Representation of 'Queer Troubles' in The Kite Runnerand Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda

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Abstract: Gender roles, representation, and performativity occupy elementary position in the contemporary literary world of fiction. In Asian region performativity and discussion on queer differences are analogous to taboo. The present study analyzes gender troubles portrayed in *The Kite Runner* by Khalid Hosseini and *Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda* and Becky Albertalli. Content analysis technique helps to conduct a qualitative enquiry for evaluating diverse sexual orientations of fictional characters in the selected texts. Judith Butler's theory of 'Gender Performativity' theory (1990) that rests on the idea of gender as performance provides theoretical underpinning to analyze how fiction portrays the 'denaturalization'; a process depriving gender of rights due to digression from established norms. The study establishes arguments that gender represented in Albertalli's narrative finds a way of breaking the traditional norms of gender and sexuality implying that gender is instable, denaturalized and changes over time causing deviation from the established gender norms. In*Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda,*Simon's gay identity shatters binary construction of gender into masculine and feminine and demonstrates gender performativity. The study reveals that LGBT identities are 'subverted' even in Western societies viewing gender into masculine and feminine merely. *The Kite Runner* focuses Assef's gendered acts and his choices exposing him as bisexual though he cannot reveal his identity because of strict Sharia Laws in Afghanistan against LGBT community. The study discusses gender as social and contextual construction performing repeated acts. In Albertalli's novel, gay characters perform as LGBT, supported by friends and family, however, in Hosseini's novel characters with sexual orientations conceal their deviant sexual orientations due to strict religious and cultural norms resulting in serious problems. The study significantly educates readers about gender fluidity, differences, and sexual orientations. The study can be extended to investigate various social and psychological factors due to which characters fear announcing their LGBT identity and their inability in declaring the gender they perform.

Keywords: Society, Gender, Representation, Performativity, Queer, LGBT

I.   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study is to explore different problems faced by LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) characters through fiction. The study is significant since it enlightens the readers about 'gender fluidity', which means that gender is constructed and not fixed. LGBT emphasizes the diversity of sexuality and challenges heterosexuality (relationship between opposite sex people) as the only sexual construction in the society (Michael, 2006). LGBTQ community is referred to as a group of lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people working together for common cause of disrupting fixed gender constructions. Term 'Queer' emerged from the cultural studies by Teresa de Lauretisin 1991. It signifies three interrelated projects; challenging heterosexuality as the benchmark of sexual formations, gay and lesbian studies as one single entity, and focus on sexual bias shaped by race. 'Queer theory' represents different critiques together which enable us to rethink about sexuality (de Lauretis, 1991).

Heterosexuality is regarded as normal, and homosexual (relationship between same sex people) is considered as abnormal. Judith Butler (1990) conceived it as a forced cultural ideology. Society determines what is sensible and ordinary. In the context, where heterosexuality is prevailing, the presence of homosexuality is stifled (Butler, 1990).

Previous studies remained less focused on exploring bisexual relationships. Netzley (2017) defended the issue of preference and separation experienced by gays and bisexuals as comparative. However, heterosexuals treat bisexuals more harshly than homosexuals and bisexuals face segregation more within lesbian and gay communities.To understand sexuality,sex and gender regardless of being masculine or feminine, which cause attraction to opposite sex (Bradley &Valiulis, 1997). Butler (1990) underpins

Gender Trouble (1990) as a method for subverting gender roles. Testing customary ideas about gender and sexuality is a solid method for changing perception of gender identity.

To challenge heterosexuality, queer theory centres on mismatches between gender, sex and desire. Institutionally, 'queer' relates most noticeably to gay and lesbian subjects, it likewise incorporates such themes as cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, gender ambiguity, and gender remedial medical procedure. Gender construction needs not be understood as binary,that is male or female, which means heterosexual construction only.Rather genders such as homosexual and bisexual should be accepted (Butler,1990). The present study analyses gender troubles represented in *The Kite Runner* (2003) by Khalid Hosseiniand *Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda* (2015) by Becky Albertalli. Both the novels represent different cultures;however, the characters are not able to announce their gender openly for the fear of acceptance in the societies.

