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Subversion of Normative Sexuality in Pedro Almodovar's Movie *Bad Education*

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Letter of Recommendation

Ms. Shakuntala Rawat has completed her thesis entitled “Subversion of Normative Sexuality in Almodovar’s movie *Bad Education*”, under my supervision. She carried out her research from November 2011 to September 2012. I hereby recommend her thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

The Thesis entitled “Subversion of Normative Sexuality in Pedro Almodovar’s movie *Bad Education*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Ms. Shakuntala Rawat, has been approved by the undersigned members of Research Committee.

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Abstract

The present thesis entitled “Subversion of Normative Sexuality in Pedro Almodovar’s movie *Bad Education*” shows the performativity of gender and sexuality in order to rupture the heterosexual values and norms. It challenges the notion of male/female category based gender roles and opens the horizon for possible other sexual identities. For Almodovar homosexuals, transsexuals, bisexuals, transgenders and drags are as real as heterosexuals. He believes that gender and sexuality are matter of construction and performance. In the movie *Bad Education* almost all major characters have multiple and ambiguous gender and sexual roles. They play more than one gender identities as per the demand of situation, desire and interest. The protagonist of the movie, Juan has homosexual relationship with a film director Enrique and priest Father Manolo. Likewise, he plays the role of transgender drag queen Zahara for the movie “The Visit” and other theatrical performances. But ultimately, he marries with a girl named Monica and has a son. Similarly, next character Ignacio, in his childhood, he has gay homoerotic sensibility but in his adulthood he turns into the preoperative transgender having well developed breasts. He prepares for sex change surgery.

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I. Subversion against Normative Heterosexuality

This research focuses on Pedro Almodovar's movie *Bad Education* (2004), a story about people who have multiple gender and sexual identities in late 20th century Spanish society. Technically a complex sort of story, *Bad Education* has three layers of narration; one layer of story deals with the present world, second layer is flashback and final layer is the world of art. For this reason, many critics argue that *Bad Education* is a movie within movie. As similar to its plot structure, the characters of the film have more than single identities. In a sense, we can say that this movie presents various social attitudes related to gender and sexuality in Franco and post-Franco regime Spain. Ignacio (Geal Garcia Bernal), Enrique (Fele Martine), and Father Manolo (Daniel Gimenez Cacho) are lead characters of the movie. Garcia Bernal performs the role of four characters (Juan, Angel, Zahara and Ignacio) very beautifully. This story tries to dramatize that how a normative society has constructed and fabricated the norms regarding gender, sex and body. The major concern of my thesis is to show gender, sex and body are the matter of performances and constructions. On the basis of biological imperatives and social roles, human beings can be categorized into two genders; male and female. It is a traditional concept, but new thinking is different, because an outwardly male can perform female roles and vice versa. In this way, stable notion of gender and sexuality is challenged by performativity and contingency.

Pedro Almodóvar's *Bad Education* tells the story of two childhood gay lovers, Ignacio Rodríguez and Enrique Serrano, and their separation after the unforgettable and life-changing schooldays at a Catholic school in 1960's Spain. The film narrative is filled with complex chronologies and crossed identities, uses story within a story structure, and jumps back and forth to the 1980s with Ignacio and

Enrique. The story moves through a series of flashbacks based on one of Ignacio's stories by the name of "The Visit", spanning the school life of the two young boys and exposing the deep and dark secrets of sexual abuse experienced at the hands of school Principal Father Manolo and the devastating effects that this abuse consequently has on Ignacio's life. Enrique feels crisis of inspiration for his next film, so agrees to adapt Ignacio's story into a film script. Ignacio desires to play the part of Zahara, the transsexual lead act, his persistence leading Enrique to become suspicious, deeming Ignacio as having changed since their childhood. In his visit to Galicia, in the search of Ignacio's mother, he becomes aware that the real Ignacio, his first love, in fact died four years previously; and his suspicions are subsequently proven correct, he realizes that the young man he has been in contact with was actually Ignacio's younger brother, Juan. This impressive twist in the narrative is crucial to *Bad Education* as it presents the spectator with a plenitude of crises of identities and lies, eloquently portrayed by Pedro Almodóvar through his clever use of flashbacks, brought to the spectator's eye through the script of "The Visit".

