

FROM CLOSET TO CELEBRATION: INTERSECTIONAL AND ECOCRITICAL TRAJECTORIES OF QUEER REPRESENTATION IN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

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Abstract

Over the last few decades, representations of LGBTQIA+ identities in the literature as well as culture have undergone some degree of significant transformation—from marginalisation as well as coded invisibility to the contact of affirmation, resistance, and the public celebration. This paper attempts to examine these changes in interdisciplinary approach with the Queer Theory, intersectionality and queer ecocriticism being merged together. Moving beyond Eurocentric queer paradigms, the work anticipates the fact that sexuality and gender, as applied to caste, across class, language, region, law and ecological relations, is lessening evidence through not only autobiographical, but also cultural writings, swirling the Eurocentric canon. It is the assumption of the paper that the queerness is not ahistorical and unnatural but deeply rooted in cultural and ecological frameworks. With the help of queer autobiographies, translation, pedagogy, legal narratives, and environmental imaginary, the study will show that literature is a crucial site of resistance against heteronormativity and the creation of inclusive futures. The suggested study will introduce diverse, moral, and more worldwide reflective representation of LGBTQIA+ people through the integration of ecological and social justice in queer literary studies.

Keywords:

Queer Theory, Intersectionality, Queer ecocriticism, LGBTQIA+, Indian literature, Representation, Culture

1. Introduction

1.1 Literature, Silence, and the Marginalisation of Queer Lives

Literary and cultural representations of the LGBTQIA+ identities have long been well shaped by silence, stigma, as well as the social exclusion. During the vast majority of historical periods, the society treated queer lives in a discriminatory manner and placed them in the shadows, either not performing any service whatsoever to the mainstream history, or only alluding, developing allegories and metaphors, to their existence (Fabbri *et al.*, 2025). Non-conformity of gender, same-sex and non-normative relationships were often portrayed as immoral, unnatural or, pathological as they supported the greater orders by putting heterosexuality on a higher plane as well as reinstatement of the entrenched gender roles. Thus, the queers were barely granted an opportunity to be represented in the literature as multi-dimensional and complete human beings. They are quite sad characters, villains, or brief subtexts, demonstrating the fears and restrictions of morals of the cultures that created such texts.

Despite being repressed, literature has always been queer, and it is a fruitful area. Nonetheless, even the efforts of censorship, the religious and state authority to act against non-normative identities, authors succeeded to enable the subject of forbidden desires through symbolism, the use of coded speech, other types of narrative. They continued with poetry, myth, drama and fiction as queer meanings in order to create what may be called as an underground record of queer memory (Muthukrishnan *et al.*, 2024). These written fragments suggest that queerness has not been absorbed by anything other than the culture and rather it has been pushed to the margin with unadulterated force.

1.2 Queer Histories in the Indian Cultural Imagination

Indian environment is an extremely fertile and dense landscape of quality to bring out the queer representation. The pre-colonial Indian writings, mythology and devotional traditions contain a lot of instances of fluidity between genders, intimacy between people of the same sex and non-binary identities. The Indian

cultural history perhaps tolerated sufficiently diverse experiences of otherness, not necessarily subjected to male-female and heterosexual conventions, through the character of Shikhandi in the Mahabharata, male Shaivite iconography, and homoeroticism of Bhakti poetry (Ourkiya *et al.*, 2023). These could not be in line with modern ideas of a gay, lesbian, or transgender, but they demonstrate that there already was diversity on gender and sexual desire in indigenous traditions.

This pluralistic interpretation of sexuality and gender was in a deadly way defeated by colonial modernity. The heterosexuality was defined as normal and moral and the acquisition of heterosexual desire was deviant because of the Victorian codes of morality that were set by the British rule (Prabir *et al.*, 2022). The criminalization of same sex acts in the Indian penal code which is section 377 essentially erased the inherent sexual and gender diversity off the legal and social platform in 1861. This colonial past is what continues to affect the attitude towards queer individuals in India in order to offer a culture of shame, secrecy and fear, decades later than the independence.

1.3 Law, Culture, and the Limits of Legal Reform

In 2018, the LGBTQIA+ laws were brought to history, as the Section 377 law was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of India. It meant that the same sex relationships ceased to be criminal one and mentioned the constitutional dignity, equality and individual freedom. This legal change not only an intellectual rest to many queers, but a psychological and symbolic validation.

However, the law will not reverse centuries of social stigma, family influence, religious criticism and cultural exclusion. Homophobia and transphobia continue to prevail in the everyday life as they are discriminatory, forceful and quiet (Amy *et al.*, 2022). On this border, between the knowledge of the law and the real existence, literature and culture play a special role. Only through literary works, films and even autobiographies, queers can retell their lives and define violence and pleasure, imagine other possible futures that cannot be permitted by law. In its turn, culture is also a significant ground of negotiation, problematic, and transforming social attitudes.

1.4 The Need for an Intersectional and Ecocritical Approach

In spite of the fact that the visibility of the queer people has been increasing in most of the worlds, majority of queer studies have been pegged on the metropolitan and western experiences of the middle classes. These models do not acknowledge the overlap of sexuality and caste, class, language, religion, region, and ecology particularly in postcolonial societies like India. Such a queer subject of an upper-caste, English speaking, urban queer does not experience that he is a queer person as a Dalit, rural, and language marginalised one (Xausa *et al.*, 2022). Without the use of the intersectional approach, one may need to be concerned that the queer studies would recreate all these hierarchies, which it is meant to result in.

Moreover, the heterosexual reproduction is usually stigmatized by the hegemonic cultural discourses as something normal and tolerates the unnaturalness of queerness or non-conformity to the nature. Queer ecocriticism rejects the fallacy of this line of thinking by demonstrating heterogenous, perennial, and non-Zagatory nature and sexuality. Considering the queer theory as relating with the ecological thinking one may ask how the ideas of purity, normality, and reproduction are imposed to control the human bodies and nature.

