Queer Representation in Twenty First Century Narratives and Popular Culture

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Gender and sexuality are fundamental in understanding any structure of the society and culture, as it is the cultural construction that decides the 'acceptable' bodies and 'non-conforming' bodies. Gendered and sexual identity are always in the scrutiny of hetrosexist and homonormative ideals and norms, the dichotomous configurations and culturally accepted behaviours, attitudes and sexuality. These regulations control bodies and sexualities to behave in socially and politically accepted manners as gender identities are often presented using socio-political apparatus within the nation-space. Sexualities and identities are in dichotomous frameworks of hetrosexuality/homosexuality, fat/skinny, masculine/feminine, able bodies/specially abled and so on. This leads to the formation of power structure, where the marginalized are subjugated and dominance of one class/identity over the other is seen. Surveillance on bodies, and sexuality are played out in this binary framework and the subjugated becomes the minority, and the government can either choose to recognise the marginalization of the minorities, or justify discrimination which leads to certain entitlements that are not available for bodies that transgress cultural, social and political boundaries within the nation space. The ideological state apparatus, and hetrosexist family system reconstructs and establishes gender identities through constant negation and appropriation of gender roles through performative and corporeal constructs. Queer identities have always been in conflict within the idea of nationalism as ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ is considered as the ‘norm’ in gender identites and in family systems, by the invisible disciplinarians of the society, who constantly regulate, and put under surveillance the bodies, that leads to marginalization.

With the decriminalisation of homosexuality by the Supreme Court in 2018, choosing to recognize the rights of queer communities, progress has been made in initiating inclusivity and representation of marginalised sexual communities. However, in academic scholarship and space in Indian context, it is still important to inaugurate and venture into this discourse on the representation of queer identities through the contemporary narratives, writing the self, and popular culture. These representations in literary texts and cinema become representations of the society and culture, and thus needs to be investigated. Contemporary digitized period have seen the emergence of more public queer articulation and representation of their lives in “art, media, films, on the Internet and in other cultural spaces; many of which are created and produced by queer people themselves” (Narrain and Bhan, 20). Representation of queer subjects in literary space and popular culture have increased since the past decade and these depictions have shifted from being stereotypical queer characters to realistic and diverse characterization of queer identities. These contemporary manifestations and progressive shift seen in popular culture and in the literary narratives provide a scope to examine...
queer subjects and their identity within the nation space in the light of current positioning. The fragments of queer identity formation can be understood through these contemporary realistic and diverse forms of representations as they move away from the ‘heteronormative male gaze’ and ideals.

This edited book aims to put together the contemporary modes and sites of queer representation in the twenty first century, which have undergone a massive shift with the emergence of streaming platforms and contemporary narratives that show a positive portrayal and positioning of queer identities. The heterogeneity of sexual identities offers bodies and diverse imaginations to flourish and allows the coexistence of multiple cultural identities and sexual identities. The gendered identities are culturally constructed and heterogeneity of a cultural construction in India provides space to understand these representations through literature and popular culture. Academic discourses and scholarship are further aligned to this social constructionism of gender identities in the West. In India, contemporary scholarship, segregation and documentation of information pertaining to gender and sexual identities, is skewed more towards women’s representation, feminism and masculinities and other allied areas. There still exist a dearth of scholarly documentation and engagement on queer sexualities through contemporary representations and narratives of change. This proposed book aims to carefully identify and present different domains of queer representations based on specific thrust areas. Book chapters are invited from eminent academicians, activists, sociologists and researchers for the edited book. In sum, this edited book hopes to inaugurate the much needed literary and cultural debates on queer representation to strengthen the idea that queer subjects no longer function as palatable to the heteronormative gaze.

We invite book chapters not exceeding 6000 words in APA format that explore queer identity and representation through contemporary queer narratives, popular culture and visual culture.

Potential areas for consideration include, but are not limited to:

- Intersectional queerness and merging identities
- Queer body image and identity in 21st century literature
- Fashioning queer identities
- Social Stigma and Queer Violence
- Queer culture and Diaspora
- Queer Rights, activism and movements
- Queer visual culture
- Class, caste, and positionality of queer identity
- Queer Politics
- Male gaze and queer subversion
- Lesbian Aesthetics
- Queer portrayal within the national space
- Writing the self in queer and trans memoirs
- Charting Queer genealogies through literature
- Colonial/Postcolonial trans and queer identities
- Queer Cultures
- Queer Health and Reproductive Rights
- Lesbian and Trans masculine representation in fiction

Interested contributors of the book chapter may send an extended abstract of not more than 500...
words, with four keywords along with a brief bio-note to the editors at queerstudiesbook@gmail.com by 25th July 2021. On accepting your abstract, you may send in original, unpublished essays of around 6000 words (notes and references included) on the above mentioned or any related topics. You may contact us for any queries at queerstudiesbook@gmail.com. This proposal will be submitted to Routledge India.

Publication Timeline:
Submission of abstracts: 25th July 2021
Intimation of Acceptance: 01st August 2021
Submission of full paper: 31st October 2021

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