar pattern of a marriage, being troubled for a while and then falling apart. But the motive for the breakdown, the non-conformity to gender roles by one of the partners and the passionate loyalty of the other for which she relinquishes the union which may turn repressive is not of familiarity.

The Pregnant King, on the other hand, construes sexual transgressions as the means of reinterpreting myths, or to write Hindu-myths with a thoroughly non-traditional twist. As the author Pattanaik’s claims, in the “Preface” of this novel, literary creation “a deliberate distortion of tales in the epics” to have new characters and subplots that contribute towards “a celebration of stories narrated by our ancestors that are rarely retold as they seem to challenge popular notions of normality” (34). Therefore, Yuvanashva’s mother, the widowed Shilavati ruled her kingdom in

great prosperity and peace while the Pandavas were in their exile and then fought, wars. Arjuna reveals how Iravan, his son out of wedlock, was convinced to be a ritual-sacrifice, as the “perfect man” with “thirty six sacred marks on his body” (251) to benefit the Pandavas in the Kurukshetra war, with a bride for a night which was Krishna transformed into a woman, Mohini. Even, Yuvansahva, before, being faced with his own gender-confusion, orders the execution of Somvat(i) and Sumedha to establish his credibility as a ruler unafraid of violence, to be “truly king” (168). Much later, he atones for his actions by enshrining them as “Somvati, most chaste of wives” and “Sumedha, most noble of husbands” (324-5). The narrative reverses notions of normalcy not just of gender but “about love, law identity, gender power and wisdom” (viii). However, the literariness deployed in the novel also utilizes the familiarity with characters and situations from *Mahabharata* but has a de-familiarized functionality of the same. Instances include the story of Arjuna’s temporary gender fluidity which is familiar: in the novel, Arjuna is requested “a story for the submission of the most prosperous kingdom of Ila-vrita”, King Yuvanshva’s Turuvasu (242): the story of experiences of being Brihannalla, an eunuch, for a year along with the tale of Iravan and Mohini is narrated to appease Yuvanashva, confused with motherhood. Pattanaik, thus, uses the familiar story of Brihannalla for a dialogue between Yuvanashva and the third Pandava that addresses their experiences of disavowing gendered roles, though the epic has no such instances. Yuvanashva’s tale actually predates that of Pandavas and Kauravas. Again, Shikhandi’s gender fluidity, of cursory importance in *Mahabharata* as the failed attempt of King Drupadha to procure a son is popularly known but in the novel, Shikhandi born a woman, transformed into a man is forced to have a wife, who she eventually loves and fathers her child. And Mandhata, born of a man, King Yuvanashva, marries Shikhandi’s daughter, a depiction accommodated within the scope of literary fiction. There is a recurrence, throughout the novel, of the anticipation of some sort of connectivity through experiences, deriving from non-normative sexualities. This connectivity extends to create a questionability of other conventional power structures as well, like the Pandava superiority or the principles of kingship or the ethical aspects of conjugality. This leads to a sort of vacillation between building expectations of familiarity with certain situations as also disavowal of the same to retain the non-normalcy of such experiences.

Revathi’s text is most focused of the three on the idea of resisting established gender-norms, titled as the story of a ‘hijra’, the indigenous term of sexual dissidence. However, Revathi does not seem to be too earnest in pushing a politicized agenda of sexual minorities. Instead, she narrates an incredible series of dangerous psychosocial and physiological quests to become a woman and to find love of a man. This narrative is hers, and hers only and she does not speak of a generalized communal identity of transgenders. In fact, she almost delineates herself from the aravani culture, speaking of the specific and completely individualized spiritual and emotional significances of her life, as an individual who has struggled to succeed in fulfilling the dreams of living as a financially independent woman, unlike her mother and sister. Within this personal scope of the narrative, even in spite of it, the writer invokes the contentious visibility of the ‘hijra’ figure in its very title. The familiarity with a hijra figure pertains to that of stigma, or at the most sympathy. Revathi’s act of writing her story de-familiarizes the ‘hijra’ figure in this book which “will make people see that hijras are capable of more than just begging and sex work”(v). So, the anecdotal nature of narrating physical and emotional harassment, in public and domestic spaces alike by class-mates and teachers, by co-passengers, by clients and policemen during prostitution and also by a husband and parents and brothers derives from the familiarity of derogation of a person, for not ascribing to his birth-attributed male identity or simply for not being a man. The strain of de-familiarization, on the other hand, occurs as Revathi recounts how she recovered