1.5 Aim and Scope of the Study

This paper will discuss how LGBTQIA + representations are becoming manifested in texts and culture through the complementary strategies of the queer theory, intersectionality, and queer ecocriticism. It does by focusing on Indian and non-Western texts, in particular, on queer autobiographies, regional literature, translations into the West, pedagogy scenarios, the ecological texts, and by declaring culturally specific genders and sexualities unstable the Western universalist models of queerness (Lillywhite *et al.*, 2025). It will, in this manner, attempt to demonstrate how literature can be regarded as simultaneously mirror of societal transformation as well as a powerful tool of imagining a more socially inclusive, ethical and sustainable future.

2. Theoretical Framework

This research is conceptualized in the application of theory of queer, intersectionality and queer ecocriticism. Put together, the frameworks enable the consideration of the representation of LGBTQIA+ in literature and other types of cultural art as something more than the politics of identity, explaining how sexuality, power, environment, and social hierarchies, constitute each other (Vakoch *et al.*, 2022). Such a practice instead of applying queerness as a predetermined category is also applicable in locating it in colonial, caste, environmental, and cultural production, especially non-Western ones.

2.1 Queer Theory

2.1.1 From Sexual Identity to Sexual Discourse

Initially, queer theory emerged as a radical movement of the naturalization and essentialist ideas of sexuality which were the order of the day in the psychology, law, or social sciences at the close of the twentieth century (Clark *et al.*, 2023). The earlier models were prone to believing the sexual identities as unchanging objects founded on either biology or individual actuality (homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual). Queer theory rebuts that, saying that it is discourse, and institutions and power relations that make the histories of the production of sexual identities rather than its discoveries as natural truth.

The work of Michel Foucault *History of Sexuality* made a radical difference in the way sexuality is understood. Foucault demonstrated that it is not only that contemporary sexuality was regulated by power but still under the power regulation in the practices of medicine, law, education and religion (Two Bears *et al.*, 2022). It is in terms of grouping individuals such as homosexuals and heterosexuals that might be considered as instruments of classification, surveillance and control as opposed to a natural fact. Thus, queerness is not an anomaly or deviation of a given normality, but rather a category created as a result

of the control power in a modernized society to bring under control bodies as well as desires.

This is one of the key lessons of literature studies because it allows texts to be recognized as not just expressions of sexuality, but also as an environment where sexuality is being created. The literary narratives, metaphors, genres, characterization plays a role in construction of the type of desire that can be imagined, approved or banned.

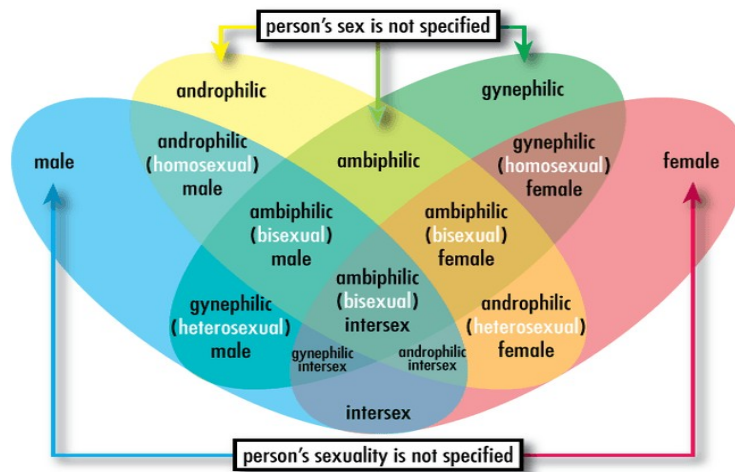


Figure: Queer theory

(Source: fiveable, 2022)

2.1.2 Gender Performativity and the Instability of Identity

The theory of performativity of gender as formulated by Judith Butler just made the traditional notions of identity more tenuous. Butler held that gender was never an identity, but rather a sequence of acts, gestures language and behaviours which were socially regulated in a repetitive manner (Wilson *et al.*, 2024). Masculinity and femininity should not be conceived as a state of mind, they are directed and repeated performances which are socially oriented.

This idea is expansive in queer presentation. Once gender ceases to be a natural category, but a performance then the abnormality is not on not subverting the gender norms through transgender, non-binary, or gender-fluid identities, but the

norms as unnatural. Queer literature is inclined before the emergence of the characters that subvert the presumptions of gender in such a manner as to display the exploitability of binary categories like male/female or masculine/feminine.

Drag, cross-dressing, disguise, and playing roles come in handy in literary tales to distort the notion of identities, which are not of a flux nature (Rajesh *et al.*, 2025). The queer theory thus is used by the critics to understand these tropes as the exceptions rather than political activity that informs these particles of gender and sexuality.

2.1.3 Queer Theory as a Critique of Normativity

It is not that queer theory is desirous to be represented, but it questions the entire processes that constitute normalcy. It challenges heteronormativity, the perception of the naturalness, universality and superiority of heterosexuality. It also attacks homonormativity that only invokes the acceptance of the queers on the terms of their conformity to heteronormativity principles such as monogamy, marriage, and domesticity.

This is an advantage of the queer theory in literature when queer theory is concerned with fluidity, ambiguity, non-reproductive intimacy and atypical forms of kinship (Foo *et al.*, 2024). Rather than celebrating one-sided positive benefits of formations of queer, queer theory glorifies discourses that bring out inconsistency, longing, disappointment, and turmoil. These texts are not yielding to the impulse of making queer lives acceptable or conformable.

2.1.4 Queer Theory in Postcolonial Contexts

Despite the introduction of queer theory in the western academia, it must be properly integrated in the applicability to the postcolonial settings. Gender and desire are not rather the catalysts of sexual identities in such a society like India but so are caste, religion, history of colonialism, and language. The queer experience such as that of hijra, kothi or aravani in the west such as gay and lesbian may not understand the experience of other queers.

The queer theory will then be decolonised. Examples of non-Western literary works like the Indian literature exhibit some traces of queerness that do not subscribe to the Western discourses of coming out and self-realization (McKisson *et al.*, 2023).