Through the movie like *Bad Education* Pedro Almodóvar has strived to create a space for marginalized gender roles in Spanish film, with the belief that gender can be used as a vehicle for challenging and attempting to change ideas and values engrained in patriarchal heterosexual Spanish society. Furthermore, he presents homosexuality in contemporary Spanish cinema. Homosexuality was considered as a taboo during the Francoist period and Spanish patriarchal society as a whole. Almodovar raises the voices of oppressed people in terms of gender and sexuality through the film narrative. He portrays society as he believes it should exist; without patriarchal, archaic values that were arguably engrained in the beliefs of its institutions such as the Catholic Church. In the movie *Bad Education* the majority of

the male characters engage in homosexuality, homoeroticism, transvestism and bisexuality; sexual behaviors which are linked to both taboo and social stigma. This could be considered as Almodóvar's way of challenging the engrained ideas existing in patriarchy that deem homosexuality as marginal, and unnatural. The very choice of homosexual heroes in this film must pose a challenge to those codes of representation and structures of identification inherent in dominant straight society.

Gender is regarded as one of the major components of identity.

Heterosexuality has designed norms about sex, body, gender and sexuality. Through the analysis of Pedro Almodovar's film *Bad Education*, the present dissertation attempts to show constitutive and performative nature of gender and sexuality. Since, they are constructs and performances; they can be transformed and subverted. Furthermore, it shows how Almodovar raises the issue of transsexuals to rupture usual gender and sex dichotomies. Recent critical studies undoubtedly convey a subversive vision of gender, sex, and sexuality. From such perspective gender and sexual identity are nothing more than a play; and people can choose and perform various rules concerning their gender and sexuality related identity. Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Sarah E. Chinn, and Marjorie Garber among many other critics have discussed about unstable sexual identities such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, drags, transgender, transvestite, heterosexual and so on.

As the theory of gender performativity is a part of the whole queer theory, first of all we need to know the connection between them. Queer theory is a recent development that reinterprets human identity, gender, and sexuality in the constant state of flux. For this theory, there is not any essential human identity grounded in gender and sexuality roles. Gender and sexuality are the social constructs. Hence, vulnerable to change. Transsexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality and drag culture are

inextricably related to queer theory: it deconstructs the gender and sexuality roles of traditional discourse. Similarly, queer politics reinterprets the complex genealogy that is fundamental to the fabrication of gender and sexuality. At this point, its prime concern is to fathom up the discursive practices that iterated and reiterated the gender and sexuality roles, thereby generating the theory of performativity. If queer theory subverts the false naturalization of human identity, gender and sexuality; the theory of performativity reinterprets the discursive practices that naturalized or essentialized these categories. According to this theory, gender and sexuality are the outcome of socio-cultural performance imbued with the network of power politics and representation. Judith Butler remarks on it as: "...Performativity is not singular act but a representation and ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of the 'body', understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration" (Gender Troubles XV). Here, she means to say that gender and sexuality are the social constructs that seem natural because of their repetitive deployment with the flow of time. Moreover, Butler basing her idea on this theory interprets gender in the following ways:

The view that gender is performative sought to show that what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through the sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body. In this way, it showed that what take to be an 'internal' feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain 'bodily acts' [my emphasis], at an extreme, an hallucinatory effect of naturalized gestures. (XV)

Here, Butler seems anti-essentialist and anti-foundationalist since she questions the hitherto perceived notion of feminine and the masculine aspects of social discourse.

Gender, for her, is not the patriarchal discourse; it is an outcome of the discursive practices. Women in the western discourse are assigned to perform the certain tasks in opposition to the duties of men. With the repeated performance of those very acts gender is constructed: it is not essential in the human nature. So, gender is the socially constructed category and hence historically contingent.