Moreover, the present study addresses the questions as how deviation from established norms causes 'denaturalization' of gender portrayal in the selected fictional texts.It also explores how fiction portrays gender and sexuality as merely masculine and feminine to endorse flexibility in the society? Furthermore, the study explores different problems faced by LGBT characters portrayed in fiction. It is significant as it enlightens the readers about 'gender fluidity', which means that gender is a construction. It provides an insight into gender differences and sexual orientation represented in fiction.

II.   GENDER PERFORMANCE AND SUBVERSION OF IDENTITY

Social ordersaccept gender as a natural characteristic existing within an individual. Feminist and queer theories challenge the essence, drawing on a portion of similar contentions used in the poststructuralist discussions of identity as constructed one (Sullivan, 2003). Poststructuralists set out a method for revaluating broad ideas like freedom, truth and power. It contends that there are no objective and universal truths, however, these specific types of information, and the methods for being that they induce, become 'naturalized', in culturally and historically specific ways (Sullivan, 2003). If being queer is the same as not falling in the category of normal or dominant, then queer theory is a stimulus to question the norms and the general ideas of gender and discover that they are only constructs. Similarly, there is no natural gender, and female gender is denaturalized by challenging the inherent idea of fixed gender (Butler, 1990).

Feminist domains tried to subvert the exacting classes of gender and sex in 1960-70. Accusing types of sex discrimination for the production of gendered category instead the treatment of a particular category, Butler's work turned into a significant endeavour in queer studies and opened a new feminist rhetoric. The central purpose of Butler's work clarifies gender as a performative activity where gender signifiers are redundant renderings of a content. She believes that gender is not someone is born with, rather, it is something which one performs (Butler, 1990).

Meanings are formed more or less linguistically through production and organization of signs (Kant, 2004). Based on the available signs, people of different cultures make meanings and ascribe values to these signs. 'Everything is representable' (Prendergast, 2000: p.1). With positive representation, we develop good perception, while negative representation affects our attitude towards things represented. Similarly, LGBTQ representation plays a vital role in making perception about these people in the society.

Clark (1969) asserted; T.V. substance reflecting business as usual social structure, and those at the foundation were represented in one of the three stages: non-recognition, ridicule, or regulation (Clark,1969). Giving representation to a group of people is better than ignoring them completely. Furthermore, representation of LGBT character portrayal helps in minimizing the negative attitude towards LGBT people, though there still remains a gap to address the issue within the religious context.

Schiappa et al. (2002) conducted a study taking 245 college undergraduates to know their attitude towards gay men based on their viewership of 'Will and Grace'. The study as sample shows a direct relationship in media representation and viewers perception. More media projection of LGBTQ characters may encourage people to be tolerant. Similarly, Calzo et al. (2009) in a study led survey from college students to know their attitudes towards homosexuality as a result of media representation. The study revealed that as a result of movies, comedies, dramas and other mainstream media representation,tolerant attitude grew towards homosexuality. However, in Asian religious societies the situation is vice versa.

Alter and Schiff (2009) study concluded gender stereotypes as generally the assigned roles attributed on sexalso known as sex role (Levesque, 2011). The study revealed that stereotypical role assigned to male and female determined dominant positions like reformer, legal counsellor, legislature, scientist and administrator, however, women were given the role of a mother, an aunt and wife. The study clearly showed a gap by excluding discussion on queer troubles.

Pinar (1998) explained queer theory as drawing method that inspects personalities, representation, relation and needs sexually oppressed people. Moreover, it questions the patriarchal norms and challenges the proliferation of equality. The study revealed that an attempt is made to bring an end to silent sexual identities and values oppressed as a result of heterosexual gender construction of the society.

Foutsand Inch (2000) investigated thatmain characters of 22 sitcoms broadcast showed only 2% to be gay characters, of which one character was black and two white (Fouts& Inch, 2000). The study illustrated that less representation of gay characters in the mainstream media was broadcast.

