

I. Introduction

The present research work is a study of David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988). It has made an attempt to analyze Sexuality as a Performance. Rene Gallimard, a French diplomat stationed in China and Song Liling, a local opera singer, who has masquerade himself as a female are the central characters in the drama. The crux of the play is, how a male (Song Liling), actually a Chinese spy forges himself to a feminine character in order to pass sensitive confidential diplomatic documents of the French government.

As *M. Butterfly* is a drama, some theatrical aspects also are taken into consideration for the analysis of the play, however, major focus of this research work is to demystify, how Rene Gallimard, never got to know for twenty years that his lady love was a male. And thereby to disclose the thematic aspect, that sexuality can be understood only through performance.

M. Butterfly is largely based on a real-life 1986 scandal, involving a French diplomat, Bernard Bouriscot, who for twenty years maintained a relationship with an international spy and Chinese opera singer, Shi Pei Pu, whom he believed to be a woman. Hwang was inspired by the elements of Western stereotypical definition of Asian male as feminized and disempowered present in the play. However, Hwang also took ideas for *M. Butterfly* from an Italian opera play by name *Madama Butterfly*, where a Japanese woman falls in love with an Englishman who eventually abandons her.

Hwang as an individual trapped between, basically, two cultures: Western and Eastern finds himself in difficult situation be exactly fit in those cultures. This difficulty of identity gets outlet through a creative means: writing plays. So his own identity plays vital role in analysis of his plays. Much of his work is about Asian-American whose parents are immigrants; one of the issues we find most strongly in his work is trying to figure out that dilemma. He was raised with a mentality that was concerned with group identity and about

doing this for the group. But he was also raised as an American, which is essentially based on individual identity. This issue of identity comes in one way or the other in his plays. In an interview with Bonnie Lyons, Hwang expresses his view on identity:

It's probably true that all my work in some sense confronts the issue of fluidity of identity and explores the ideas that who we are is the result of circumstance, the result of things that are not necessarily inherent but instead come out of our interaction with our contacts. Many of the plays suggest that if contact changes the individual becomes a different person, so to speak. (230)

His interest in fluidity of identity relates to the current notion of self as a theatre or self as a performer. In many of his plays there is at a predetermined role that exists in literature like Gallimard playing Pinkerton in *M. Butterfly* or Steve in *F.O.B.* playing Gwan Gung. The characters take on various mythologies and try to find themselves in relation to those mythologies, almost as if the search for identity is so difficult and complex that "it is easier to hang your hat on pre-established identity and try to have that become you or you become that thing" (Lyons 2).

Hwang's *M. Butterfly* is one of the most celebrated of recent American plays. It has raised a serious debate on whether gender and sexuality are biologically created. Lee A. Jacobus in *Bedford Introduction to Drama* (2001) introduces *M. Butterfly* as a play that reveals difficulties of character in fitting into the American way of life. He comments, "At root, *M. Butterfly* examines both racist and sexist attitudes common to the Western male. As Song Liling, the actor who masquerades as a woman tells us late in the play, 'being an oriental I could never completely be a man'" (Jacobus 1575). Jacobus's comment hints at identity problem of the character Song Liling. David Henry Hwang himself in the interview with Lyons reveals some idea regarding the identity problem of song Liling. He says:

The characters are often clinging for security to a certain identity based on a stereotype or a literary archetype and simultaneously trying to go past them to something that is more personal and individual [. . .] when Song disrobes. She is really trying to say “look at me, get past the makeup, and get past the archetype” [. . .]. She is trying to get to something personal. (235)

Hwang, in an interview with John Louis Digaetani opines that the mixed sexual character of Song and Gallimard have to do with something person than the espionage game. It is more, associated with the personal level of satisfaction. Commenting on sexual personality of Gallimard Hwang in the interview says, “The line between ‘straight’ and ‘gay’ become very much blurred in this play, but I think he (Gallimard) knows he’s having an affair with a man. Therefore, on some level he is gay” (Jacobus 1576).

However, it is no doubt that the play is largely based on troubled sexuality of the characters. It makes an attempt to analyze the sexual tension between east and west. Song hails from east and Gallimard from west and both of them are having a role-reversal in the play. It is not Gallimard, who is dominating and powerful but it is Song, who, farcically as a female submissive Gallimard. Finally, the role-reversal is justified, when Gallimard dresses up in wig and garb, traditional Chinese opera dress and stabs him in the heart and Song smoking watches the act. Thus, sexuality of Gallimard is exposed at the end, when he turns virtually into a woman.

John Clum in his influential book *Acting Gay* (1992,) comments on homosexuality and heterosexuality of the character. He comments:

[. . .] in *M. Butterfly*, drag ironically, denied the homosexuality of seventeen - year affair between two man [. . .]. Galliamard conducted his affair with a Chinese transvestite totally believing that women’s clothes covered a woman’s body [. . .]. The plodding literalness of Hwang’s play also kept it heterosexual.

Homosexuality is hinted but safely displaced. So a play managed to be about that of all. The White man is safely heterosexual, duped by a wily drag Queen who he thought all along was woman. The non white gay man is there to provide a catalyst for a commentary on the heterosexual, white experience.

(32)

So, he comments the play as a catalyst for sexuality studies. The play raises various questions and responses about the way our societies take sex. Hwang in his afterward to *M. Butterfly* states:

For the myths [. . .] of men and the myths of women-these have so saturated our consciousness that truthful contract between nations and lovers can only be the result of heroic effort. This is why after twenty years; he had learned nothing at all about his lover, not even the truth of his own sex. (Hwang 100)

Hwang, here, throws suspicion on the notion of “truth” about one’s gender and sexuality identity. The rigid “truth”, that sex is always hetero sexual, is put under the open discussion in *M. Butterfly*.

Some critics comment that Hwang has designed *M. Butterfly* which needs a theatre which is similar to a prison house. Kathryn Remen commenting in David Henry Hwang’s *M. Butterfly* and Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punishment* analyzes theatre and prison house operating in a similar fashion with similar purpose. He
analy

zes the performance of *M. Butterfly* rather than its thematically aspects. However, his analysis shows Gallimard as a character those rebels against oppressive power that dominates his sexual potentiality. He states, “I will discuss how these powers transform our theatre from one of traditional, observational arrangement into a spectacular theatre of punishment that both involves and implicates the audience” (391-400). Andrew Shin in the essay “Projected Bodies in Henry David Hwang’s *M. Butterfly and Golden Gate*” comments *M. Butterfly* to be a cynosure of cultural debate on race and sexuality. She argues:

[Hwang] does not valorise Western Masculinity as traditionally conceived as a model to be imitated: rather, in dramatizing Rene Gallimard’s failed construction of gay identity through the stereotype of Asian woman, the mask of a gay identity through the stereotype of Asian woman, the mask of a gay Asian opera singer in communist China, he exposes the prison house of heterosexist. (182)

The issue of sexuality is crucial in her analysis also. She finds that more than cultural or political sexuality is major issue that causes the development of the plot.

Dorrine K. Kondo focuses on “the multiplicity of Asia and of women”, and her article “*M. Butterfly: Orientalism, Gender, and a Critique of Essential Identity*”, is useful in understanding Hwang’s condemnation of binary assumptions about “aesthetics and politics, the personal and the political, woman and man, east and west. (30)” She shows how the matrix of power relations operates on the specific characters’ perception of self.

Much of the other criticism on *M. Butterfly* has focused merely on plot and structure indeed, the content, of the story is to incite interest. Most mainstream plays do not have a collection of tabloid topics such as cross-dressing, international intrigues, mistaken identity and illicit homosexual affairs. However, other criticism that has given importance to the thematically aspects has hovered around the issues like racism, sexism and imperialism. From the above mentioned critics it can be deciphered that “sexuality” is a crucial issue of debate in *M. Butterfly*. However, they have not yet answered satisfactorily the questions like: how could Rene Gallimard spend twenty years love affair without knowing the “exact” sex of his partner? Why can the characters not fit themselves in one category? Is heterosexuality only a natural form of sexuality practice? The present research work is largely, based on the above concepts. The researcher has made a sincere attempt to analyze, all these queries and much more related to the debate on troubled issue of Gender and Sexuality. For the purpose, the research work will be divided into four chapters.