If we talk about the origin of the phrase “gender performativity”, was first applied by Judith Butler in her seminal text, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity* (1990). Sarah E. Chinn in her essay “Transgender” published in *Gay and Lesbian Studies* refers to Butler while claiming that “gender was the act in the same way that performative language is a speech act. Gender is performative” (Chinn299). Gender is performed reiteratively through an array of “acts, gestures, desires” (*Gender Trouble*136). And “these acts, gestures and desires articulated and enacted; create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core” (*Gender Trouble*136). This is how the gender is naturalized and emerges as essential identity.

According to Butler, identity does not refer to an independent agency. It is constituted through reiterative acts. Gender is just like a social drama which, as per Victor Turner, “requires a performance which is repeated” (*Gender Trouble*127). Turner too lays emphasis upon performative tendency of gender. Similarly, gender attributes, which constitute identity, are not expressive but performative. Judith Butler, in her essay “Performative Acts and Gender Construction”, argues, “In this sense, gender is no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time, an instituted through a stylized repetition of acts” (120). Chinn reinforces the same argument in this manner: “There is no subject underneath the gender, no universal self. Rather self is constructed through its strenuous performance of gender” (300). Such theoretical

perspectives make it clear that gender does not command any subjectivity and universality.

Butler argues “If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of repeating in the breaking or subversive repetition of the style” (121). Because of the reiterative nature of identity, there is a chance that it can be transformed and subverted as argued by Butler in the following extract:

Because there is neither an essence that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspire; because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender creates the idea of gender and without those acts, there will be no gender at all. Gender is thus a construction that regularly conceals its genesis (123).

In this way, Butler doesn't find any difference between body and gender. She persistently focuses on the absence of essential core of body. Just like gender, it is a construct. After all, both of them are constitutive in nature. So, body is a set of possibilities. It is not predetermined by some manner of internal essence.

The perspective towards masculinity/femininity or homo-/heterosexuality as dyads of binary oppositions is not suitable to current scenario of gender and sexuality study. So, they must be taken as performative variations. Needless to say, explicate the structure of their constructedness modulates the performance in such binary system. The subject cannot be performing according to its free will but acts only by subjugating itself, because performativity begins right from the moment of birth with the remarks: “It is a girl/boy”. So, the whole social matrix controls the system of

performance even before the body can opt as a subject. Butler in her introduction to *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* opines:

In the first stance, performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate act but rather as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effect that it names the regulatory norms of sex work in performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies and more specifically, to materialize the bodies sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative. (2)

Such peculiar impact of performance, though replicated in many forms, can be denaturalized by bringing it into the forefront as a configuration of society. So, not only performances such as 'female masculinity' treated by Judith Halberstam in her essay "An Introduction of Female Masculinity" but a number of other back and forth and overlapping in variations are possible in the uneven, heterogeneous formation that we know as sexuality. In other words, the binaries of homo-/hetero-sexuality and masculinity/femininity break and collapse into one another to liberate the infinite possibilities of other sexualities.

In a nutshell, rather being embroiled in the accuracy of biological essentialism versus historical constructivism regarding sex, gender and sexuality, it would be more reasonable, as Sedgwick argues, in her book *Epistemology of the Closet*, to keep such understanding and "cultural and material reproduction, plural, multi-capillaries, respectful and endlessly cherished" (44). Marjorie Garber's concept "clothes make the man" in her *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety* similarly suggests,

the categories of gender, sex, and sexuality must be viewed as an unstable historical and political construct of our society. Thus, they can be subverted and transformed.

Sexuality gets blurred when the cultural expectations of males and females become instable. Traditional association of masculinity with males and femininity with females doesn't hold true. Gender is performance rather than some unchanging essence. Extrinsic or cultural factors start to mould the material body in advance, by the time body is able to make choices on its own, it has already fallen into the shackles of social norms and values. Body can never act in real sense, but reiterates what has been predetermined. Since, masculinity and femininity are social constructions; they need not necessarily conform to biology.