They are oriented, instead, towards community, ritual, family and survival. The current studies shall be rooted in a flexible, contextual queer theory that is sensitive to the culture-specifics.

2.2 Intersectionality

2.2.1 The Limits of Single-Axis Identity

Though, queer theory is hysterical normative sexuality, it can also be misleading in the flattening of difference in the queer communities in a situation whereby it views sexuality as the minimum or the single axis of identity formation. The response to this deficiency is intersectionality, which was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw, in that it shows the concomitancy of a multiplicity of oppressions which include: racism, sexism, classism, and casteism.

The sexuality of a queer person is not within a vacuum space. The queer lifestyles depend on their gender, caste, economic position, religion, language, disability, and geography. This inability to consider such intersections forms a partial and often elitist image of the queer life.

2.2.2 Intersectionality in the Indian Context

Intersectionality is also significant in India. Access to education, housing, employment, and social respect is still determined by the caste (Ylinen *et al.*, 2024). The Dalit queer will be discriminated not just on his sexuality but even on the ostracism of the caste. Similarly, the religious conventions, the local cultures and language hierarchies exert very huge influence on whether queerness has a sense of meaning and realization.

The canal city cultural queer communities have the propensity to dominate the popular discourse, media and NGOs activism. Their life is neither that of poor rural or non-English speaking queer. One of the places where these subjugated voices may have a voice is in literature.

2.2.3 Intersectionality and Queer Literature

The intersectional analysis allows the literary analysts a chance to examine the way in which characters cross the overlapping production of power.

Brokering gender is not the only part of the gender that is brokered in a novel but also family rejection, economic fragility, caste, and linguistic exclusion (Lucas *et al.*, 2024). One can find these bound up struggles in queer autobiographies in India where individuals will observe that the survival mechanism is through networks of kinship, labor and community.

This paper predetermines intersectionality, which, at the same time, does not allow romanticizing queerness, yet has presented it as a complex social fact that has arisen as a result of inequality and resistance.

2.3 Queer Ecocriticism

2.3.1 Challenging “Natural” Sexuality

Queer ecocriticism operates under the assumption that heterosexuality is natural and queerness unnatural that is also a cultural assumption. The classical ecological and social discourses associate nature to reproduction, family and reproduction of biology, which outweigh other forms of intimacy, which have no fulfillment with reproduction.

They have used this argument to justify the history of place the queer people in conditions of discrimination by depicting them to be out of nature. Queer ecocriticism results in the revelation of this ideological association and re-branding nature as multifaceted, erratic, disjointed.

2.3.2 Queering Ecology

Findings It is ecological systems that are thriving on diversity, adaptation and interdependence. Ecocriticism reveals that variation, hybridity and change are the concepts that constitute the keys to life in that it views nature as a queer phenomenon (Burnett *et al.*, 2025). Queer relations are also not governed by definite norms but are developed in care, cooperation and mutual dependence just like ecological networks.

Queer ecological thought is more inclined to literature that describes non-human relations, ecological crisis or other relations of kinship (Stokes *et al.*, 2025). These narratives project futures, which are not based on reproduction and inheritance but sustainability and nurture.

2.3.3 Literature as Ecological and Queer Archive

Queer ecocritical readings allow literary works to be taken as collections of other modes of living with the earth. The experiences that are queer of exclusion and resilience are put alongside the stories of migration, displacement, loss of the environment, and the bodily difference.

Coupling the queer life to the eco-vulnerability, the literature exposes the devastating nature of the systems of exploitation to both the marginalized human beings and the nature. This perception expands the queer studies into ethical project to think of life of justice, sustainability, and co-existence.

3. Historical Shifts in Queer Representation

The problem of queer-identities in literature and culture has never rested. It has evolved together with the shifting social attitudes, political forms, religious activities and law systems. The queer representation is reflective of more power, moral and struggle of belonging issues as the representation has been invisible and condemned to self-articulation and celebration (Grogan *et al.*, 2022). After such historic transformations, it will be possible not only track the control and marginalization of the queer lives, but also perceive how the queer life was able to fight the erasure through narrating their stories and practicing their culture.

3.1 Early Literary Depictions: Deviance, Tragedy, and Moral Panic

Throughout the early modern and the modern literature, the queer characters could hardly be regarded as the human beings. Rather they presented themselves as agents of ethical danger, psychological illness or wasted luxuries. Any non-conformity of gender and same sex desire was largely considered as insanity, crime or spiritual corruption. These pictures were not coincidental, but they were reflexions of better social anxieties of the family, reproduction and patriarchal dominance.

The homosexual characters in the then literature in Europe and the colonies were usually punished as the text progressed. All of their stories ended with a death, a banishment, loneliness, or a societal misery, which contributes to the belief system that going cross to heterosexuality is bound to destroy one. These narration lines carried an ideological value as well: they were a reminder to the readers of the evilness of non-normative desire and defended heterosexuality as the sole other acceptable method of intimacy.

The same had been the patterns of Indian literature of the colonial and early postcolonial periods (Porrone *et al.*, 2023). Although the pre-colonial writings managed to adopt a wide range of expression of sexuality and gender, the Indian literary that was influenced by the Western realism and the Victorian moralizing managed to gradually push the queerness into a taboo. The subject matter was not covered or the gay characters were indirectly and codified by authors. The queer characters that were presented are normally either proclaimed as a sick secret, sad damsel or rebuked.

3.2 Colonialism and the Regulation of Sexuality

Sexuality and gender in India was greatly transformed by the colonial rule in terms of how it was conceptualized. The British colonial rulers did not arrive carrying new laws only but also carrying with them new morals. The ideology of the Victorian was created to establish the heterosexual and monogamous family life as the basis of the civilized society. This model was followed to the letter since any other aspect of it was perceived to be immoral and uncivilized.

This was following introduction of section 377 of Indian Penal Code in 1861 which made it criminal to be unnatural and thus this was the act of sexual intercourse between the same sex and other unproductive pleasures. This was not only a penalties law that introduced new forms of identity (Vakoch *et al.*, 2024). Homosexuals were no longer a collective of individuals who may have made certain preferences, but transgressors and deviants before the law.