II. Performativity, Gender Identities and Performance Theory

In general understanding performance means artistic presentation, or manner of functioning of certain acts or festive. In other words, it is a practical form of performing a ceremony, a play, a piece of music and such feats. According to *Microsoft Encarta Dictionary 2008* performance means “a presentation of an artistic work such as a play or piece of music to an audience.” Similarly, *The Oxford Dictionary* defines *performance* as “the carrying out of a command duty, purpose, promise, etc. It is something performed or gone, an action, act deed or operation.”

By above definitions, it is clear that performance is closely associated with art, in fact they are complement to each other. Performance art has its origin in the works of several avant-garde artists of the late 1950s. Avant-garde draws its inspiration from the invention and application of new or unconventional techniques and is therefore on the vanguard or cutting edge of new styles. Participants in the creative process can be considered members of the avant-garde.

American artist and Prof. Allan Kaprow born in 1927 coined the term happenings to define performance. Happenings is used to define late 1950s movement, generally held outdoors, in which people come together to execute instructions they had not seen before. Central to such happenings are the elements of discovery and surprise. *Happenings* later took place within a performance space. An example of this was *Moviehouse* (1965), a feat of performance by American sculptor Claes Oldenburg, in which several artists performed in the seats of a movie theatre while spectators watched from the aisles. This loosely defined form of art could encompass almost any activity. In the early 1960s Kaprow defined the happening as “an assemblage of events performed or perceived in more than one time and place. Its material environments may be constructed, taken over directly from what is available or

altered slightly, just as its activities may be invented or commonplace” (37). The happening marked the beginning of an important new art movement known as performance art.

Kaprow drew the inspiration for the happening from a variety of sources. Reading *Art as Experience* (1934), in which American philosopher John Dewey sets forth his ideas about the experiential nature of art, led Kaprow to embark upon a celebration of the importance and meaning of everyday activities and experiences. American experimental musician and composer John Cage, with whom Kaprow studied from 1956 to 1958, introduced him to the idea of using randomness or accident in creating art. Another source of inspiration was American painter Jackson Pollock, whose physically active painting method focused attention on the process of painting as an artistic event.

Another, American John Cage also explored performance art but differently. In his pioneering 45-minute untitled piece of performance, staged in 1952 at Black Mountain College, one person read a text, another performed choreography, and a third produced sounds, all with minimum rehearsal.

Celebrations on fertility were probably the oldest form of performance. They go as back as Stone Age. Such fertility celebrations were carried out during the birth of a child and harvest. Caves were the centre of such performances. Figures, carvings, paintings and symbols depicted in caves found in Mexico show some of the oldest form of celebrations.

Such performance was carried out in the form of music, produced by beating certain utensils, dancing and mass chanting of prayers. About the figures depicting performance found in caves, temples and mosques, Richard Schechner writes:

[. . .] In India and elsewhere, it is common practice to rub the representation of both phallus and vulva when passes by them in a temple. I’ve seen people reach out in museums making the same life taking touch. Everywhere cult

items are fondled; men and women in eternal love making process, people indulge in eternal charm of singing and dancing. (68)

India is as one of the oldest nations that practices various forms of sexual activities, including homosexuality, ancient times. Presenting this view of Hindu sexual performance, Schechner writes, “Phallus and Vulva are the complements of each other, which are like two parts of a coin. On the other hand, rubbing phallus and vulva means Hindu tradition of celebrating ‘linga’ and ‘yoni’ which are entangled together at same places” (72).

With the advent of Ibsen and his followers, the text became all important and actors had to adapt themselves to the new conditions: realistic dialogue, in conversational style, took the place of rhetoric and delimitation; gestures became more restrained and the scenery presented an accurate representation of the place and period of the play. ‘Fourth wall’ through which the spectators watched what Emile Zola, speaking of his intensely realistic plays, called ‘a slice of life.’

Bertolt Brecht, the dominating figure in the European theatre of 1950s, whose early plays showed him, attempts to make use both of Piscator’s epic theatre and his own theory of alienation. This new approach was to the problem of actor, audience relationship consisted in destroying by various technical methods the once – prized ‘theatrical illusion’ and so preventing the spectators from becoming emotionally involved in the action. Contemporary theatre, the latest concept on performance renews itself through dynamic international and intercultural encounters. Such a widening spectrum of globalization has led to a remarkable hybridization of the possibilities of or theatre itself.

Sexuality and Gender

Sex-sexuality and gender-identity are closely associated terms used to define an individual and the society one lives in. They are inter-related to an individual and society.

These words are catchwords in various social theories like feminism, sexuality studies and gender studies.

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines “Sex” as, “either of the two main categories (male and female) into which humans and most other living things are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions.” In general, sex is understood as state of being male or female. Sex is divided into male or female according to their function in the process of producing offspring’s. Sex is also an action that involves sexual organs and results to pregnancy of the female. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in her essay, *Gender Criticism* writes:

“Sex has had the meaning of certain group of irreducible biological differentiations between members of the species, Homo Sapiens, who have XX chromosomes and those who have XY chromosome. Sex in this sense as “chromosomal sex” is seen as relatively minimal raw material based on the social construction of gender” (Sedgwick 273-302). According to chromosomal definition, only one chromosome out of 46 determines sex. According to this definition, sex is a “natural biological coupling” (Cranny-Fracies et al. 4). It is a part and parcel of the establishment in western cultures. It establishes male and female as binary opposite identities.

In normal understanding, if sex is an essential biological difference of the species Homo sapiens gender is a social construction in which certain identities and behaviours are attached to the biological and anatomical raw material of human sex-male/female. Simon de Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex* (1972) tries to distinguish sex and gender saying, “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman; gender is the effect of social and cultural processes” (Cranny-Francis et al. 5). The above analysis shows that sex is natural and gender is a cultural phenomenon.

In general, sexuality refers to the direction of somebody’s sexual desire, towards people of opposite sex, people of the same sex, or people of both sexes. But, in literary theory,

it is associated with power concept, deployed in socio-political analysis of sex and gender. In this regards, Beasley writes it, as:

Sexed regimes, identities and practice, which typically involve binary and hierarchical categories such as men and women, usually associated with an account of biology and reproductive function as well a sexual regimes, identities and practices. It is also commonly involved to binary and hierarchical categories such as heterosexual and homosexual usually linked to conceptions of biology and reproduction. (1)

Lately, there have been various new trends in the Study of Sexuality. People of varied sexual backgrounds and groups are in search of their identity and hence this field of study is in rapid rise. However, homosexuality and heterosexuality are the most common sects of this study. All these epochs of study have their root in Queer Theory.

Michael Foucault's *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality* (1984) is considered a landmark text for the relatively new field of queer theory, whose root lies in counter culture. Queer Theory studies the intersection between politics, gender and sexuality. Its main thrust is to refute the idea that our identities are somehow fixed or determined by our gender or sexual preferences.

Study of sexuality cannot be possible without the study of sex and gender. In this regard, *Gender Trouble* by Judith Butler has following opinion:

They are highly inter-related term and often mistaken for each other. The term 'sex' denotes to an individual's genetic identity of whether a person is female or male. At the same time, it also denotes to the sexual behaviour of an individual. On the other hand, 'gender' means class, race, ethnicity, or imperialism. But, when it comes to scholarly studies, Beasley writes, sex and gender refers to sexed and sexual, respectively. (21)

Butler is of the opinion that the study of sexuality deals in two major parts of human life; sex and power. It focuses upon the field critical to socio-political analysis of sex, gender and sexuality. This discipline assumes that sex is a matter of human organization that is, it is politically associated with social dominance and subordination, as well as capable of change. So, theoretical frameworks and writers in this field are concerned with how power is constituted and perpetuated in the formulation of 'sexed' and 'sexual differences.' They reevaluate mainstream knowledge that marginalizes those who are beyond power position.

The crucial subject of sexuality, even today remains to be female, but these days, its study, basically refers to gay men's sexual positioning. This focus has been laid more upon gay than lesbian, because the queer behaviour of lesbian is no new concept to the society, in respect to the gay studies.