from such damages and continued to pursue her dream of living as a woman, repeatedly reminding her readers that it would have been much easier not to do so.

Narratives of Gender Fluidity as the ‘Reclaiming’ of Literary Forms

Concurrently, the process of narrating gender fluidity also influences the creation of the . Though known forms and techniques of narratives are seemingly used, the enablement of the same is based on marginalized conceptions of reality. The contemporariness of each of these texts also implies their production after the evolution of post-modern thought when narrative structures and techniques have become more flexible: for example, generic formats are no longer “an empty vessel, an item into which other things could be poured with the result that these other things would automatically take on the vessel’s shape” (Cobley 2006). Narrative procedures are have become more self-reflexive and flexible, qualities that allows the transformation of the literary values in a text based on gender fluidity. A narrative “operates within a familiar categories and constituents” but includes “the insistence on the need to defamilairize and politicize them” (Cohen 1998) which may be incurred by gender fluidity.

The causality of the change in narrative forms and elements may be explained as a certain form of ‘reclamation’ from heteronormative biases of literary expressions. The term reclamation is used to denote the sense of ‘retrieval’ or ‘recovery’ or ‘restoration’, all of which signify an act of betterment from the existent condition. The processes and/or sites of reclamation or the “recovery of the everyday” from the trauma, in this case, of stigmatization, inflicted (Das, Kleinman 2001) forms counter-narratives. Such acts of reconstituting the literary can be explained as “agentive moments” (Daniel 1996) . The concept of “agentive moment” refers to “semiotic configuration” of the “human habit of habit-change” due to the “crises of meaning, where existing habits have proved unhelpful” (190), generally ideated in the context of political violence and social suffering. Here, the notion has been re-contextualized to explain the literary values of the texts as undergoing re-creation and re-direction pertaining to generic features to not only deride the ‘habits’ from the heteronormative rationale but also create the “agentive moment” of non-heteronromativity.

The choice of the prose-narrative, given its innate structural malleability, for each of the three tales becomes relevant. Narratives in prose, have maximum scope of re-configuring literariness, given the various possibilities to “explore in rhetorically trained language a view of the world articulated by explicit, general and abstract principles- nature, race, likelihood – and centered on man as agent in the world” (Goldhill 2002). Moreover, *The Danish Girl* and *The Pregnant King* can also be termed as novel, the most popular form of literary fiction. The novel as a narrative form “does not establish a relation of continuity between the old and the new, but one of discontinuity”(Simonsen 2004).

Therefore, one can read in Ebershoff’s novel, these very efforts to redirect the heterosexist conventions of story-telling, specifically in his decision to strike a balance between literary imagination and the factual experience of gender fluidity, in the text. It is claimed in the “Author’s Note” that some “important facts about Einar’s actual transformation lies in these pages”. The newspaper-accounts of “Einar Wegner’ remarkable life” from early 1931 are largely due to the fact that Lili Elbe “herself leaked the story to the press and wrote some stories about herself”; other than these “helpful” articles, another “indispensable source” were “Lili Elbe’s diaries and correspondence, which Niel Hoyer edited and published as *Man Into Woman*” which”provided critical factual detail ... Lili’s first vist to Wegner’s studio, Einar’s mysterious