Wilchins (2004) studied gender stereotypes with relation to feminist, gay and transgender struggles for fairness and gender norms framing the primary target of such fights. The study highlighted the mistreatment of LGBTQ community; however, it lacked discussion on the importance of gender representation, which mainly shapes opinion about gender roles in the society.

Hence, the ideas of heteronormativity and performativity are a landmark to investigate the power structures particularlythe situation at work places. Although, 'queer theory' recently believed to be excessively Western in scope; it has proved valuable and exemplary methodology to deconstruct and destabilize the discourse of gender, class and sexualities quite different in distinct settings (Kirsch, 2007). It means, queer theory has been very helpful in deconstructing the fixed gender constructions as a result of strict heterosexual societies.

III.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Butler's Queer theory (1990) provides backdrop to the present studyfor exploring gender binaries and the related idea of heteronormativity.

Gender and sexuality areviewed from various angles. Butler examined that people considered gender and sexuality as only 'masculine' and 'feminine' only under the fix norms (1993). However, it should have been viewed as a variablechanging over a period of time. Butler considered gender subjectivity as a variable identity,whichis not fixed like 'male' or 'female', rather it continuously changed according to the performance, however, it was dependent onthe set of acts or repetition of certain rituals. Butler (1993) also explainedthat action determined gender.

Butler's theory of 'Gender Performativity' (1990) focused that:
a)   Meaning of gender is fixed within the constraints of culture and patriarchy.
b)   Gender is performance.
c)   Category of feminine only is fixed within the context of heterosexuality.
d)   Deviation from norms results in 'denaturalization'.

Butler (1999) suggested thatdifference between gender and sex showed that gender was not determined by sex and if sex and gender were really different then a woman was not the cultural construction of female body and man was not to be associated with male bodies. Therefore, sex was something stable and gender was constructed socially (Butler, 1999).Sexwas a cultural norm asit was no more determined by the body (Butler, 2011). In many cultures at that point there existed two sexes,either a male or female which held to transform children born with ambiguous genitalia through operation.To fit into cultural norms, people change their sex. Based on this, Butler (1998) developed her arguments about gender being performative.Gender identity is framed within certain set of acts. It implies that no one is a gender prior to doing gendered acts. Moreover, identity is guaranteed through balancing ideas of sex, gender, and sexuality which can be associated to gender as performative.

Qualitative in nature, the study uses content analysis technique to analyse the text. Krippendorff's content analysis depends on the notion that social orders have organizations with practical experience in making and dispersing the 'operating rules' of the society and these rules and ideas are exhibited in the written communications of a specific society (2004).

IV.   TEXT AT A GLANCE

Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda by Becky Albertalli revolves around Simon Spier, an LGBTQ character, who is unable to declare himself a gay and conceals his sexual orientations. Though, *Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda* is a farcical story, it illustrates the difficulties faced by LGBT characters in coming out and revealing their identity. It highlights different issues concerning LGBT people living in societies where gender is viewed as male and female only. Albertalli gives a positive representation of LGBT community, helping LGBT with minimized suicide risks and harassment on the basis of gender and sexual

orientations. Simon though reluctantly but successfully comes out as gay supported equally by his friend and family.

Gender Performativity in Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda

Queer studies' circles around the nature of heterosexual (sexual relation between male and female only) gender, body and gender system. Queer theorists consider gender a dynamic entity that changes according to performance and suggest that it should not be perceived fixed into male and female gender construction only. Further, the reason given for this notion is based on the idea that gender is related to gendered acts one repeatedly performs. In this study, the selected texts are specifically analysed form the perspectives ofButler's theory of performativity, a concept she gave in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity* (1990). The purposeis to investigate different LGBT characters specifically homosexual and bisexual relationships in the context of different societies represented in the selected texts. The study focuses main characters, their LGBT identities and difficulty they face in unfolding their homosexual or bisexual identities.