Moreover, study of sexuality cannot be studied excluded from counter-culture. Root of this relatively new field of writings lies in the sensual writings of Whitman, Emerson, Ginsberg and Kerouac. It is rather concerned with, "whether sexuality can positively disrupt oppressive power relations" (Beasley 118). But the study of Sexuality gained a full critical acclamation only from 1960s and 70s. It was oriented from gender studies. Foucault's *History of Sexuality* has a considerable contribution in the study of sexuality in literary discourse.

Characteristic of sexuality studies are more contextualised ones. The first direction of sexuality study is emancipator and second is Sexual Differences and its critiques on singular differences. Sexuality also includes topics on Multiple Differences for example Race/Ethnicity/Imperialism approaches, the phrases coined as (REI). Other popular fields it includes are Constructionism, Fluidity of Identity Crises and Queer Theory.

Beginning of Sexuality goes back to the roots of modernism. It has links with eighteenth century European Intellectual and Cultural Movement. The common element of this movement was a trust in human reason and the application of human reason to dissipate

the darkness of superstition, prejudice and barbarity. In the context, Abrams writes, “Its purpose was to free humanity from its earlier reliance on mere authority and unexamined tradition,” (75). So, modernity as a cultural movement contributed for the emancipator thoughts on gender and sexuality. The ethos of this movement took all human beings as equal as they possessed rationality whether they were women or homosexuals or blacks. Liberal human rights approaches first developed antidiscrimination stance for the woman and homosexuals.

Kate Millett, in *Sexual Politics*, analyzes western social arrangements and institutions as covert ways of ‘manipulating power’ so as to establish and perpetuate the dominance of heterosexual men and subordination of women. Feminist liberationist’s approach perceived sexuality as intimately tied to the normative power. They developed a critique of existing heterosexuality as about a male model of sexuality in which “penetrative sex is sex, and everything else is fore play that is just the preliminary before the real thing” (Beasley 122). Such a critical analysis of sexually encouraged to discuss about the other forms of sexuality such as masturbation and celibacy. They noted a link between rape and heterosexuality, child abuse and violence. The idea of sexuality is innate need of men was criticized. The idea that debate in relation to power relation, caused split between the feminists favouring heterosexuality and lesbian feminist. Therefore, both the gay liberation movement and women’s liberation movement remained significantly in sexuality political studies.

By late 1980s and 1990s the multiple differences occurred in sexual minorities including in ethnicity/imperialism theorizing. The categories of sexual identity politics began to be questioned in sexuality studies. Many gays and lesbians expressed their frustration with the divisiveness of identity politics.

First lesbian sex radicals, who supported the more libertarian, sexuality as pleasure, position associated with gay men’s politics began to mount a rejection of women’s

liberationists thinking. The lesbian sex radicals turned their back upon the notion of shared women centred approach of women liberationists thinking. The lesbian sex radicals turned their back upon the notion of shared women centred approach of women liberationists. They began to promote new lesbian coalition. They “denounced women centred model because it revolved around a perspective of the good women” (Rubin 78). Lesbian sex radicals actively supported sexuality, butch femme lesbian identities and the beneficial use of pornography.

Moreover contrary to women centred approaches, they insisted that such practices were not initiation of heterosexual perspective norms of patriarchal relation of dominance and subordination. Besides sexual activists the critique of sexual identities arose from other minority groups such as race/ethnicity/imperialism studies. Beasley in this context writes, “They drew attention with the notion that more than sexuality, race, ethnic, class, imperial issues may be crucial for them” (124). He advocates for stronger identity oriented modernist approach in analysis of race, ethnics and others.

Bell hooks, a contemporary critic raises her suspicion on Sexuality in her book *Postmodern Tendency*. She believes that identity politics only can be means to overcome oppression. She writes, “She raises doubts about the benefits of postmodern challenges to identity; if we say that there is no fixed sexual identity that we can call ‘gay’ or ‘straight’, then what becomes of the experiences and the understandings collectively that allow people to politically organize for gay rights,” (qtd. in Beasley’s *Smith and Petances* 125).

Sexual Orientation, however, refers to the sexual preference of an individual -- whether heterosexual or homosexual.

By adolescence, it is assumed that most individuals establish a clear erotic preference for a partner of the opposite sex, that is, are heterosexual. Some are attracted to members of both sexes and are termed bisexual. Small but not significant proportion of the populations is attracted only to members of their own sex and is exclusively homosexual.

In theory, biological sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation develop independently. For example, most commonly a biological male identifies himself as masculine (his gender identity is male), and chooses opposite sex partners (his orientation is heterosexual). Another example, less common, might be a biological male with a female gender identity who chooses to live in the female gender role and has a biological male for a sexual partner. This person would be a male-to-female transsexual with a heterosexual orientation. Even less common, but indicative of the variety of human sexuality, is the existence of transsexuals with a homosexual orientation: for example, having changed from female to male gender, a transsexual may then prefer other men.

However, these definitions alone cannot satisfy the scholars of the feminist, gender and sexuality studies. Sex has its binary quality for the psychoanalyst like Sigmund Freud. Human beings are divided into two categories: either the father's replacement or the mother's. However, Freud showed possibilities of sexual "perverts" because of excessive repression in the society (C. Francis et al. 5).

In his essay "Sex/Gender System" (1974), feminist anthropologist Gayle Rubin explains the variable ways that kinship organizations produce gendered beings out of bodies. She argues that all societies have a sex gender system, and that system produces social conventions on gender from the biological and anatomical raw material of human sex and procreation. She argues that for both Levi-Strauss and Lacan, it is "only through being subjected to the process of heterosexual gendering that human subjects are produced" (Cranny-Francis et al. 6). For Levi-Strauss and Lacan, to have a status of a person, "I", everyone must first be positioned within kinship that is to become a daughter, sister, brother, or son. The individual is prohibited from desiring members of their own kinship group. One is a man to the extent that one does not desire other men but desires only those women who are substitute for the mother. One is a woman to the extent that one does not desire other women

and desires only those men who are substitute for her father. So, hetero-normatively and incest taboos on “sex” are determining factors of one’s identity. Kinship systems make all homosexual practice taboo, so heterosexuality was made natural by culture.

For Eve Koofsky Sedgwick also the term “sex” extended indefinitely beyond “chromosomal sex”. She says that the history of usage of sex often overlaps with what might now more properly be called “gender”. Genres are two, and they are defined in contradiction to each other. They may be said to be opposite. But, she questions and elaborates:

But in what sense is XX the opposite of XY? Beyond chromosomes, however, the association of sex, precisely through the physical body with reproduction and with genital activity and sensation keeps offering new challenges to the conceptual clarity or even possibility of sex-gender differentiation [. . .].

[These] usages involve [. . .] sex-gender only to delineate a problematical space, rather than a crisp distinction. (Sedgwick 271-302)

Sedgwick uses “gender” in order to analyze men and women relation under the physical and cultural rubric, and she uses “sex” in order to analyze male and female relationship. She further supposes, “the whole realm of what modern culture refers to as sexuality and also call “sex”- the array of acts, expectations, pleasures, identity formations, and knowledge, in both men and women, that tends to cluster . . . around genital sensations” (274). Sedgwick, here agrees in the line of Freud and Foucault that sexuality might be the very opposite of what we “originally” referred as chromosomal sex. It can be more relational, the socio-symbolic, the constructed, the variable, the representational.

Drawing the history of sex and sexuality, Michel Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality* 1978 links sex and sexuality in the realm of power and discourse. Foucault shows that prior understanding of sexuality (including the psychoanalytic and Marxist) has depended heavily on what he calls “repressive hypothesis”. Repressive hypothesis says that our entire culture

represses sexual desires by ignoring sex or by silencing sex through various discourses that conceal sexuality. According to “repressive hypothesis”, the history of sexuality could only be that of the “negative relation” between power and sex, “the cycle of prohibition” (82-85). Counter to “repressive theory” Foucault argues that modern societies created more discourse on sexuality. Responding to this paradox Foucault writes:

The multiplication of discourses concerning sex in the field of exercise of power itself an institutional incitement to speak about it, and to do so more, and more; a determination of the part of agencies of power to hear it spoken about, and to cause it to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated details. (198)

Instead of envisioning “power” as something exercised prohibitively from the top of the society downward, against sexuality, Foucault describes both sexuality and power as relations that are operating circularly and affecting each other. He further says that the entire history of ‘knowledge’ is not separate realm of sexuality: rather it “constitutes that sexuality” (20). Foucault through his *The History of Sexuality* justifies a view of sexuality as the central repository of truth values of modernity.