Pedro Almodovar, in the words of a famous movie critic Gary Indiana, in her essay "Film Comment" is "Spain's most prolific, independent and symbolic director" (1). The Spanish dictator Francisco Franco had shut down the official school of dramatic art in Madrid. He is one of the leading post-Franco filmmaker. *Pepi, Luci, Bom* (1980) was his first full length movie which captured essence of the time. It is liberal both culturally and sexually. His film boast on autobiographical elements, as his ideas stem directly from Spanish society. He does not hesitate to focus on "formerly taboo and censored subjects like corrupt policeman, homosexuality, drug use, gender issues, HIV, prostitution, sex, and abuse" (1). Spanish society's middle class and outcasts have provided him a wealth of unforgettable characters.

He breaks prejudices and traditions concerning identities in a particular society. By presenting deviant characters like transsexual, drag queen, cross-dresser, and transgender. They are not only visible to his work, but work as leitmotifs. Consciously these characters blur the frontiers between sex, gender, and sexuality.

Some of them torn transvestites for a show, other are operated; these characters choose to express their feminine side either for a lifetime or just for a matter of few hours.

From his movie *The Law of Desire* to *Bad Education*, Almodovar breaks the clichés about transsexuals. In his movies, they are not reduced to “people who believe them to be female and who wish to live full-time as women” (Gagne and Tewksbury 483). They choose to express mainly feminine part of themselves, but live outside the common sex and gender dichotomies. His movie *Law of Desire* (1987), is an outrageous melodrama featuring homosexual and transsexual protagonists in a sadomasochistic triangle involving incest, murder, suicide and several explicit homoerotic love scenes. In the movie Tina played by a woman, is post operated transsexual who had daughter with a lesbian. She nevertheless used to be in love with her father and still has affairs with men. In the same movie, the transsexual actress Bibi Andresen plays a lesbian who is genuine girl. Almodovar’s next movie *High Heels*, Letel is a well known drag queen who performs imitation of Becky, a famous singer.

Michael Koresky in his article “Almodovar’s *Bad Education*: Men Behaving Badly” argues about technical and thematic aspects of the movie by stating that “Bad Education is a delicate, squishy layer of cake; and its ultimately alienating facet is that its tension is not based on narrative flaw, characters revelation or even sexual politics but rather on audience’s ability to decipher where its artificiality ends and its authenticity begins. By exorcising his own boyhood demons within a narrative of such complex metacinematic trickery Almodovar manages to question the merits of autobiography itself” (5).

Carina Chocano highlights the issue of sex and body as the matter of performance in her article “A Review on *Bad Education*” in *Los Angeles Times*, stating that “Angel is an epically lethal femme fatale so duplicitous even her gender is a put -on and –off fittingly. Garcia Bernal slips in and out his vulpine transvestite, eager artist and gay hustler selves as if they are silky dressing gowns” (7). Here, Carina regards the sexual identities of angel as dressing gown, which can be put on and off any time. In other words, sexual identities emerge quite performatively.

Likewise, next critic Dana Thomas, in her interview with Pedro Almodovar published in *Newsweek* considers Almodovar as a director who dares to speak on the behalf of people who are ignored and marginalized along the lines of gender, class, and profession. In her words “Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar has long been known for his colorful, touching and often hilarious tales of people on the fringe, transvestite, neurotic actress, drug addicts” (5). She also discusses how Almodovar thought the process of exploring homosexuality, unveils the hypocrisy of the church in the following words:

I personally am completely anticlerical and manifest myself ferociously against the church’s position towards homosexuality. There is a great paradox in the church: it continues to portray homosexuality as a disease, yet the percentage of homosexuals in the church is huge. I would almost say seminaries are schools for future homosexuals (5).

Through the above mentioned lines, we notice the ferocity and hatred towards the hypocrisy of the church regarding homosexuality and other non-heterosexual activities. Actually, Almodovar’s friends had been sexually molested by their teachers

in Catholic boarding school. In a sense, this film consists of many pieces of his personal life.