Simon the protagonist, is biologically a male but he develops attachment towards the same sex, he has different sexual orientations than other characters in the text. He performs his gender differently which labels him a homosexual. He tries thrice to date a girl but feels uncomfortable to be in relationship with a girl. He confesses that he does not enjoy girls' company and finds himself at odds with girls, Simon expresses that:

In eighth grade, I had this girlfriend…So, we went to the eighth-grade dance as a couple, but my friends and I spent the whole night eating Fritos and spying on people from under the bleachers. And at one point, this random girl comes up to me and tells me my girlfriend is waiting in front of the gym. (Albertalli, 2015, p.6)

Apparently, Simon does not know what people do when they go out dating a girl. Since at eighth grade, he is not sure of himself being a gay "I think the real reason I had girlfriends was because I didn't one hundred percent believe I was gay" (Albertalli, 2015, p.7). That is why he keeps a girlfriend though he does not really know what people do with a girlfriend. Simon does not dance with his girlfriend. He simply eats and spies on people while his girlfriend is waiting for him in front of the gym. Butler's notion of performativity best explains the character of Simon as his gender is constructed according to the gendered acts which can be termed as his performance. The fact that he never found comfort in girls' company and specifically when they become his girlfriends confirm that he is homosexual rather than heterosexual with deviant sexual orientations. If he takes interest in girls, he might have been comfortable with dating them, but he restrains from going on dates with girls because of his gender performance. In fact, he is afraid to be closed to girls and does not enjoy their company. Also, he tries to avoid them as much as possible.

Simon cannot perform the role of a boyfriend and therefore, stops making girlfriends since he is not a heterosexual, he assumes himself to be a gay. Moreover, had Simon being heterosexual, he would have taken Abbey as his girlfriend "She has the kind of mouth that always rests in a faint smile, and she smells a little like French toast" (Albertalli, 2015, p.15).Simon adores Abbey's company onlyas a friend.

Structural-functional theory (1960) states that, in a given society one must figure out how to sustain in order to ensure survival. The idea is that gender roles are not biological rather given by culture within a society (Parsons, 1960). Simon is unable to proclaim sexual orientations clearly because of the role assigned to him by the society, ignoring which is not easy for him to do. Though, not interested in girls, he has to socialize with friends like Abbey "that's the thing people wouldn't understand" (Albertalli, 2015, p.15). He worries about his identity defined by society; thus, he conceals the reality.

"If I were straight, the Abby thing, I do think I get it" (Albertalli, 2015, p.15);Abbey is the one he takes as his girlfriend. Simon himself makes sure about his gender being not straight which most of the people thought and falls in line with Butler's theory of performativity that there is no natural gender, rather constructed socially by gendered acts, and his gendered acts makes him homosexual (gay) and not a heterosexual. He himself makes it clear that he is not a straight or heterosexual male but is a gay, when Abbey tries to convince him that Leah could be a perfects match for him "You looked so sweet together tonight." "Me and Leah?" I ask. But I'm gay. GAY. Gaaaaaaaayyyyy" (Albertalli, 2015, p.24). Simon's conversationwith Abbey shows his interest in deviant relations.

Simon adores and appreciates the physical appearance of Cal, a handsome good-looking boy of his school. He is not excited about meeting his girlfriend or does not show any intent to be in relation with Abby or Leah or any other girl. However, the moment he comes across Cal, whom he thinks to be gay "haven't heard anything about him being gay, but there is this kind of vibe I get, may be" (Albertalli, 2015, p.15)he shows his excitement that he understands him and shows his attraction towards him. Simon, though has

not yet announced publicly about his gender, however, he through his behaviour perfectly comprehends the gender he now performs. The text appears to pave way for the acceptability of homosexuals here.