Sexuality is assumed hetero-normative and unified. Foucault questions the neatly unified sexual field. So, *The History of Sexuality* has been an assertive unprecedentedly institutionalized movement of gay and lesbian criticism. Commenting on this book, Sedgwick says that the book is “most famous and agenda setting formulation about the history of homosexuality under the heading “incorporation of perversion, and a new specification of individuals” (Sedgwick). Drawing the history of homosexuality Foucault writes:

As defined by the ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden act [. . .] the nineteenth century homosexual became a personage a past, a case history and a childhood [. . .]. The psychological, psychiatric,

medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was a secret that gave itself away. The psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized- Westphal's famous article of 1987 on "Contrary Sexual Sensations" can stand as its date of birth-less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility [. . .]. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration. The homo-sexual now was a species. (43)

Foucault in "Scientia Sexualis" explores the historical continuity between religious confession and psychiatric "free association" as the forms of finding truth and secrecy of an individual. By writing the history of sexuality from the view point of discourse Foucault denaturalizes hetero-normative sexuality and opens the way to multiple sexualities. Foucault says, "After the turn of the century, if regular sexuality happened to be questioned, it was through a reflux movement, originating in [. . .] peripheral sexualities" (39).

First Lesbian sex radicals, who supported the more libertarian, sexuality as pleasure, position associated with gay men's politics began to mount a ejection of women's liberationists thinking. The lesbian sex radicals turned their back upon the notion of shared women centred approach of women liberationists. They began to promote new lesbian coalition. They "denounced women centred model because it revolved around a perspective of the good women" (Rubin 78). Lesbian sex radicals actively supported SM (consensual sadomasochist) sexuality, butch femme lesbian identities and the beneficial use of pornography. Moreover contrary to women centered approaches, they insisted that such practices were not initiation of heterosexual perspective norms of patriarchal relation of dominance and subordination. Besides sexual activists the critique of sexual identities arose from other minority groups such as race/ethnicity/imperialism studies. "They drew attention with the nation that more than sexuality, race/ethnic/class/imperial issues may be crucial for

them” (Roen qtd. in Beasley 124). Bell hooks advocates for strongly identity oriented modernist approach in analysis of race/ethnicity/imperialism/gender/sexuality minorities. She is suspicious about postmodern tendency in aiming to deconstruct identities:

She raises doubts about the benefits of postmodern challenges to identity: If we say that there is no fixed sexual identity that we can call ‘gay’ or ‘straight’, then what becomes of the experiences and the understandings collectively that allow people to politically organize for gay rights?’ (Smith and Petracas qtd. in Beasley 125).

She believes that identity politics only can be a means to overcome oppression.

Finally certain practical political movements in the early 1990s raised serious difficulties regarding the coherence of gay and Lesbian identities, as well as the coherence of the identity of homosexual in the homo/hetero binary. These political movements involved rejection and expulsion of certain groups from gay and lesbian organization for denying fixed identity of these categories. An organization named NAMBLA (The North American Man/Boy Love Association) we expelled as not belonging to within homosexual collective politics in 1994 from ILGA (a worldwide confederation of Lesbian and gay organization)” (Gamson 11).

All of the examples above in relation to race/ethnicity/ imperialism as well disrupted any simple notion of gay, lesbian and homosexual identity political groupings. This situation leads to a greater stress on plural identities and increasing fragmentation, in other words to postmodern/Queer identity.

To sum up, sexuality does have two opinions. The first opinion is essentialist’s opinion. According to this opinion our sexuality has biological basis-genetic and parental hormonal factors have determined our sexual orientation. Our sexual orientation is set early in

life. We may try to repress but we will no longer be able to deny our true self. The identity, (gay, lesbian, male, female, bisexual) with which we are born and which we will take to the grave. But the second opinion of sexual orientation is “social constructivism”: those events on the environment made us who we are (Cranny-Francis et al. 9). Our sexual orientation and desires are based on social and cultural factors. So, sexuality is a set of social processes which produces and organizes the structure and expression of desire.

“Identity”, the term cannot be separated from “sex”, “sexuality” and “gender”. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines “identity” as “who/what somebody or something is” (588). Who (what is his/her identity) somebody is, is defined by his sex, sexuality and gender in the society. One’s self (subjectivity) depends on these factors.

There are different concepts of “identity” besides our very common understandings. Earlier views of individuals as “self-determined, integrated beings” have been replaced by a more complex notion of “individuals as multiple subjectivities, sometimes described as fractured and split” (Cranny-Francis et al. 33). “Identity” is used as political weapon to fight against marginalization and exploitation. For example females, blacks, homosexuals were united under their identities respectively and fought against the mainstream culture and marginalization of these multiple cultures. On the basis of some shared physical features, sexual orientation and shared desires certain groups form an identity.

“Sexuality” and “Gender” are highly interrelated terms in the field of “gender” and “sexuality” studies. What is clear about the definitions and discussions of “gender” and “sex” is that ideas about “sexuality” are so intimately tied up with “gender” that it is sometimes difficult to see where one ends and other begins. In this discussion the researcher is going to draw an analytical outline about the dynamics of power in current social arrangement about sex. The focus of this chapter is to show how sexuality and gender are deployed in socio-

political analysis of “sex” and “gender”. The term “sex” throughout much of English speaking world and history has covered both:

Sexed regimes: identity and practice-which typically involve binary and hierarchical categories such as men and women, usually associated with an account of biology and reproductive function as well as sexual regimes, identities and practices, which also commonly involve binary and hierarchical categories such as heterosexual and homosexual usually linked to conceptions of biology and reproduction. (Edwards qtd. in Beasley 1)

The word “sex” is used in everyday language to refer to one’s sexed identity (one’s sex) as well as to the sexual. It has been used for biological or material body. But “in scholarly analysis it is used for sexed and sexual-that is gender and sexuality respectively” (Beasley 1). The terms have been used by the various thinkers/theories in the gender and sexuality politics.

As such, the gender identity is does not come by birth, but comes through performance. Sexuality of an individual comes through It is constructed depending on the circumstantial and sociological surroundings.

III. Sexuality as Performance in *M. Butterfly*

Primarily, sex is an act of conjugation between male and female for the purpose of reproduction. However, the border of sex cannot be confine within the limitations “male and female conjugation,” as for ages in known or unknown form, the act of sex has been practiced amongst varying sex partners. As such, it has much deeper and wider level of interpretation and understanding.

M. Butterfly is basically based on the confused sexual identity to two characters: Rene Gallimard and Song Liling. The protagonist Rene Gallimard has got multiple sexual orientations. He is married and has a child and at the same time for years has been engaged, physically with a female, who is a disguised female. So it is difficult for him to stick into only one sexual course. He married Helga late at age thirty one. He says, “I was faithful to my marriage for eight years” (1. V. 1522). However, his sincerity towards his wife cannot be termed “true.” As, in an conversation with his friend, Marc, we learn about his relationship with a 17 year school girl.

MARC. I gave you little of my life, so that now you can give me some of yours.

(Pause) Remember Issabelle?

GALLIMARD. Of course I remember ! She was my first experience.

MARC. We all wanted to ball her but she only wanted me.

GALLIMARD. I had her.

MARC. Right you balled her.

[...]

GALLMARD. You told me to wait in the bushes by the cafeteria that night.

The next thing I knew, she was on me. Dress up in the air.

MARC. She never wore underwear.