Colonialism too revived the indigenous traditions in the moralizing way. The practices and personalities of cultural and religious life, gender-fluid deities, marduki (hijra) communities, and same-sex worship, became re-established as uncivilized, obscene or sinsome. This caused both the systematic obliteration of the queer histories by mainstream narratives and the internalized shame of the communities themselves of the queers.

3.3 The Emergence of Queer Voice Through Life-Writing

However, at the end of the twentieth century a shift in significant direction was noticed in the appearance of queer autobiographical and testimonial writing (Sharma *et al.*, 2024). As feminist, anti-colonial and human rights movements increased in strength, suppressed groups began to revive their voices. Life-writing enabled queer people to fight against medical, legal and religious discourses that had caused them to become known as diseased, immoral and criminal.

The queer were given their voice through autobiographies, memoirs and oral histories without the experts representing them. In India it has been through the form of a narrative provided by hijra, transgender and queer writers who provide their narrative on how their lives were struggle in life, survival and dignity. They were not just any texts that were trying to achieve sympathy and yet had to be heard and respected.

The accounts of the queer life-writing included family rejection, violence, love, community, and resilience and shook the existing stereotypes. It showed that the issue of queer lives was not in any abstract form moral, but it was a real life situation that depended on the social organization and personal courage.

In such a manner literature was the place where no secret was made but where it is possible to proclaim the queer identity.

3.4 From Pathology to Politics

At the same time when queer autobiographical writing appeared, the LGBTQIA+ identities in literature began to lose their emphasis on the pathological accounts and gained the emphasis on the political one (Muñoz *et al.*, 2025).

This was largely the manner in which the topic concerning the queer had been depicted before, in a tragic, deviant or psychologically traumatized form, with a result that they either encountered solitude, punishment or death. These portrayals were in accord with an exaggerated social order in which non-normative sexualities were either treated in the field of morality or in the sphere of medicine. Still, the process of queer communities forming the political sphere began its reflection in the literature, which began to show queer characters as the members of resistance and solidarity and social change rather than victimization.

This alteration was particularly noticeable within the Indian atmosphere at the end of the twentieth and the first years of the twenty-first centuries. When the legal and social movements against the criminalization of homosexuality started generating momentum, writers and cultural producers required literature to be the place where they could offer challenges to the main stream narratives, and fantasize on different ways to be (Magro *et al.*, 2025). The struggle against Section 377 was not only a court battle but also a cultural battle in which the role of stories, poems, plays as well as films was rather important in the process of forming the conscience of people. A necessity to infuse the anthropomorphism of the law prohibition and courtly social stigmatization was being shocked out in the sophistication of their histories, in describing queer lives. They proved that the queer people were not the objects of an abstract law, or morality but they were human beings with their families, relations, wishes and dreams.

Such important places as the literary festivals, independent presses, and Internet websites might be found by queer voices. These spaces gave writers in territories, languages and social classes the ability to proliferate their writing without the

ensorship of mainstream and the market mechanisms (Moulton *et al.*, 2022). As such queer representation was more diverse and political. The focus in narratives shifted towards mass struggle, families of choice and community building of queers rather than just focusing on individual distress. The characters were taking protests, formed circles of support and care in the course of the discrimination; this is also representative of the activism of real life LGBTQIA+ activism.

At the same time, queer fiction, poetry, and drama started exploring the themes of love and friendship and non-ashamed and non-apologetic intimacy. These texts required not only the freedom of Ray and Homosexuals to live happily but also to be in lust, be emotionally satisfied, though in the hostile environment. Though they never rejected the idea of violence, exclusion, and fear, they disregarded the fact that which queerness is always deadly. They instead ensured that the queer life was complete, multidimensional and to be enjoyed. Through this, literature was placed in the position to draw back queer existence as not an issue to be solved but indeed as an active and valuable part of social and cultural lives.

3.5 Celebration, Visibility, and New Queer Futures

The publicity of queer representation in culture and literature more and more turns into visibility, affirmation, and celebration in the twenty-first century. The legal change, digital communication, and the rise of confidence of LGBTQIA+ communities to occupy the space of the populace have compelled this change. With pride parades, online spaces, queer groups and independent publishing, new cultural spaces have been developed where queer identities can express themselves openly and imaginatively (McKinney *et al.*, 2023). These developments have made it difficult to let the society overlook queer lives than it continues to be a contentious space in conservative and traditional space. Even visibility itself is now a sort of political power, defying a long tradition of silence and loss that used to mark queer life.

The new cultural moment can be seen in the contemporary queer literature writing, which demonstrates the characters and narratives that transcends the logic of tragedy (Emory *et al.*, 2025). Whereas most previous texts paid

significant attention to the issue of shame, secrecy, and voice of punishment, numerous modern texts describe the topics of queer love, friendship, and community in an assertive and gentle way. Suffering is not denied in these stories; family rejection, social stigma and violence are still making the lives of most queer people to conform to the same.

Nonetheless, rather than letting pain make queer identity whole and complete, the modern writing embraces the vulnerability and happiness simultaneously. It demonstrates that despite the hostile conditions, the queer individuals establish the relationships with each other, build the art and develop the methods of belonging.

What is specifically significant about this shift is the fact that it undermines the notion that queerness should be clarified, defended, or remedied. Through the depiction of queer life as a normal, multifaceted, and emotional phenomenon literature opposes the belief of LGBTQIA+ identities as a social issue. Queer characters are now being depicted more as lovers, friends, parents, artists, and activists, who go through the same connectivity and purpose struggles as any other person. These representations justify queer life without erasing its difference in that the diversity is presented as a normal part of the human experience and not a variation of it.

Simultaneously, partying in queer literature does not lustre blindly and uninformed of political facts. There are still many writings that feel the presence of discrimination and inequality. What has evolved is the unwillingness to have these conditions to have the last word (Manwaring *et al.*, 2024). Celebration is a resistance that creates value of queer life in opposing activist efforts to reduce or erase it. Queer writers and artists use storytelling, poetry, and performance to provide spaces in which other possible futures may be envisaged- futures, founded on inclusion, support and understandings as well as fear and marginalisation.