bleeding and physical decline and his journey to and stay at the Dresden Municipal Women's clinic" (311). The experiences of gender fluidity as in "Hoyer's assemblage of Lili Elbe's original" to which Ebershoff is "indebted" actualizes his enablement of the literary imagination. Therefore, it may be argued that the text bears evidences of how gender fluidity directs narrative motivation: this is in some sense redirection, of the heteronormative rationale of literature. The substantive effect of this 're-direction; is noticed as gender-'deviant' subjects were the chief source of pornographic fiction, the "non-respectable literature" hugely produced in the nineteenth century (Lanser 498). Also, gothic novels served to be expositions of the "lacunae" in heteronormative restrictions (Haggerty 2014). Gender fluidity in *The Danish Girl* does not produce writings that seek to stimulate the morbid curiosity of the reader which sexual 'transgressions' are known to arouse. Instead, the focus is on how the bodily struggles of a person translate into the emotional struggles of that individual: "She was Fräulein Lili Elbe. A Danish girl in Dresden. A young woman out in the afternoon with a pair of friends. A young woman whose dearest friend was off in California, leaving Lili, it suddenly felt, alone. She thought of each of them—Henrik, Anna, Carlisle, Hans, Greta. Each, in his own way, partially responsible for the birth of Lili Elbe. Now she knew what Greta had meant: the rest Lili would have to undergo alone" (309). These lines become a synecdoche for the text.

It is also remarkable that while discourses challenging gender norms have a strong sociological content, Ebershoff's comprehension of gender fluidity ascertains a certain dissociation from the social aspects of existence: "Lili's small circle—Greta, Hans, Carlisle, Anna—already knew about her, but she had never handed over the details of her nearly impossible transformation to anyone else. She had never asked anyone to enter that intimate circle, which sometimes felt too cramped to welcome another soul" (279). Here, too, gender fluidity, redirects the course of writing the biographical details of an individual by ignoring his/her/hir relation to the society. There is a stoicism involved in ignoring the necessity of social approval which is resistive without being a tirade against the society. This signifies how human desires and senses may be prioritized over and above social norms, making dissociation a form of defiance. Lili's gender fluidity, thus, entails the narrating of individual experiences without references to social spaces of existence. This also allows more focus on the conjugal space where Lili/Einar and Greta exist to depict the duality of Lili's efforts to forget Einar and Greta's urges to seek Einar in Lili, allowing a discursive articulation of transsexual experiences.

A similar pattern of gender fluidity, as the determining factor of literary writing may be located in *The Pregnant King*. As already mentioned, Pattanaik construed 'literary' through reinterpretation of mythical elements pertaining to the Indian epic of *Mahabharata*. Incidentally as per the "author's note", the novel pertained to the fact the author "wondered" about the "function" of the "bizarre tale" in "the sacred chronicles, referring to how the "story of the pregnant king is recounted twice in Mahabharata", once "by the sage of Lomasha during the exile of Pandavas" and "the poet Vyasa during the war of Kauravas"(vi). Moreover, Pattanaik surrounds the primary plot with complementary subplots with other tales from "the classical scriptures" that refer to experiences of gender fluidity like that of Somvati and Shikhandi as also stories "of Ayli (called Pramila here), Iravan and Bahuchari (Called Bahugami)" which "are part of the rural and hijra traditions of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat"(vi). The novel, therefore, results from the decision to write about experiences of gender fluidity; though the literary techniques pertain to re-creation of mythological elements with non-traditional twists, the process is actually a form of reclamation from heterosexist assumptions of Indian mythology. Narrating gender fluidity, therefore becomes instrumental in redirecting the religious and scriptural morality associated with a specific

Hindutva identity and leads to the questionability, exploration and re-construing of the hegemonies in our tales and traditions.