GALLIMARD. My arms were pinned to the dirt. I looked up and there was this woman bouncing up on down on my loins. (1. IX. 1558)

It was beyond doubt that he was a “male” in the traditional sense, as he was able of heterosexual relationship; with his wife and the 17 year old girl. And to be precise, he had a “penis,” the weapon of a male to claim himself a “male.” So, he was at least a “male.”

His affair with Song Liling, the most “fairest maiden” started in 1961. To him, she was a butterfly, whose company was the most soothing for him. He says:

GALLIMARD (to us). And so, over the years 1961, ‘62’, ‘63’, we settled into our routine, Butterfly and I. She would always have prepared a light snack and then ever so delicately, and only if I agreed, she would start to pleasure me. With her hands, her mouth [. . .] too many ways to explain, and too sad, given my present situation. But mostly we would talk. About my life. Perhaps there is nothing rarer than to find a woman who passionately listens. (3. IV. 1563)

Gallimard was, externally a capable male. He was having wife, children, affair and was also a worshipper of beauty, one of the essential features of a capable male. But, when it was revealed finally that Song Liling was a man with a “penis” who could give perfect pleasure to Gallimard for their twenty years of affair we came to know that his dominant sexual orientation was homoerotic. However, he always assumes that his sexual partner Song Liling is madam Butterfly, a perfect woman.

Gallimard practices various kinds of sexuality like “hetero”, “homo,” “bi” but almost always assumed the hetero normative homophobic position.

Foucault says that “power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of object and rituals of truth. The individual and knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production” (88). As a French diplomat in China and having a male position in the society Gallimard assumed power. He had official authority as he had a diplomatic post. He assumed

that he was always superior to the women especially Song Liling, because of his heterosexual dealings. French as well as Chinese Societies were heterosexual dominant. But in Foucauldian analysis “identity” and “truth” are viable to change. When Gallimard was found at odd with the laws he was found guilty. His apple cart was upset. In Foucauldian analysis society creates discourses which produce a truth that man to man attraction is guilty act.

As Althusser says that such ideas work hegemonically and the victim does not know that he is a victim. Gallimard is trapped in the hegemony of hetero normative society and believes that he should love only a woman. His diverse sexual orientations are declared false. His diverse sexual orientations and homophobic hetero normative discourse get clash he cannot resist the hegemony through living. His life will be a life full of embarrassment, if he chooses to obey the punishment he would be meeker follower of the normative society. So, he chooses suicide. But, he carries out the suicide in a quite peculiar way so that he can die a “death with honour”. The drama ends in tragedy. However, by dramatizing Gallimard’s multiple sexual orientations and exposing that it is power that creates truth the play opens the way to Performance theory of sexuality.

The play moves around the disputed issue of “identity,” as the central issue. Gallimard’s sense of his beloved’s identity comes from the traditional sense of assumption, “to see is to believe.” It was because he assumed “identity” as pure and single as he was a subject of hetero normative society which belied in single unitary identity. But the case of identity does not come from the perspective of “to see is to believe.”

Gallimard enjoys as a person in a privileged position in his heterosexual society. He prides himself into “us” and to homosexuals; he assumes “others.” Exploiting Derridian idea of deconstruction, Diana Fuss in her *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (1991) opines that heterosexuality/homosexuality binaries are constructed rather than born. She writes:

The majority of the community created the binary oppositions of heterosexual/homosexuals. They assumed heterosexual as “us” and to define “us” they created the homosexual as “other”. Heterosexual is what homosexual is not. It also created “homophobia” in the society “us”. In these binaries “us” are supposed to be “natural” and superior and the “others” as “unnatural”, and therefore inferior. But Fuss argues that we “cannot totally move outside the current conception of sexuality. (Seidman 198)

We cannot assert ourselves to be entirely “outside” heterosexuality nor entirely “inside” heterosexuality because each of these terms achieves its meaning in relation to the other. So we are neither outside nor “inside” these categories. Gallimard cannot all into any categories strictly as the categories themselves are loosely constructed. His identity is neither entirely masculine, feminine, heterosexual nor homosexual. His identity is ambiguous.

Gallimard falls in love with a woman. The womanliness or femininity, he falls in love with, is constructed one. He falls in love with an identity which is constructed but he takes that identity as truth. Song for him, is a female even capable of bearing child, as she produces him a child claiming to have been born of their conjugation. One day Song enters his room carrying a child and says to Gallimard, “He looks like you. [. . .] I will raise him and he will be our child” (2 VII. 1568). This identity of Song as a woman was true for Gallimard. But, finally, when song’s identity was revealed again as a male and a Chinese spy the earlier identity proves to be constructed. Finally Song Liling whom Gallimard falls in love is not a person, but a stereotype constructed.

Gallimard, a Western male creates various stereotypes about himself and about Song and maintains them through his practices. He creates and loves a “beautiful Butterfly” who is an oriental woman. Stuart Hall in his *Representation: Cultural Presentations and Signifying Practices* (1996) says that stereotyping” [. . .] is a part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order. It sets up a symbolic frontier between [. . .] “Us” and “them” (258).

Stereotyping operates structural power relation in which inequality prevails. In heterosexual homophobic society the heterosexual majority assumes power, creates positive and negative stereotypes and represents its “other” with negative stereotypes.

Gallimard aligns himself with the heterosexual male dominated western society. He internalizes the male’s dominant position. He assumes himself masculine and superior to Song. He places himself with “us” and Song with “them”. He says,

GALLIMARD. [. . .] here was a Butterfly with Little or no voice but she had the grace, the delicacy . . . I believed this girl. I believed her suffering. In wanted to take her in my arms so delicate, even I could protect her, take her home, pamper her until she smiled. (1. VII. 1554)

By attributing the passive attributes to song he tries to prove himself superior. He says, “Death with horror/is better than life/life with dishonour” (1554).

Rene Gallimard loves Song Liling because she is ‘M. Butterfly’ for him. Butterfly is a stereotype of a perfect, submissive oriental woman. So Gallimard loves a fictional identity. He loves fantasy rather than the fact because the so called factual identities are cultural constructs. In the first act of the play Rene Gallimard introduces his love object:

GALLIMARD: In order for you to understand what I did and why, I must introduce you to my favourite opera: Madame Butterfly. By Giacomo Puccini. First produced by La Scala, Milan, in 1904, it is now beloved throughout the western world. (1. III. 1551)

And he further describes:

GALLIMARD. And why not? Its heroine, Cio-Cio-San, also know as Butterfly, is a feminine ideal, beautiful and brave. And hero, the man for whom she gives up everything, is [. . .]- not very good looking, not too bright and

pretty much a wimp. Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton of the U.S. Navy [. . .]. (1. III. 1551)

While introducing us the characters he expresses a great happiness to identify himself with Pinkerton and Song Liling with Cio-Cio-San. Hwang through this meta-narrative style reveals that the character's identities are just stereotypical. The assumed identity categories are viable to change; this signifies Queer sensibility in the play. Different stereotypes applied to a particular community may attribute conflicting characteristics. This conflict reveals that the stereotypes are generated by those who are outside the group and they are a part of political strategy for managing the groups. Gallimard's stereotyping of Song as a beautiful submissive woman is a part of it. When Song Liling crosses the binary position set by Gallimard, it is revealed that identity categories are dynamic and ambiguous.

Contesting stereotypes is difficult, yet not impossible. Song Liling contests the female stereotypes by creating new stereotypes and by parodying the old stereotypes. She reveals the apparent contradiction of earlier stereotypes. Song Liling has a clear knowledge of Foucauldian power from the moment. She recognizes Gallimard's masculine arrogance and she weaves the trap of deception. She understands that lying is the best form of resistance to contest stereotyping power. She supplies false facts with lies the observer would prefer to believe. Song changes the roles of the game. Song justifies her lies by explaining that western masculine eye will never accept her oriental male body as a body with any power: "being an oriental I could never be completely a man" (1572). By assuming another identity she undermines the power more effectively with lies than, she could do with truth. Song creates a character and information that is a lie that Gallimard wants to read into his fantasy of dominance. She creates a body that is a lie and Gallimard falls in love with this body, a stereotype, not with the physical body underneath the lies.