This silence to celebration ease is not an indication that the battle with injustice is over. Rather, it is an expression of a more and more resolute living in an open and creative way against all odds. As writers and artists, queer people are still asserting their right to be heard and right to love and exist. By so doing, they contribute to the creation of new imaginations of the society where the difference is not merely allowed but is welcomed as a source of power and potential.

4. Queer Autobiographies and Lived Experience

Queer autobiographical writing in India has become one of the strongest, most effective literary genres in the current discourse of LGBTQIA+. However, as opposed to fiction or theory writing, an autobiography introduces the reader to first-hand experience and gives the marginal person a voice, through which they can tell their own story, instead of having it narrated by an institution (i.e. medicine, law, religion, media). With such narratives, queer identities have long been either silenced or distorted in a society where such identities were historically and still remain to be a form of resistance, self-assertion, and cultural intervention.

Autobiography has been a key tool of dignity and agency that has enabled transgender and hijra communities to reclaim their dignity. In the past, hijras were either depicted as targets of derision, rite performers or medical monstrosities. They existed mostly out of the mainstream cultural platforms (Forrester *et al.*, 2024). This trend changed decisively with the appearance of such autobiographies as *The Truth About Me* by A. Revathi and *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi* by Laxmi Narayan Tripathi. These writings are not simply stories of individuals, but they confront the societal, cultural, and institutional structures that have marginalized the lives of gender-nonconforming individuals.

The Truth About Me by Revathi tells the story of an individual who was assigned as a man at birth but who develops and identifies as a woman and joins hijra people. Her story keeps progressing through that childhood disorientation, family denial, financial hardship, and the dislocation.

Instead of giving one moment of revelation or coming out, Revathi shows identity is a gradual process which is cast by desire, fear, community and needs to survive. This disrupts Western queer discourses which tend to make self-realization of the self a dramatic unit in the life of queer.

The way of becoming a self in the story by Revathi cannot be separated by searching a common space where one may live and be understood.

On the same lines, *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi* by Laxmi Narayan Tripathi is a characteristic depiction of hijra that switches between ritual tradition, activism, and individual change. Tripathi writes of her transitions into the hijra, a group that emerged out of Brahmin family and it indicates how caste privilege and cultural capital interplay with gender marginalization. Her story complicates the assumption that every hijra is oppressed in the same way it tells how access to education, language and social networks determine the opportunities queer individuals can have (Manwaring *et al.*, 2024). It is with this prism that hijra identity does not look like a singular category but rather a heterogeneous and stratified society internally.

The most prominent was the contribution that these autobiographies made towards resisting linear models of identity. The Western queer discourse tends to believe that the journey of queer life is that of confusion to self-acceptance, where the latter results in an act of identity declaration. Conversely, on-going negotiation is the focus of Indian queer autobiographies. Family rejection may go hand in hand with emotional attachment; ritual belonging may go hand in hand with economic exploitation; pride may go hand in hand with vulnerability. All these stories demonstrate that queerness is not a place, but a process that is constantly modified by shifting social and material landscapes.

The main topic revealed in these texts is the role of family and community in formation of queer lives. In the Indian society, the system of kinship ties is so ingrained in the economic and emotional survival that a break with a family is synonymous with homelessness, poverty, and violence. Autobiographical narratives indicate that a good number of transgender and hijra persons will have

to abandon their residential setups and seek refuge in other less genuine kinship groups in hijra community. Such communities offer emotional support, as well as economic and ritual systems that allow survivors to survive. Meanwhile, they are not devoid of hierarchy, exploitation, or discipline, which keeps the readers in mind the marginal spaces are organised by power as well.

These stories would not be possible without intersectionality. Hijra autobiographies reveal the effects of caste, class and religion on queer experience. A Dalit or working-class hijra has to deal with different problems as compared to the one who can access education and social capital (Roodenburg *et al.*, 2024). The interpretation and tolerance of non-conformity to gender depend on religious patterns, which may be Hindu, Muslim, or Christian. Through foregrounding of such intersections, queer autobiographies oppose the homogeneity of queer identity, and queer discourse of middle-class, urban, and English-language activism and media representation which can often assume hegemony.

In queer theory terms, these stories derail queer assumptions based on a fixed or biologically dictated gender. The lack of strength in gender categories is demonstrated through hijra identities that do not belong to either male or female. This instability is brought to bear by autobiographical writing in terms of displaying how people alternate to being different persons, different roles, and even different names as they go through their lives. These represent not the confusion of gender but the demonstration of the performative and constructionist quality of gender.

Meanwhile, these are political documents (Lane *et al.*, 2022). Through the description of their experience of police brutality, medical abuse, and social isolation, queer autobiographies reveal structural injustices of the transgender and hijra communities. They encourage readers to think of the queer lives not as individual issues but as the human rights and social justice issues. To this extent, autobiography is sort of activism, where individual pain is transformed into the social commentary.

Queer autobiographical writing also establishes some form of counter-archive to institutional histories that have neglected or overwritten their non-normative lives. These books help to keep stories alive which would otherwise have been forgotten and this gives the future generation an account of the life, struggle, and survival of queer people in unfriendly places. Literature becomes, therefore, the memory and resistance to the extent that marginalized lives may not only be remembered, but affirmed by it.

Altogether, queer Indian autobiographies are crucial in changing the ways in which gender and sexuality are apprehended. They subvert medical, legal, and cultural accounts of queerness that have historically represented it as an outsider category. By taking all these intricate approaches to describing identity, community and survival, these texts prove that queerness is not an individual characteristic but a highly social and political one.