Similarly, Alonso Durald discusses about bad education system in his article “Holy Terror” in *The Advocate* (The National Gay and Lesbian newsmagazine), stating that “Pedro Almodovar talks about Catholicism, the thrill of the prohibited and bad education of the entire generation.” Like most of Almodovar’s films, *Bad Education* does not make for easy plot synopsis. Gael Garcia Bernal plays role of school with Enrique in the Spain of the early 1960s. The film begins in the early 1980s when Angle asks Enrique, an openly gay director, concerning a story about childhood romance and about how a school priest father Manolo came between them because of his own desire for young Ignacio. In Angle’s version of story, Ignacio grows up to become exotic drag queen. In the same essay Durald gave some of the extract of his interview with Pedro Almodovar on the issue autobiographical elements in the *Bad Education*. Almodovar notes that “I am not telling my story directly, but it’s a story from my memories. I was never a boy abused by priests. But I was badly educated in a catholic school in the mid 1969s; I was a soloist in the choir like Ignacio” (76). In this way this movie is partially autobiographical.

Movie critic Alan A. Stone makes comparative study between Hollywood LGBT filmmaker and Almodovar in his article “Lawless”. He finds Almodovar more courageous and daring. For describe Almodovar’s distinct qualities in the following words:

Pedro Almodóvar is Spain’s most prominent director and one of the heroes of the European struggle against Hollywood hegemony. An out gay artist, Almodóvar’s major concern is sexual subversion.

Almodóvar's success says something about the willingness of contemporary film audiences to accept the foregrounding of homoerotic and gender-bending the themes. Transsexuals, feminized men, and masculinized women are the repeated characters in his films. (8)

Along with the popularity, his movies create many controversies in heterosexual society. He ruptures both written and unwritten laws that establish the category of transgression. Almodóvar has said that to portray transgression "isn't my aim, for it implies the kind of respect and acceptance of the law I'm incapable of" (9).

Bad Education is a radical departure for Almodóvar, who has always kept faith with eros and hedonism despite his skepticism about God and law. Even though he is still trading in sexual subversion, *Bad Education* presents a film-noir, world of greed and betrayal in which no one can be trusted. Many critics like Stephen Holden talk about the noir element of the movie *Bad Education*. Holden discusses about the noir elements in his essay "Film Noir Fantasy and a Transsexual Femme Fatale" in the following way:

Though there's some humor, *Bad Education* is neither a farce nor a comedy but a perfect film noir. Pedro Almodovar believes in the passions and obsessions that drive film noirs. A successful film noir is an act of seduction in which storytelling, music and imagery lead us to imagine a shadow world of infinite temptation and corruption. *Bad Education* is a quintessential film noir-as dark as they come-blending noir and crime elements with erotic melodrama, laced with personal memories. (3)

Almodovar presents the all features of noir movie that of deception, fatalism, double identity, crime, obsession and desire. Here, Zahara plays the role of femme fatale preoperative transsexual.

Almodóvar worked on the screenplay of *Bad Education* for almost ten years and that he had to finish it before it turned into an obsession. It is the real coming-out story of a man who has been out of the closet for most of his life. *Bad Education* demands a great deal from its audience both because the script is an intricate postmodern cycle of interrupting narratives and because the homoerotic elements so directly challenge the normative heterosexuality. For Almodóvar homosexuality is as normal as heterosexuality. If film is to be judged as an art form, *Bad Education* is Almodóvar's most important work, with far more complex characters and sophisticated narrative than his other films. In words of Alan A. Stone, "he establishes himself as a talent to rival Spain's legendary filmmaker Luis Buñuel" (3).

Almodóvar comes from a poor family; he had no university education, no film-school training, and no apprenticeship. He realized early on that he was different from other children and was aware even before puberty that he had a gay sensibility. The movie theater became a refuge for the boy, and he began to read films through that sensibility. He identified with the strong women and worshiped the vulnerable victims. Freud famously said that dreams were the royal road to the unconscious; perhaps the movies offer another way to get there. At least for Almodovar his own unconscious desires were found hidden in the subtexts of the movies.

In his same article, "Lawless" Alan Stone states that "Almodóvar belongs to a generation that no longer needs Freud to find its way into the unconscious. Nothing is

repressed. Free association is art, and sex is pleasure without consequences: Freud's polymorphous perverse is utopia and gets better with drugs and alcohol" (4). It means to say that Almodovar's society is comparatively liberal and open to the issue of gender and sexuality whereas Freud takes the help of symbols for expression.