Queer theory does not consider the binary division that is male/female and gay/lesbian appropriate and considers it artificial, which leads the society to hetero-dominance construction (de Lauretis, 1991). Simon tries to segregate these different classifications, and stands for representing a progressively fluid idea of gender. Simon pays close attention to their behaviour "Bram is cute. Like, really, really cute. He stands a foot or so back from the fence, totally sweaty, with a white turtleneck under his soccer shirt" (Albertalli, 2015, p.91). He breaks gender stereotypes of paying attention and getting attracted to opposite sex people only. The narrative supports the Western notion of same sex relations. Simon finding out that Blue is also gay, starts over thinking about Blue.He feelsobsession for Blue "What I want is to sit here and think about Blue. I think I'm starting to get a little obsessed with him" (Albertalli, 2015, p.50). Simon tries to unfold his identity and becomes conscious of the fact that he is attracted towards the same sex. Simon learns to know about his sexual orientation as he adores the same sex by being accustomed to romanticizing same sex relations.

Idea of gender performance is not inherent; rather something, which is performed subject to gendered acts due to which Butler termed gender as performative (1988). Simon'sdepicts that one has not an already defined gender. Simon's character does not show fixity of gender "Why is straight the default? Everyone should have to declare one way or another, and it should be this big awkward thing whether you're straight, gay, bi, or whatever" (Albertalli, 2015, p.69).Simon believes that there should not be a default anymore. He emphasised the idea that people should stop considering heterosexuality as a default, as there are people like him who do not fit into hetero construction of the society and want to be accepted the way they are without being a big deal "as a side note, don't you think everyone should have to come out?" (Albertalli, 2015, p.69). Simon questions gender constructions. He tries to denaturalize the fixed gender construction. If gender is not natural and fix then there should not be any default and for straight parents accepting their queer children should not be strange.

In 'Sex & Gender' based on the individual's inclination for sexual accomplices, three distinctive sexual orientations are 'Hetero' or 'Heterosexual', 'Homo' or 'Homosexual' and 'Bisexual' (Hilary, 2009). Based on these constructions given by Hilary (2009), Simon is more likely to be inclined towards homo and believes himself to be a homosexual. He lives with his parents and two sisters, Alice and Nora, which means he is the only male in the three children of the family. As we know family plays a vital role in shaping behaviour and opinion of a child, and playing most of the times in the company of his sisters Simon has developed a habit of socializing with girls which serves as a primary socializing in the development of a child. Also, it is a fact that his family is less religious and more democratic which is an encouraging factor in his becoming a homosexual "My parents are Democrats. My dad likes to joke around, and it would definitely be awkward, but I guess I'm lucky. I know they're not going to disown me" (Albertalli, 2015, p.25). He confidently performs his gender because he believes his parents will not disown him, which shows if gender stereotypes are minimized, LGBT community can be in better situation to practice their gender and sexual orientations. However, Western societies have taken up the notion where religion is backgrounded.

Feminists and LGBT community struggle against gender stereotypes (Wilchins, 2004). Simon represents the struggles trying to keep his identity a secret. He does not talk to Blue openly because it not easy for both of them to come out and reveal their secrete identity. I'm supposed to decide when and where and who knows and how I want to say it" (Albertalli, 2015, p.92).When martin knows about his secret being gay, he tries to blackmail him "You blackmailed me. This was—I mean, wasn't that the whole goddamn point? Humiliating me?" (Albertalli, 2015, p.92).Simon feels humiliated when Martin let people know about his gender. Minority gender always struggles in their strife for bringing fairness. Gender based discrimination has often led to serious problems for LGBT people, and the straight or hetero need not to exploit it like Martin (Wilchins, 2004).

For most of the people it is not easy to perform their gender based on their gendered acts (Ram, 2008). In the novel Simon and Blue face, the same problem as they are not able to meet each other in person because of the fear of coming out. Despite the fact that they love each other and chatting online, they feel hesitant to meet each other in person "I wonder what it would be like to meet him in person, after all this time. Would we even have to speak? Would we go straight into making out?" (Albertalli, 2015, p.37).