5. Translation and the Politics of Queer Language

5.1 Translation as a Gateway to Queer Visibility

Translation has become important in expanding queer discourses beyond localized and frequently isolated linguistic groups and putting them into wider audience and publication in multilingual societies like India (Samant *et al.*, 2025). The gender and sexuality experiences of Indians are censored by the diverse cultural traditions, idioms, and social practices, which, because of the tremendous linguistic diversity, are distinctly expressed by Indians. Queer lives are practiced and told in Tamil, telugu, Bengali, Hindi, Marathi and numerous others, and with their own practices of having a name of desire, identity, the body. But English prevails in the national media, academic discourse, and international discussion in LGBTQIA+. Translation thus plays the vital role that enables the regional queer voices to be heard outside of their local cultural contexts.

Such a form of translation is not only technical, but very political and cultural. Translators are faced with the challenges of how to translate the meanings, emotions and social backgrounds of the queer lives between language worlds.

Much of native manifestations of gender and sexuality lack direct equivalents in English, which frequently is influenced by historical developments of identity politics in the West. This creates a set of hard decisions to be made by translators; whether to translate using the words that are familiar to the English language and thus will not necessarily represent local realities or to use original words that can put the reader to the test and hence educate (Ourkiya *et al.*, 2024). With the help of each decision, the perception of queer in new viewers is formed and cultural specificity is maintained or lost.

The translation also indicates whose stories move and how they are packed. In the case of the translation of queer texts into national languages, the texts have access to national and international readerships, scholarly locations, and activist networks. This boosted visibility can have a positive effect in empowering marginalized voices; however it also presents those voices to the mainstream interpretation paradigms which can simplify or distort their experiences. As an example, an autobiography written in English by hijra women could be interpreted via the discourses of Western transgender lives, yet the concept of hijra has a ritual, social, and historical context of its own.

Meanwhile, the process of translation can upset and broaden international conceptions of queerness. It puts into circulation regional narratives that introduce new modes of thought regarding identity, kinship, and belonging. The readers are introduced to new words, lives and practices that are new to them that are breaking down the conception that there is a singular universal way of living queerly (Richmond *et al.*, 2024). That is how, translation is not merely a required transmission of meaning; it changes the frames according to which the issue of queerness is perceived.

Therefore, translation is a transgression into queer visibility, yet it is also an arena of negotiation and force. It may replicate linguistic and cultural superiorities or oppose them through foregrounding diversity and complexity.

Queer stories of various regions of India can be disseminated without losing their place when approached sensitively and ethically to employ translation to create a richer more inclusive queer discourse around the world.

5.2 The Problem of Western Queer Categories

The prevalence of the Western identity categories: gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender also is among the most enduring and intricate issues related to the translation of the queer narratives. These words were created as a part of certain historical and cultural background in Europe and North America of the time, influenced by certain concepts of individuality, personal identity, and self-improvement (Krapivkin *et al.*, 2023). According to them, sexuality and gender are fundamental in inner personality of an individual that can be named, proclaimed and publicly established. By imposing these categories on non-Western societies without overthinking, these categories threaten to pervert local concepts of desire, gender and belonging.

In South Asian systems, as an example, several localized expressions of gender and sexuality are entrenched in social, ritual, and communal models as opposed to being part of personal or identity descriptions. The meaning of such terms as hijra, kothi, aravani, or jogappa not just characterizes gender or sexual orientation of a person, it also means certain cultural roles, types of kinship, labor devices and spiritual practices. A hijra is not simply a person who does not fit the male-female dichotomy, but a person belonging to a different community, where it has its own systems of belonging, hierarchies and rituals. To be called a transgender, as English would put it, is to remove most of this culture and historical particularity.

Likewise, in most of the Indian settings, same-sex intimacy has never been interpreted as signifying the presence of resolute sexual identity.

Men or women relationships can have involved age, caste, occupation or social role instead of a concept of being gay or lesbian in the contemporary Western world (Ammaturo *et al.*, 2025).

Placing these experiences into the vehicles of western identity may force a paradigm according to which readers can perceive them as manifestations of a unified, individualized sexual self when in fact, local meanings are much more fluid and relational.

Not only linguistic, but also epistemological, is the problem. Western categories of queer are usually accompanied with suppositions on liberation, visibility, self-disclosure which are not always in compliance with the conditions of queer life that exist in non-Western societies. Privacy, ambiguity or community is sometimes more significant than declaration. By imposing the queer onto Western modes of translation, one will be eliminating these other modes of existence.

Queer translation should thus not give in to the urge to institutionalize variance. It should not ignore the fact that queerness is not a homogenous identity around the world, but rather a wide range of ideas; these are influenced by history and culture and language. Through keeping indigenous words and meanings visible in translated works, translation is able to disrupt the supremacy of Western modes of thinking and help improve the plurality and complexity of how a world queer lives are perceived.

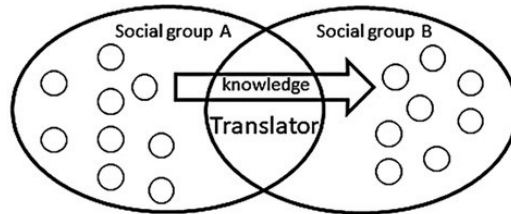
5.3 Translation as Negotiation and Resistance

Instead of the pursuit of absolute equivalents, queer translation works in the context of a negotiation. Translators need to find an equilibrium between the necessity to make a piece of writing legible to the audience of new readers, and the necessity to keep the cultural and political context of a piece of writing (Hindhede *et al.*, 2024). This maybe through the omission of some words, giving a clarification or through hybrid phrases which carry on the texture of the language of the original language.

In this regard, translation implies a struggle against linguistic and epistemic domination.

English being a world academic and publishing language has a tendency of posing as the authority in determining what is legitimate knowledge. Queer translation dispels this hierarchy by demanding the existence of indigenous queer language and experience in texts translated. It does not allow English to usurp English as the only language of queerness.

As a case example, such terms as kinship, ritual, community, are frequently left without translation in hijra autobiographies translations. This compels readers to respond to the unknown instead of fitting them into Western classifications. These strategies do not deny the complexity of queer worlds and help to fight cultural erasure.