The text, therefore, embodies “agentive moments” of gender fluidity, the effectiveness constitutes in the constant questioning and reallocation of gender roles, terms of the structure, the sequence of actions and the characterization in the narrative. To begin with the epical quality of the narrative is emphasized in the primary plot as complemented secondary stories of similar content (already exemplified) and the initiation of the narrated action in *media res*: “They came like ants to honey. Warriours. Hundreds of warriors ... to the misty plains of Kurukshetra” (1), so begins the text. This feature of the text is then re-comprehended to renounce another epical feature of heroic figures, who epitomize ideals of masculinity; as Pattanaik (2015) is quoted in Daftur’s article in *The Hindu* that this need of a hero be it Rama, Arjuna or Krishna is because “have become so westernised that we don’t realise what we consider universal is actually rooted in Greek and Abrahamic myths, which is why we seek heroes and villains and martyrs even in Hindu stories that follow a very different non-linear cyclical structure”. Pattanaik’s narration of gender fluidity, therefore, enables this non-hierarchical structure where a savior-hero is not necessary. Instead gender fluidity pervades the characterization so that even cisgender characters like Shilavati with “the body of a woman but head of a king” because of her desire and ability to be a just ruler reconfigure ideals of masculinity and femininity. In fact, Yuvanashva’s seemingly individual quest provides redemption from any restrictive norms for all the other characters, which is achieved not by upholding values of a warrior or a king, but emancipation beyond gender norms which once again implies epical action reclaimed by gender fluidity.

Accordingly, Revathi’s narration of gender fluidity pursues similar re-direction of Indian autobiographical writings which was for long synonymous with the memoirs of distinguished individuals. The rise of subaltern autobiography, specifically in women’s writing and Dalit Literature was also given to rigid gender compartmentalization. Revathi’s text redirects not only the heterosexist assumptions of the mainstream but that of the marginalized discourses. The literary nature of the text defies a heteronormative rationale as a consequence of narrating not merely a woman’s struggles in a patriarchal society; instead, it is a struggle of an individual born and identified as a man seeking a feminine existence in a hetero-patriarchal society.

Moreover, in this act she seeks no alignment with the visible ideation of “queer” as a movement in India, choosing to identify herself with the very indigenous term ‘hijra, therefore, vouching for her “agentive moment” without seeking recourse to Western conceptualizations of gender fluidity. The Indian context of gender fluidity enables the use of an Indian idiomatic English, frequently interspersed with Tamil and Hindi words, especially terms of expressions, emphasizing the relevance of specific hijra-rituals, and finally interactions of the Indian social spaces with emotional realities. In the final pages of the narrative, she seeks to associate herself with the identity of a woman, claiming that she “could no longer fully inhabit the aravani culture”. Her transsexual womanhood is by choice and her writing of gender fluidity render this womanhood as a form of achievement in spite of numerous and various types of restrictions. Revathi’s gender fluidity (re)directs the process of charting selfhood in an autobiographical narrative, “the isolate uniqueness that nearly everyone agrees to be the primary quality and condition of the individual and his experience” (Olney 1972) from the long-borne burden of heteronormative rationale.

‘Queer’ Stories and Queer ‘Theories’: Comparative Perspectives

The insights derived from the above comparative study about the literary aspects of narrating non-normative sexualities, may be used to enhance theoretical insights into the same i.e. experiences of non-normative sexualities or gender fluidities. Hence, a corollary aim can be in newer and alternative engagements with gender fluidity by juxtaposing the inferences about ‘narrative’ queer with ‘theoretical’ queer, given that Queer Theory/Theories (the plural form is used by Donald Hall (2003) to imply the “many different voices and sometimes overlapping, sometimes divergent perspectives that can be loosely called “queer theories”” (5)) happens to be the most visible amongst the available scholastic discourses on gender fluidity, so much so that ‘queer’ has, since, come to become the “shorthand for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community” (Giffney 2009).