There are situations in Simon's life when he feels really disappointed at his helplessness of not being able to come out as a gay and meet Blue "I don't think I can keep this up. I don't care if it ruins everything. I'm this close to making out with my laptop screen. Blue BlueBlueBlueBlueBlue" (Albertalli, 2015, p.62).Simon really feels frustrated at things happening around him, and seems fed up of his secret, chatting Blue on laptop without knowing his real name and for not being able to meet in person. Discriminatory attitude towards LGBT does not allow Simon and Blue to make their relation public

despite loving each other "I don't even know his freaking name. I think I'm a little bit in love with him" (Albertalli, 2015, p.62) also, both of them feel reluctant to share their real names and continue chatting on email with code names. Had there been no strict gender construction into male and female only, they would not have code names and would not wait that long for meeting each other in person.

Misogynistic instruction imprinted on youth mind enabled Martin to blackmail Simon, otherwise it should not have been a shock to know Simon's homosexual identity, neither Simon should have worried about Martin's coming out about his secret as gender is varied and based on one's repeated gendered acts. Martin tries to exploit Simon situation and ask his favour in getting close to Abbey. Furthermore, later in the novel when Martin reveal Simon's identity, he is not happy at what Martin has done to him "I don't even know what tell you other than the fact that being out to the universe is completely exhausting" (Albertalli, 2015, p.98) he himself feels uncomfortable when people came to know about his identity.

A study reveals children make perception about things from reading those text books and things they watch through media (Ullah & Haque, 2016). Simon is threatened by Martin "the entire school would know within a day" (Albertalli, 2015, p.2) Simon he feels and falls prey to Martin easily, he is brought up in the same society and feels reluctant at letting his identity disclosed to the whole school. Though, gender is fluid and is a choice rather fixed, Simon is not able to avoid beguiling at Martin's hands, "I just think we're in a position to help each other" (Albertalli, 2015, p.2). Religious and social barriers baring individuals form such acts.

Performing gender roles other than male or female is viewed natural by Butler (1990). Simon thinks people are not ready to accept LGBT and avoid conversation of homosexuality with anyone but only Blue. Queer theory seeks to deconstruct the strict gender norms constructed as a result of heterosexual societies as it offensive and lacks representation of queer people (1990). Heterosexual children nourished in a society develop minimum amount of tolerance towards homosexuals and often shares jokes against them resulting in violence and blackmailing. Simon on finding out that Martin has taken screenshot of his conversation with Blue goes through a lot of mental stress. Strict gender rules have always kept a section vulnerable which puts them under a lot of struggle in getting proper recognition. However, positive representation in fictional text and media representation has changed the perception up to a great extent and proved a helpful tool in deconstructing the strict gender notions in denaturalizing it. Moreover, American fictions sketches a sympathetic portrayal of LGBTQ characters.

Positive portrayal of LGBTQ characters in media, movies, comedies and other sources of entertainment, along with the tolerating attitude towards homosexuality, there is a significant change in the perspectives towards LGBTQ community in American society (Calzo et al. 2009). Apart from the problems faced by Simon in letting his family and friends know about his identity. Simon parents are kind enough to accept their son's queer identity "it's not even about me being gay, because I know deep down that my family would be fine with it. We're not religious" (Albertalli, 2015, p.25).Simon knows his family accept him as normal with deviant sexual orientation and queer identities. "I know they're not going to disown me" (Albertalli, 2015, p.25).

Representation of LGBTQ community, general opinion really gets affected and gender fluidity disturbs the young people mind, which helps in bringing marked changes in their behaviour towards these people. Similarly, Albertalli through Abbey and Leah show his audience and readers that it is cool to have friends who are homosexuals, which is not as bad as some people think it is. "My friends would be fine. Albertalli successfully showed his reader and audience how to be cool on finding your friends belonging to LGBT community. Support like Abbey definitely minimizes the negative stereotyping and lessen the life risk for LGBT community. "I feel mostly relieved" (Albertalli, 2015, p.61).