Song Liling creates “womanliness” from her male body. Song is a man with a penis when she drops her briefs and shows the naked body in the witness box in the court. Song is a woman for Gallimard. Song is able to deceive him through masquerade. Then, it can be declared that ‘womanliness’ that he falls in love is nothing more than a masquerade. In her essay “Womanliness a Masquerade” (1929), Riviere argues that genuine womanliness and masquerade are one and the same. Gallimard’s manliness and Liling’s womanliness are just constructed subjectivities. To some extent patriarchal femininity and masculinity are ‘masquerades’ in which both sexes adopt a role which covers over ambivalence and anxiety of subjectivity and sexual identity.

In theatrical masquerading and performance both femininity and masculinity appear real in their effects. As the effects are real their identity also appear real to the audience. Similarly, the regular behaviour of dressing, way of speaking and make up create a person’s identity rather than by, their innate attributes. Gallimard, first, sees Song as a beautiful woman dressed in butterfly dress. This creates an effect that Song Liling is a woman. Gallimard wears formal man’s dress like hat, suits and some informal male dresses also. He often wears ‘tuxedo’. This always gives him an impression of a gentlemanly diplomat. Song is seen in “wedding kimono” in the first act, scene five. In the first act Hwang describes Song’s costume and says, “([...]) Song her back still towards us, drops her robe. A second of her naked back ([...])” (1. ix. 1956). One day in 1960 in Beijing Song enters into Gallimard’s room in a sheer dressing gown. Gallimard was very much attracted to her “womanliness” that was a sheer masquerade, an effect of her dress. They have a little conversation filled up with sensual attraction:

SONG. I’ll do my best to make you happy.

Turn off the lights.

(Song tosses her hair back and smiles)

SONG. Monsieur Gallimard?

GALLIMARD. Yes, Butterfly?

SONG. “Vieni, Vieni!”

GALLIMARD. “Come, darling.”

SONG. “Ah! Dolce notte!”

GALLIMARD. “Beautiful night” [...]” All ecstatic with love, the heavens are filled with laughter.”

(...Blackout). (I. XII, 1560)

The conversation and their behaviour shows that Song’s femininity and Gallimard’s sexual orientation are nothing more than the effects of masquerade.

M. Butterfly dismantles the idea that sex predetermines gender identity. Traditionally it is believed that ‘sex is natural and ‘gender’ is cultural; therefore gender which suggests dressing, way of speaking, use of makeup and a set of behaviours, comes later. But through masquerade Song Liling and Gallimard parodize the notion. It is ‘sex’ that follows gender in the case of Gallimard. So his relation to Song helps blur the boundary of gender and sex in the play. Realizing that the hetero normative idea of gender that he was stocked to was false, in the ending part of the play Gallimard says, “I’m a man who loved a woman created by man- simply falls sort” (3. III. 1572). Here “loved” implies for having sexual affairs also because he has even been convinced that he has made Song pregnant:

GALLIMARD. I want to-

SONG. I am pregnant (Beat) I’m pregnant. (Beat)

I’m pregnant.

GALLIMARD. I want to marry you! (2. III. 1567)

But, finally, when Song strips and shows his naked boy with penis the audience as well as Gallimard were amazed and shocked because they come to know that gender as well as

compulsory heterosexuality were just a matter of masquerade and performance. This shock value parodizes the notion of homophobic society that prescribed only heterosexuality as natural and compulsory.

Song Liling is a “transvestite”. By adopting transvestism or cross-dressing she is able to seduce a man. This seduction of a man, who is the representative of heterosexual society, reveals the gullibility of people in compulsory heterosexuality. People have been so hegemonies that any one in man’s dress must be a man for them. It is clothes that determine a person’s sex in such societies. The cross dressing of Song Liling and deception of Gallimard challenges categorization of male and female, and show that male and female are simply the artifacts of dressing. They are constructed categories.

A crucial implication of Butler’s claim, that heterosexuality is fiction produced through practices and discourse to challenge the idea that any individual’s sexual identity reveals the “truth” about them, is best applied in *M. Butterfly*. Rene Gallimard and Song Liling’s identities are products of “performance”. What appears to be the truth of their identity is, actually, the effect of repeating over time a series of gestures, dressings and acts. They create the “impression” of an essential gendered identity and heterosexual compulsion but there is no essential gender identity underpinning them. The gendered subject as masculine or feminine is thus not established through a single constitutive act; any and every impression of Gallimard the Song’s gendered identity is achieved through the process of “(re)-citation”. Shift of “gender” of Song from female to male and Gallimard acceptance at the end of the play:

GALLIMARD. [...] My name is Rene Gallimard- also known as Madame Butterfly

SONG. Butterfly? Butterfly? (3. III) 1575)

It suggests that one never in one's gender. It is only in a perpetual and uncertain, though inescapable, condition of doing gender, of repeating the acts and gestures that produce and sustain the notion of gender identity. Song Liling produces and sustains herself as a female before the eyes of Gallimard by repetitive acts and gestures that heterosexual society has prescribed to be a female. But this repetition is in Butler's term "temporal and contingent groundless of ... [the] 'ground' of gender identity. The groundlessness of the identity is revealed; precisely through an occasional discontinuity in performance" (141). This discontinuity occurs in *M. Butterfly* when Song Liling has to stand in the witness box in the court to deliver a testimony. When she puts off her drag (dress) it exposes the fallacy of the dominant belief in an original that straight men and women embody; and that gay, lesbian, or transvestite subject deviates from the original, is itself a mythical figuration.

Depending upon the "groundless" identity categories Gallimard's viral display depends upon exaggerating gender stereotypes; hence he assumes a masterful role in relation to Song as expressed in the metaphor, "I began to wonder; had I, too, caught a butterfly that would writhe of a needle?" (I, XI. 1559), and his virtuosity elicits Song's gift of "shame" (1559) more than conventional modesty. Shame testifies to female masochism. Even more interesting and parodic is Gallimard's interpretation of "friendship". "Better, but I Don't like the way he calls me 'friend'. When a woman calls a man her 'friend', she's calling him a eunuch or a 'homosexual'" (I.XI. 1559). In this instant his homophobia which he received from his homophobic community is revealed. But that is revealed at the end when his heterosexual partner was a male. Assuming masculine arena of sexual politics he gains admiration and envy of his colleagues and immediately advances his career, for, shortly thereafter, the French the very fact that it is articulated, a rule of law. Mode of action with regard to sex is of a juridical discursive character. "Treason and Homosexuality" that Gallimard is accused of are the discourses created by the power.

Court plays an instrumental role to control one's sexuality. It prescribes laws and declares what doesn't fit to the law is unnatural, illicit or forbidden. This idea is circulated among societies and that becomes a norm, and people call it a truth. So truth is hegemonic and discursive construction. This can be revealed in the dialogue between Gallimard and his friend Marc.

MARC. Ah, yes. She cannot love you, it is taboo, but something deep inside her heart ... she cannot help herself ... she must surrender to you. It is her destiny.

GALLIMARD. How do you imagine all this?

MARC. The same way you do. It's an old story. It's in your blood. They fear us Rene. Their women fear us. And you know something? They are all correct.

(I. IX. 1556)

In this dialogue homophobia is naturalized by the discourses. But by saying it "an old story" Marc further reveals that sexuality categories as heterosexual/homosexual are fictions constructed through discursive practices.

The cycle of prohibitions create truth about one's individuality. Foucault writes, "thou shalt not speak, thou shalt not touch, thou shall not consume, thou shall not show and, thou shalt not experience pleasure ... thou shalt not exist, except in darkness and secrecy" (84) exposing the discursive prohibition about sex. For twenty years of affairs Song Liling exploited these prohibitions like "thou shalt not show" to deceive Gallimard. Had she been showing her naked body completely? Gallimard would have preceded the relation differently. This can be proved form the following dialogue:

JUDGE. Did Monsieur Gallimard know you were a man?