Translators' challenges:

Ambiguity of the source knowledge from group A

Language related interference and lack of equivalence

Converting translated knowledge into social networks of group B through process where:

- Translating knowledge
- From tacit to explicit
 - From new explicit to local explicit
 - From new explicit to tacit knowledge

- General idea is conveyed
- Sufficient information is conveyed
- Most of the information is conveyed
- Virtually all the information is conveyed

Figure: Translation as Negotiation and Resistance

5.4 Translation and the Politics of Representation

Translations also define who has a right to represent the queer communities and their perception. Translating the queer texts of the regional languages into English language usually makes it known to the academic readers, foreign readers and international LGBTQIA+ communities (Murphy *et al.*, 2022). Such visibility has the potential to make it empowering, but it brings up who owns the narrative.

Queer authors may be silenced by those who translate, edit, or publish their works by applying their ideological models. As an example, when themes of victimhood are stressed and community, ritual or joy are deemphasized one can create a one dimensional picture of queer life. Queer translation must also be ethical, i.e., sensitive to power relations between authors and translators and viewers.

Additionally, translation may also have an effect on activism and policy. Narratives that go viral around the world can influence the international understanding of the Indian queer communities by the global organizations, donors and academics (Yaszek *et al.*, 2023). To make these representations correct and proper is thus not only a literary issue but also a political issue.

5.5 Expanding the Vocabulary of Queerness

Among the greatest contributions that come along with queer translation is the fact that it broadens the universal terminology of gender and sexuality. Translation increases the variety of possibilities in how one can conceptualize and describe queerness by introducing native words and stories in dialogue with the global queer discourse.

Such growth is not only linguistic but conceptual. It permits novel modes of conceptualising identity, want, kinship, embodiment to penetrate academic and cultural discourses. Queer translation therefore acts out the notion that queer life has a single and universal paradigm.

5.6 Translation as a Political Practice

Finally, translation is a political process. It identifies who speaks, in what ways and what types of knowledge circulate and who hears it. Translating in the framework of queer literature can either reinforce the hierarchies in existence or it can confront them (Raso *et al.*, 2024). Queer translation can be used as a social justice tool when performed in an ethical and reflexive manner, allowing the voices of the marginalized groups to be heard beyond the language and cultural barriers without losing their distinctiveness.

Translation has helped to make queer worlds more inclusive and plural by asserting language diversity and pushing against epistemic authority.

6. Queer Ecocritical Imaginaries

6.1 Re-thinking Nature and Sexuality

Queer ecocriticism comes out of a critical encounter with two cultural truths in the dominant understanding of nature as orderly and stable as well as reproductive and the assumption of heterosexuality as the natural law on the orderliness of nature. Over the centuries, ecological and social discourses have been identically aligned such that reproduction, lineage and biological continuity is favoured. Families, inheriting, and heterosexual coupling have been set in the context of the key to the subsistence of the society and nature as a whole. In this context, the lives of queers, particularly those who do not result in biological reproduction have become unnatural, overindulgent or even wasteful.

Queer ecocriticism argues with this ideological conviction showing how both nature and sexuality are much more diverse and fluid and unpredictable than such schemes can be. It is not sameness but variation, mutation, adaptation and interdependence of the ecological systems to thrive (Bishop-Sanchez *et al.*, 2024). It is all defied by species not reproducing in the traditional fashion, organisms shifting sex, ecosystems that develop with disruption, and all these make perfect sense and keep evolving. Nature even, when viewed queerly, seems to be highly non-normative.

The literature that unites the image of the environment with the gay experience thus emerges as an effective domain, where the notions of what is perceived as natural are reconsidered. The queer ecocritical texts reveal the artificiality of the connection between the environment and the heterosexual way of being, by showing a variation of nature, bodies, and relations that are not limited to a fixed set of stereotypes.

6.2 Alternative Kinship and Queer Belonging

It is one of the most significant contributions of queer ecocritical thinking: it redefines the notion of kinship. Conventional families are founded on bloodshed, reproduction and inheritance. The queer individuals are also not included in these models, as they are typically not accepted by their biological families and have no opportunity to obtain any legal recognition. As a response, queer communities have and continue to develop other models of kinship within the parameters of care, mutual support, and relations of choice.

These alternative structures are often present in literature. Queer stories represent a web of friendships, lovers, older adults and neighbours who offer emotional and material assistance when biological family is not accessible (Nichols *et al.*, 2024). These bonds are closer to ecological systems than nuclear families: they are dependent and loose and perpetuated by care, rather than duty.

Queer ecocriticism views such alternative kinship as moral lessons on how to survive in an unwell world. This is a time of ecological crisis and thus cooperation, flexibility, and group accountability grow to be more and more essential to survival. As an alternative to procreation, queer kinship based on care is a very strong metaphor of sustainable co-existence.

6.3 Marginalized Bodies and Exploited Landscapes

Queer ecocritical stories have a tendency of creating parallels between the treatment of queer bodies and the exploitation of nature. They are both exposed to control systems, normalizing systems, and extracting systems. The urban development, legal system, medicine, and even social norms are used to discipline queer bodies just like industrial agriculture, urban development, and resource extraction discipline ecosystems.

Literary works depicting polluted environments, displaced people and endangered species tend to resonate with narratives of queer marginalization.

Both disclose the ways of power structures that attempt to control the difference and eradicate what does not comply with mainstream paradigms of productivity and reproduction (Chow *et al.*, 2023). Queer ecocriticism lays emphasis on these relations so as to demonstrate that environmental injustice as well as sexual oppression belongs to one logic of control.

Having connected ecological destruction with the control over queer lives, the literature enables the readers to view the two as the ethical crisis. The use of land and oppression of otherness are driven by a world perception where order, purity, and profit are more important than diversity and care.

6.4 Queering Time and the Future

The other significant issue regarding queer ecocriticism is that it disputes linear, reproductive time. The heteronormative culture tends to project the future as a family, inheritance, and a bio-continuity. The non-linear queer lives are not always so and are often left out of the view of the future.

Queer ecocritical literature challenges this discourse by envisioning a sustenance-based, community-centred, and ecologically balanced future of reproduction, but not only (Schönberg *et al.*, 2024). According to these readings, it is not necessary to have more humans in the world to survive but to know how to live well with one another and the planet to survive.