The narrative exposes its audience to gender fluidity that foundsgender as not fixed and natural, rather a fluid entity which changes over time depending on certain set of gender acts (Butler, 1990). Fictional character face some problems in unfolding their identity being homosexuals, however, they are able to make it public. American fiction representation is successful in breaking gender stereotypes. Their society is be a better place to live for LGBT community, and helps in minimizing suicide risks and gender-based violence against LGBT people.

Gender Performativity in The Kite Runner
The Kiter Runner by Khalid Hosseini is a story of friendship, father and sons, about sacrifices for friendship as well as of betrayal in friendship. Beautifully written story throws light on certain practices consider as taboo and intolerable in Afghanistan, the setting place of the novel, a country soon to be destroyed by war. The story revolves around two young boys named Amir and Hassan. They both grow up under the same roof, however, live a completely different life. Amir is the son of a wealthy diplomate, while Hassan is their servant's son.

The novel includes intrinsic elements to show the existence of LGBT characters in the novel. Though, the characters, whose sexual orientations match acts with LGBT community does not come out openly as gay or bisexual and the reasons are understood in the country like Afghanistan, where pronouncing mere terms related to LGBT discourse is considered taboo, followed by strict punishments under Afghanistan's constitutional law under Islamic Sharia Law (Bezhan, 2017). A studyrevealed that in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, members of LGBT community cannot declare their gender identity and sexual orientations belonging to LGBT because of the fear of persecution, harassment and life threats. There is lack of public education and the religious obligation in the country does not allow these people to express their sexual orientations and gender openly. There is very minimum amount of public discussion about issues related to LGBT and terms like homosexuality are dealt as taboo words (Emadi, 2019). In the country where certain practices are shockingly common, pronouncing mere terms associated to those practices are considered taboo words there. In such circumstances, LGBTQ issues remain unaddressed. In Afghanistan, the Taliban led government instituted strict nationwide Sharia law in the light of which performing gender other than male and female is considered a sin and is liable to punishment (Bezhan, 2017).

Assef, antagonist of the novel, shows bisexual habits and behaviour in his character. He is a boy having deviant sexual orientations. The choices he makes about his sexual orientations support the claim that he is a bisexual.For example, the incidents when Wali, Kamal and Assef want to punish Hassan for a mishap took place in the past; Assef proposes a punishment for Hassan in his mind according to his sexual orientations. According to Freud (1913), the unconscious is the storehouse of desire unfulfilled which is the reason of most behaviour of human beings. Here lies, according to him, the most primitive wishes went unfulfilled due to unfavourable circumstances, which Freud called as repression. (Freud, 1913). Assef's repressed wishes find an expression the moment he gets an opportunity of expressing it and when he sees Hassan helpless, his repressed emotions come out to play its part, which he does without even listening to his own friends.

Wali and Kamal do not seem to agree with the supposed punishment, however, Assef did not put off his proposal. Wali tells Assef that his father told him it was a sin to have sex with same sex people, but, Assef put him off by saying that"Your father won't find out, and there is nothing sinful about teaching a lesson to a disrespectful donkey" (Hosseini, 2003, p.62). Assef on getting opportunity of expressing his repressed emotion spare no time in expressing it. His friends, who equally wants to punish Hassan are however, not in favour of what Assef is going to do "Just a Hazara, Assef said. But Kamal kept looking away" (Hosseini, 2003, p.62),Kamal is looking away and Wali tells him that was a sinful act, but Assef listens to none.It is neither sinful for him nor is an act of shame and taunts his friends. "fine Assef snapped. All I want you weakling to do is hold him down. Can you manage that?" (Hosseini, 2003, p.62).

The narrative, thus supports gender as fluid and not to be taken fixed and stable (Butler, 1990), Assef's bisexuality is confirmed by certain set of acts. When Amir went to Afghanistan for rescuing Hassan's son Sohrab, Zaman who is in charge of an orphanage tells Amir about what Assef does to children he takes from orphanage "Usually he will take a girl. But not always" (Hosseini, 2003, p.218). The South Asian narrative understands gender fluidity as negative, which points out societal and cultural clash.