SONG. Well, he never saw me completely naked. Ever. (3.III. 1571)

But Song refuses this prohibition at last and strips all the dress and presents herself completely naked. She exploits the taboo to fool Gallimard to spy about France's foreign diplomacy to support her country. So here power operates that different level and Song turns victorious. Now Song is no more a woman. 'She' is 'he'. This reversal of identity denaturalizes the gender identities and reveals that identity itself is ambiguous. So song's manipulation of identity and power to dismantle the notion of fixed identity serves Queering purpose.

However, Song Liling accepts that she and Gallimard had experienced a lot of sexual pleasure. She answers to the judge, "of course we enjoyed more [. . .] complete union, and I supposed he might have wondered why I was always on my stomach [. . .] it was my job to make him think I was a woman" (3. I. 1571). She accepts her involvement in homosexuality to please Gallimard. Her expression "we did enjoy more [. . .] complete union" suggests that 'sex' is not only copulation between a man and woman, insertion of penis into vagina but a far different experience from it. The sexual pleasure practiced by the pair deconstructs the notion that heterosexuality alone is sex and other activities are foreplays of it. Rather, it gives rise to the ideas that there can be multiple sexual orientations, practices and pleasures besides heterosexual practices. This idea of inclusion of all sexuality possibilities like homosexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, masturbate, pornography characterizes Queer sensibility.

One might be amazed that if heterosexuality and homosexuality both are natural, if natural and both are constructed, if constructed, how could they exist differently for so long time? From the example of Gallimard and Song we can infer some ideas to answer this question. Majority of the heterosexuals constructed one opposite or "other" to define them. They are not what the "other" is. These binaries are not completely opposite to each other. They have some similarities that cause ambiguity in their opposition. But the majority avoids the absences, gaps, ambiguities and similarities between them and sets them in completely

binary oppositions. So these binaries work as each other's opposites. But Gallimard's assumption about Song Liling is that she is a woman, but he gets pleasure from a man masquerading as woman. Here Song is both a man and woman. This reveals the ambiguity of sexuality oppositions and challenges this binary assumption. This deconstruction is against the exclusionary practices of hetero normative society. So deconstructing this assumption *M. Butterfly* gives an emphasis to inclusion of all sexualities.

Most of the characters in *M. Butterfly* are like caricatures that play brief scenes that underscore the sexual and political ideas which are more fully realized in the shifting relationship between Gallimard and Song Liling in and out of drag. By doing the caricature of the dominant stereotypes from western culture and literature they ridicule the canonical western beliefs about the notion of gender, sex and identity. Gallimard identifies himself with the macho American stereotype Pinkerton. The central male attitude-voiced more than once- is that woman wants to submit just as the passive east, whatever is protestation, wants to be penetrated by the superior but beneficent West. This western macho male attitude, "your eyes say yes while the mouth says no" (3. III. 1572) has been ridiculed. *M. Butterfly* is interested, dramatically and ideationally, in the difficulty of defining sexual and political roles. In one of teasing scenes in the play Song Liling tells that only a man knows what a woman should be. Female's roles are traditionally played by men in Chinese opera, but when Gallimard, who first sees Liling singing *Butterfly*, finally visits her in Chinese opera. She is playing a female warrior, attracting the men around her. Exploiting the female stereotypes she dominates Gallimard though submissiveness milking him for the secrets she passes on to her superiors. America did not have embassy in China. So, Tulon, the French Ambassador says, "the American's are asking us to be their eyes and ears. Say for, Jack Kennedy signed an order to bomb North Vietnam, Laos" (2. 11. 156). This information was perhaps drawn by Liling from Gallimard. So, sexual discourse has been connected with politics. *M. Butterfly*

even dramatizes the idea that it is not only identity categories that are at flux but also the politics, power and identity of the countries also are at constant change. The French ambassador Toulon expresses his disgust:

TOULON. What a bunch of Jerks. Vietnam was our colony. Not only didn't the American help us fight to keep them but now, seven years later, they have come back to grab the territory for themselves. It's very irritating. (2. III. 1561).

So, politics changes, power positions also change. Discourses change. Truth changes; *M. Butterfly* dramatizes postmodern concept of truth that is never one or static rather it is always in the state of flux.

Gallimard is presented as a whip who becomes sexually and professionally sure of himself because of his liaison with Liling an "ideal woman". But to his surprise she is "aggressor" rather than totally submissive as the table turns out of his control. In the final scene when Gallimard faces Song completely naked showing the penis Gallimard gives an explanation for not knowing. The explanation was that he chose not to know anything that would interfere with his image of the ideal woman who loved him completely. But in practice the person whom he found most loving was the man who "deserved nothing but a kick in the behind, and instead [he] give him [. . .] all [his] love" (3. III. 1573). So what he loved is not a physical body, that is male or female, but an idea or fictional body. Truth of body also turned to be a fiction that is what postmodernism encompasses.

Gallimard goes to prison and song Liling will go back to China, but Gallimard keeps saying that he wants to find another ending the right one-for their story. Liling offers to continue the affair, but that would be play acting for Gallimard, not the idealization that has let him call his lover "Butterfly". He wants to believe that a woman can so worship an unworthy man that, by Puccini out of Belasco, she can kill herself for love. That is no more

possible from Song Liling. Song could be a homosexual partner to please his body but she can no more be an image of an ideal woman now, and he loses faith on her sincerity too. By adopting Song Liling again as a partner neither he can resist and avoid the punishment nor he can avoid the public humiliation and “embarrassment” of the homophobic “French colleagues” (1573). He realizes that he must rebel against the rigidity of the society. He rebels against the punishment he has been given. He rebels by denying the truth other people believe. He determines, “and now to you I will prove that my love was not in vain by returning to the world of fantasy where I first met her” (3. III. 1573). There is a vision of slender women in cheongsams and kimonos who die for the love of unworthy foreign devils: who are born and raised to be the perfect women; who take whatever punishment ““we give them, and bounce back, strengthened by love, unconditionally” (3. III. 1573). It is the vision that has become “my” live.

Gallimard rebels by creating a punishment by him than to follow other punishment prescribed by the heterosexual homophobic norms. It was Song who should have been committed suicide for the sake of western macho man. But when Gallimard could not find an “ideal Butterfly” image in Song, changes himself into M. Butterfly. He paints his face, puts on Liling’s discarded robes and commits the necessary suicide, while Liling, now the repentant male stands above and calls out in a broken voice, “Butterfly. Butterfly” (3. III. 1573). Here Gallimard like Song Liling embodies both figures: the western heterosexual or homosexual man dies along with the oriental woman.

The form of suicide involves penetration or revelation of various characters: male, female, homosexual, heterosexual, masculine feminine and so on. So, an individual cannot fully be appropriated in a single category. When Gallimard feels that Song does not fit into any gender or sexuality category he was amazed and says: “I think you must have some kind of identity problem” (3. II. 1572). Here it is not Song alone who does not fit into the identity

categories if we analyze, every individual is hard to fit into any category because an individual is natural corporal behaviours. But, the identity categories are limited and above all constructed. There may be as many individuals as many identity categories.

An Individual's rebel to oppose a single hegemonic truth by creating a new form of truth for himself. Gallimard creates his own form of punishment to satisfy himself and rebel against the hetero normative codes and conducts prescribed through the "instrumental" (Foucault 84) court.

Gallimard enacts public execution in which "the body produces and reproduces the truth of the crime" (68). Gallimard can only reproduce the trough; earlier in the play we discover that he is most likely infertile male. But at the end Gallimard realizes that it is impossible for him to physically reproduce himself and he uses his body the produce the crime, to reproduce the crime. He violates his bodily unity in a ritual fashion and with this ritual he tries to make his death more meaningful than his life has been. Gallimard often says, "Death with honour is better than life . . . life with dishonour" (3. III. 1573). Gallimard's suicide is an effective form of resistance and is the climax of the play. If "disciplinary punishment . . . [is] essentially corrective" (Foucault 179) then Gallimard does not want to be corrected, rather, he chooses "fantasy" over "reality".