Making the future queer, literature establishes opportunities of living in different ways other than the life ones have because of biological determinism. It asks readers to envision the other worlds where the difference is not the danger but it is the strength.

6.5 Literature as a Space for Ecological and Queer Ethics

Literature enables readers through its power of imagination to feel other relations between humans, non-humans and the surrounding environment. This is because queer ecocritical narratives do not merely outline the wrong but rather present alternative moral constructs based on empathy, interrelation and acknowledging difference.

These texts provoke the hierarchies of giving supremacy to some bodies, species, and lives over others by making nature and ecological thought queer (Saqlain *et al.*, 2024). They allude that a just and sustainable world would be one where every kind of life whether human and non-human, normative and non-normative, is free to exist.

Through this, queer ecocriticism turns literature into the domain of radical imagination, in which ecological responsibility and sexual diversity do not stand in opposition and contrast to each other but are mutually dependent and much closer elements.

7. Pedagogy, Law, and Cultural Transformation

7.1 The Classroom as a Political Space

Education has been considered to be one of the most efficient locus where social values have been produced, reproduced as well as challenged. The content of learning omitted, taught, and whose narratives are accepted into the curriculum all shape the manner in which students perceive the world and their role in the world (Duffy *et al.*, 2024). When heterosexuality and strict gender roles are discussed as a natural and undisputable way of life in the society, one might have to look no further than the classroom to find that queer lives are either overlooked or actively suppressed. Therefore, educating queer literature has both deep-seated political and ethical implications.

Queer themes are still perceived with suspicion or the hostility in most conservative educational facilities. They are considered to be morally dangerous, culturally unfit or ideologically unhealthy.

The resistance is indicative of the overall societal fears regarding sexuality, family and tradition. Yet, it also shows how the educational process can break the mainstream discourses. When students learn about queer characters, novels and queer histories in literary works, they get to be exposed to queer means of being, which undermine normativity, morality, and identity.

Queer pedagogy is not merely an attempt to include LGBTQIA+ texts to current syllabi, but a revolution in the manner in which knowledge is created and distributed. It promotes binarial doubt like male/female, normal/deviant and natural/unnatural (Abbott *et al.*, 2025). Through its interaction with ambiguity, contradiction and lived experience, queer pedagogy develops critical thinking abilities and moral consideration.

The concept concerned with teaching marginalized voices involves learning approaches that encompass the biological, cognitive, and social domains. The concept has been addressed by 7.2 Teaching Marginalized Voices which entails learning styles, which include biological, cognitive, and social type.

Among the most valuable contributions of queer pedagogy, there is the accent on a priori voices. Queer literature introduces into the classroom texts that have frequently been put out of the mainstream cultural frame: texts of rejection, survival, love and community, as well as resistance. These stories blur the assumption of the existence of a single and universal human experience.

In queer students, it can be extremely affirmative when they come across such texts. It enables them to find themselves mirrored in the literature, it helps them realize that their lives are worthy of an intellectual serious treatment (Rodekirchen *et al.*, 2024). These readings build compassion and understanding with the students who are not queer in their identities. They also demonstrate the influence of social rules and institutionalized power on the life of real individuals.

Queer pedagogy encourages intersectional awareness as well by focusing on the voices across various castes, classes, regions, and languages. It demonstrates that

queerness is not but limited to urban and English speaking elite but can be found in various social and cultural settings.

7.2 Teaching Marginalized Voices

In 2018, the legal status of queer relationships in India changed history, as a result of the reading out of the Section 377. It was the first time when the law admitted that intimacy between people of the same sex was not a crime but it was one of the valid manifestations of individual freedom. This shift altered legal rhetoric with the queer citizens being seen as rights holders instead of criminals.

Nevertheless, the functioning of law is at the plane of legalized realization rather than life. Social prejudice, family pressure, religious condemnation, and workplace discrimination do not necessarily get dismantled as a result of legal reform. The violence, exclusion, and silence against many queer people even get decriminalized (Mortensen *et al.*, 2025). It is this mismatch of law and legalized reality that literature becomes particularly crucial in filling.

The post-377 queer writing is one that is hopeful and vulnerable at the same time. It glorifies fresh possibilities of love, visibility, and community, and the fact that fear and marginalization still exist. In narrating the stories of the ordinary life of queer, literature shows the inadequacy of change through law and the necessity of the more profound cultural transformation.

7.4 Literature as a Cultural Intervention.

Literature is not the passive indicator of social change, but it is one that transforms it. Queer stories enter classroom, bookshops, libraries, popular discourse, and break down stereotypes as well as construct new gender and sexuality-related thinkings. They complicate the denial of queer people and their existence.

In this regard, teaching queer literature is an intervention practice within the culture. It breaks the silence, which has always enveloped the lives of queers and creates the arena of discourse and cogitation (Wilson *et al.*, 2024). Those students who read such texts know how to not take difference as a threat and instead perceive it as an essential element of human diversity.

7.5 Toward an Inclusive Educational Future

Heterosexual pedagogy and homosexual literature both indicate a more inclusive vision of study. According to them, learning must not only pass on knowledge but also develop moral accountability, compassion and social conscience (Rajesh *et al.*, 2025). Through incorporating the queer studies in the curriculum, schools can help develop a society where diversity is not only accepted but appreciated.

In conclusion, the change of culture should go hand in hand with the change of law. One of the most effective tools to accomplish this change provides literature and education where alternative futures can be envisioned and brought into the realm of reality.

Conclusion

The path of coming out to triumph in the queer literature represents the wider movements of searching acknowledgements, fairness, and honor. This paper has demonstrated that queerness exists within cultural, ecological as well as political systems through the application of the queer theory, intersectionality as well as queer ecocriticism.

Literature is proven as an effective tool of fighting erasure, pushing boundaries, and envisioning other ways of inclusion. Queer literary studies can grapple with replacing the Eurocentric system of knowledge about the human experience, with a more plural and ethical sense of the Indian and non-Western queer voice.

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