The discussion leads to denote that people with religious disposition appear more hostile and they hardly accept homosexual people (Detenber et al. 2013). Therefore, gender troubles remain secretive and dangerous. Through antagonist, the narrative establishes its negative reception of queer troubles. When Amir went to rescue Sohrab his nephew, Assef tells him "would you like to see my boy?" (Hosseini, 2003, p.238)the phrase 'my boy' implies how possessive he is about that boy, further, he made the boy dressed in certain way"his eyes darkened with mascara, and his cheeks glowed with an unnatural red. (Hosseini, 2003, p.238). Assef dressed Sohrab in the typical way local women are dressed. He kept him as passive sexual partners, which shows his attraction towards the same sex people confirming to his bisexual identity. When Amir asked Assef to handover Sohrab to him he replied "what do you want do to with him? Then a coy smile, or to him?" (Hosseini, 2003, p.243).Assef either deliberately or he does not know about Amir's relation with Sohrab asks Amir if he wants to do the same what Assef is doing to him, which Amir denies by calling it disgusting (p.244).Assef could not exercise his bisexual orientations because of the strict state laws, which resulted in his bringing boys from orphanage for a purpose.

HRW (Human Right Watch, 2017) reports no protection in Afghan Law against harassment, violence or gender-based discrimination and sexual orientations. The report also added that there are risk of arrest, persecution and violence not only from the government but also form the family. In such strict gender construction, LGBTQ people are not able to come out and keep their activities secrete. In South Asian countries LGBTQ people cannot practice, their gender openly which leads to problem like rape and forced sex, and victims like Hassan are not able to talk about it because of ridicule and public shaming. They are not even able to discuss the matter with their parents as according to HRW report parents either disown

them from their family or kill them to restore their honour of the sham they think the child has brought to the family (2017).

According to another report of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty byBezhan (2017), gays in Afghanistan live a dual life. To their friends and family, they are heterosexual and to themselves they have a secrete identity which they are not able to disclose because of disaster it can bring along.*The Kite Runner* also shows life very challenging for LGBT people. Though, Hassan was forced for the same sex sexual intercourse, still he is not able to talk about the atrocities beset on him. Had there been a positive attitude towards LGBTQcharacters.

Hence, gender representation in *The Kite Runner*remains implicit;however, presence of LGBT is there in every society and the issue needs to be addressed for negative or positive implication.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study focused on American and South Asian fiction portraying denaturalization of gender caused by deviation from established heterosexual gender norms. Both the texts highlighted existence of sexual orientations through various characters which did not align with the norms laid down by heteronormative societies. From the analysis of both these texts, it is assumed that in societies where gender is perceived strictly into male and female construction only, it is very difficult for LGBT characters to come out and pronounce their gender identity based on their sexual performance. Religion and culture bar individuals from such acts and condemn these acts as abominable and punishable overtly. Every religion of the world pronouncessuch acts though modern religious practitioners support these as 'diversity'. *Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda*representsSimon fortunate enough that his family does not consider gender a fixed construction and accepts his gay identity. Contrary to Albertalli's novel, Hosseini's novel representsthe antagonist Assef's sexual orientations not alignedto the strict rules laid down by heterosexual society and as a result he could not pronounce his sexual orientations like Simon and kept performing his gender secretly, which becomes destructive as he exercises his intentions over orphan children. Analysis also reflects gender performance varying from culture to culture. The study found how gender and sexuality wereconsidered merely masculine and feminine and 'deviant' characters actedaltogether different in western and eastern societies. The study also found that talking about sexual orientation is a taboo in eastern societies due to religious obligations and cultural conventions. Whereas, Western societies show a flexible attitude to such differences. However, the study asserted religion and culture diminishing form western societies sustaining claim of being 'Liberal' and 'Secular'.

VI. Future Implications

With the world growing exponentially, diversity in social circles and gender needs to be explored to understand the positive and negative implications. Gender alienation gives rise to many social and moral vicestherefore; in future more research is required in the South Asian fiction to understand gender segregation from religious perspective.

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