Though officially he is being punished for treason and betraying the state, really he is being punished for the sexual "abnormality" and the mistake that allowed the treason to occur. He refuses to have his sexuality corrected. He would rather live and dying the world of fantasy where his sexuality, his dreams, and his desires can remain enact. This is Queer sensibility that gives him "honour [able] life he wants to live or die. By creating a different forms of punishment. Gallimard creates a different type of body. The suicide is his reclamation of his body. The homophobic society has tried to transform him into a docile, observable body and meek "self". He makes his body back into rather a fragile body that is

even capable of being broken. He rebels and refuses to be the ends and means of the functioning of power. Gallimard refuses to operate as the lesson, the discourse, and the representation of public morality.

Gallimard's suicide/resistance shows that audience how we have been duped in the network of power relation. We realize that punishment given in the name of abnormal sexuality is inappropriate. The main character Rene Gallimard alone is not the victim we all people are vulnerable of being victimized only because we adopt different methods of pleasure. The violent punishment displays the power of punishment. We are accustomed to carefully controlled and hidden forms of punishment that mask the violence against the body. Here the violence and the effects of power are not concealed. However, it creates a situation in the audience that they are also involved in the death of Gallimard. So, this revelation of everyone having involved in the death of Gallimard, is revelation of everyone having involved in punishment formation reveals that truth is effect of discourse that operates at every level in relation to power. At last he has transformed us into the audience who respect him for his resistance to power, for his ability to reclaim himself an honourable life.

The death of Gallimard as an individual is of course a tragedy but a meaning he creates from the death compels us to believe that Gallimard is an honourable hero who created meaning of life and death by a public ritual suicide "seppuku" with a hara-kiri knife.

M. Butterfly thus dramatizes that fluidity of identity through feminine performance. It dramatizes the postmodern Queer identity by revealing that the identity categories are all constructed. The play dramatizes the gaps, ambiguities and weakness of heterosexual normativity. The play parodizes the binary oppositions like male/female, heterosexual normativity. The play parodizes the binary oppositions like male/female, heterosexual/homosexual through the deconstructive use of "transvertism", "masquerading" and "performativity".

Rene Gallimard asserts his Queer identity by rejecting to be corrected and to fit in the gender and sexuality categories created by hetero normative homophobic culture and by creating a new rather a fictional identity for him. Constant shift of identity of Rene Gallimard and song Liling reveals the Queer sensibility (sensibility) of fluidity of identity) operating through the play *M. Butterfly*.

A prominent theorist, Judith Butler questions the need for stable categories of identity. In her book *Gender Trouble* (1990) she offers an analysis of sex and gender. She argues that sex and gender rather than the inner capacities, attributes and identities, they are a set of “repeated performance the conjugal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (p. 190). According to Butler, gender only exists in the service of heterosexual; gender identities come about and are dependent upon what she calls “the heterosexual matrix”. She argues:

It is precisely the butch lesbian and the drag Queen (as well as the femme Lesbian and macho gay), whose performance radically problematizes sex, gender and sexuality in their periodic repetition of the heterosexual ‘original’. Since heterosexuality itself is only produced through its connection to the repeated signifying practices of gender, gay is to straight not as copy is to an original, but rather as ‘copy is to copy’. In imagining gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself as well as its contingency. (191)

Focusing upon constructedness of sex and gender through performance, in *Bodies that Matter* (1993), Butler argues that it is not one who decides on a bright sunny morning to go out and become a woman by putting on a dress. It is an assertion of a series of performance-putting on nylon and high heels or wearing work boots, day after day which provides people with their sense of gender and sexual matrix. You create yourself by repeating a series to steps over and

over that produces you. So Butler is convinced that compulsory heterosexuality is not a natural category but rather a system built up by repeating over and over.

To disrupt the hetero normative ideas regarding gender and sexuality categories, like Althusser, Butler also purposes a periodic strategy. In the preface to *Gender Trouble*, Butler declares:

As a strategy to denaturalize and resignify bodily categories, I describe and propose a set of periodic practices based in a performative theory of gender acts that disrupt the categories of a body, sex, gender and sexuality and occasion their subversive signification and proliferation beyond the binary frame. (Butler xii)

Challenging the formulation that “biology is destiny” some feminists proposed the alternative view the sex is natural, grounded in the biological body, where as gender is cultural related to various attitudes, behaviours, style of dress and social norms. In *Gender Trouble* Butler argues that by accepting sex (male/female binaries) as natural they are perpetuating hetero normative hegemony. She claims that sex itself is historical and constructed idea. Sex cannot be distinguished from “gender” for both are cultural. Sex itself is a gendered concept. It is the cultural apparatus of gender that produces binary sex and it does so in a way that normalizes certain bodies, genders and sexualities and pathologies others.

To contest the ideas that sexual identity reveals the truth Butler takes “drag” as a tool. He parodies the concept of compulsory heterosexuality. “Parody” is linked to the idea of mocking the very notion of a original gender identity. “All gender is periodic in the sense that it is all imitative, but some forms [like drag] are more periodic than others because they expose that imitativeness” (Lloyd 139). Drags “unmask all identity as ‘drags’ “and they also have the power to “expose homophobia”.

Butler takes help of the theoretical model of Derrida that is “iterable model”. In Derridian analysis “iteration” means “repetition” as well s “alternation”, “iterability” is linked with the idea of reproducibility. A “sign” works as a sign because of its iterability and “reproducibility”. It has the possibility of being repeated even after the “absence”. Similarly an “identity” also works as an identity because of its itarability. So drawing upon Derridian theory of performativity of Sign, Signature and Event from Derrida’s essay “Signature, Event and Context,” Butler shows that sexual identities are the products of repetitive performance. Derrida deconstructs. J.L. Austin’s performative model of communication similarly Butler deconstructs the hetero normative hegemony upon sexuality in western culture. The claim that sexuality is a matter of “performance” rather than of identity, challenges the heterosexuality’s claim to “naturalness” on theoretical grounds.

To conclude, sexuality of an individual, as supposed does not rests on his/her external appearance, but has to do with the behavioural pattern. Sexuality is rather an action than exposure of characteristics, which sets up the reality of sexuality in a human being. Gallimard, who even after enjoying an affair with a girl, having conjugal relationship with his wife and thereby bearing a child was contend with his homosexual relationship with Song proves that “sexuality is performance” rather than appearance.

IV. Conclusion

After a thorough analysis and elucidation of *M. Butterfly*, the researcher has come to a conclusion that sexuality is not natural but constructed. Gender of a child or a man/woman might be known by his/her birth; however, it is performance that decides whether the person's choice is feminine or masculine.

Rene Gallimard, a French diplomat stationed in Peking (now Beijing), during his twenty long years of courtship with Song Liling, a beautiful opera singer could not identify his real sex. During the period Liling acted as a beautiful submissive maiden, a representation of oriental women. Song spoke woman, behaved woman and even satisfied Gallimard physically. It is interesting to know, that Gallimard, a man of such wit and wisdom could not identify the real gender of Song. This leads us to a simple understanding that Gallimard's limitation of satisfaction was limited to what Song was offering. Of course, in the sexual act between Gallimard and Song, there was no penetration of penis; however, there is no denying that for years they shared sexual intimacy, for innumerable times. This is enough to realize the real choice of Gallimard, that he was physically masculine but spiritually, feminine. And, the closing scene of the drama clearly identifies, the sexuality of Gallimard.

Gallimard chooses death to humiliation and suicides. He dresses up as a female and stabs himself on chest, a traditional form of suicide known as "Seppuku" popular in Japan. Gallimard's suicide is not a suicide of defeated mentality but the acceptance of reality that his identity was more a female than a male. His killing of himself is his claim that he is heterosexual. His death is honourable, as he realizes his real identity of gender. However, his gender personality was always dominated as the Western ego of being a male suppressed his true identity. His suicide was the realization and acceptance of being a man of multi sexual personality.

M. Butterfly through its ambiguous presentation of characters and finally role reversal, (Gallimard) succumbing to feminist mentality, depicts that sexuality of a person is determined by performance not by birth. For ages, hundreds and thousands of people have been living and leading their sexual life, in against their mental desire; largely due to the fear of puritan ethics and values, and partially due to ignorance on their sexual desire. Through the depiction of dramatic notion of sexual identity, Hwang breaks away from the traditional concept of sexuality and preaches that gender and sexuality is determined by performance.

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