To begin with, the contemporary queer theory is largely dependent on “resistance to whatever constitutes the normal” (99) as AnnMarie Jagose (1996) states. The scope of ‘literary’ attributes to gender-fluidity, much more than only negation. There are personal and individualized comprehension of gender fluidity, by which the resistance is not the aim but rather than the consequence of fulfilling personal goal or desires. For example, Lili’s gender-reassigned self is not only a challenge to the socio-clinical perceptions about the fixity of gender but also about the realization of long-repressed desires and the capacity of existence of an individual, acquires primacy in the narrative. King Yuvanshava is shown to renounce kingship to acknowledge his gender fluidity which can be considered an act of subversion. But remarkably the novel does not end there but continues with Yuvanashva’s quest for knowledge about gender fluidity, in his building a shrine to Somvat(i) and Sumedha those he had had executed for sexual transgressions. More evidently, Revathi, though she was “interested ... in social struggles”, she specifies at the end of the narrative, how she was more focused on living on her own, as a single woman.

Therefore, experiences of non-normative sexualities have very emphatic personal connotations. Hence, it can also be conjectured that articulations of non-normative sexualities need to strike a fine balance between individualized or personalized and communalized existences. Sexualities, that qualify for a communal resistance to heterosexist norms, may not (want to qualify) for communal experiences or communal identities, unlike say racial, linguistic or religious identity which is largely in the realm of the communal. Literary articulation of queer may help in striking this balance. While queer theories vindicate “where narrative realizations and derealizations overlap” and how “story telling” can “fail” (Edelman 7), queer in literature recognizes the possibilities of being visible. This visibility provides the much needed scope for recognition of (queer) (gender-fluid) self in a literary piece. This prevents (dis)recognition of self in works of “Socrates to Wilde”: as Karla Jay writes, “the critics, instead of pointing out my tribes-people, denied their existence” (68). Literariness can be created to devalue this denial and depict the existence.

Moreover, a repeatedly referred to position in queer theories is about how knowledge can only be produced as a result of compulsion and queer is resistive of any definability. Jagose refers to the self-contradictory nature of the act of explaining queer as a concept. For instance, the lack of a “consistent” queer profile is referred to in her introductory account of queer. But this introductory account itself lends the notion of queer certain degrees of consistencies. The lack of a “foundational logic” of queer (Jagose 96) is contradicted by the consolidation of the notion of resistance by unsanctioned identities. Giffney verifies this resistance to production of knowledge which can only be a result of “the social, cultural and political imperatives” about how to know

(24) and lack of self-recognition need not be “inaptitude” (25). And therefore, queer is conceptualized based on this un-definability to the end of no monolithic comprehension of sexuality.

However, the narrative-queer discerns the possibility of self-definition without succumbing to the heterosexism of existing modes of knowledge production. In this study, the narrative traits have a history of narrating the heteronormative. Yet, in articulating the experiences of transsexuality and intersexuality, each of the text embody how literariness provides scope for modified, reclaimed functionality of these narrative traits. Based on the evidences from the comparative study, it is possible to put forth an idea that none of the above individuals with experiences of transsexuality and/or intersexuality are tempered into a heteronormative identity. Instead, each of the text pertain to the idea of how in the act of producing knowledge, not only is the normative modes of knowledge breached but also recreated and redefined as per the needs of the non-normative. The narrative-queer in its bid to be narrated does not succumb to heterosexual narrative-formats but changes what may be called the phenomenology of each of the text. Moreover, such changes broadly referred to as reclamation does not always follow a particular pattern. Each literary piece is enabled by the necessity to accommodate individual experiences of sexuality.

While incoherence and abstruseness are important to queer discourses, the narrative queer provide a possibility of articulating the quotidian existences without the gender markers.

The relevance of ‘literary’ vis-à-vis gender fluidity is in the agency of the author to contribute towards the presentation of ‘meaning’, often rupturing existing ones, but also further anticipating the rupture of the meanings, presented in the texts, due to the possible readability of the text.

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