In the case of sexual freedom Almodóvar's most revealing films, *Two Whores* is significant. It is a very short film of ten minute about a prostitute who complains that since the hippies are giving sex away she has no customers. A good fairy appears, waves a magic wand, and customers start lining up. Another prostitute tries to horn in on her customers, a catfight ensues, the good fairy waves the wand again, and the two prostitutes fall in love and discover they have no need for men. The male customers complain, so the good fairy waves the wand yet again, the male customers find love with each other, and everyone lives happily ever after. So, he advocates the free play of sexuality and saint of the gay and lesbian community.

Almodovar depicts gender and sexuality as fluid: in Almodovar's world women were once men; men pose as women; transsexuals can be mothers and fathers. He questions what it means to be a man, a woman, a straight, a queer, a mother, a father, all identities which in their dazzlingly expressive fluidity lean toward or away from each other in various combinations throughout his work. It's challenging enough to keep up with the twists in Almodovar's tales. He presents ambiguous sexuality in his films. Gender is something that can be performed but that performance is a genuine self-enactment; otherwise it risks collapsing artifice. Almodovar's characters are never exclusively homosexual or heterosexual and instead are identifiable only by the performances they choose at any particular moment. As Steve Marsh has skillfully synopsisized in his book *Gender and Spanish Cinema*, "identity in Almodovar's work is principally subverted through the human body. Sex changes, especially, make the

body the agent of flexibility and change, proposing the body as a site of imitation with the possibility that mimicry is more real than original. Thus, gender is performance not a biological imperative” (95). To sum up, the body is the site where identities are exchanged or transferred.

This thesis will provide a new and distinctive insight of Spanish movie *Bad Education* and its gender politics. In order to represent the performative conception regarding gender, body and sexuality, it constructs, deconstructs and reconstructs the gender discourses. This analysis will create a negotiation between queer theory and film. In other words gender based theoretical framework will be applied as a tool to deconstruct and interpret the stereotypical patriarchal practices. Furthermore, this dissertation examines the redefining notion of male and female subjectivity and its connection with performative perception of gendered identities in Post-Franco Spanish society.

This study is confined to cultural, social, religious and political aspects of the movie *Bad Education*. But it does not make technical and stylistic analysis of the film. Furthermore, it remains silent in the issue of broad history of gender, sexuality and body politics.

The study is divided into three chapters. Chapter first is the introductory part of the research. This chapter dramatizes the problematic issues of the movie that the research endeavors to address. It gives the brief summary of the whole project provides basic information about the film, its scholarly criticisms and theory through which the study will be connected. The second chapter is the textual analysis which gives the overview of the actual reading of the film through queer perspective and examining the issue of performativity of gender, sex and body and their link with

crossed identities represented in the film. Finally, the third chapter concluding of the entire project that restates the findings of the study.

II. Performativity, Transsexuality and Drag culture in *Bad Education*

Pedro Almodovar's movie *Bad Education* attempts to challenge the heterosexual norms and values through the portrayal of different characters in the film. The movie presents the two time zones of Spanish society; Franco regime and Post-Franco regime. The early phase of life of characters set in 1960s church guided rigid society. During that period society had strong faith on heterosexual relationship. But scenario has changed in the decade of 70s and 80s. Society becomes liberal concerning the issue of gender and sexuality, and homosexuality, bisexuality, transsexuality are seen as other sexual options as different forms of heterosexuality. In this background, filmmaker Almodovar raises the issue of performativity, transsexuality and drag culture through his movie *Bad Education*.

Almodovar's *Bad Education* is a film that deals with performative tendency of gender and sex as well as body of the protagonists who play with their desires and interests. It dramatizes the gender performativity and parody which defines the fictionalization of gender and sexuality. Basically, there are many stories breaking the linearity of the plotline. The story of Ignacio and his transgender avatar Zahara is significant because it crystallizes the discourse of gendered sexuality and its performative version. Besides this, the interruptions of the stories implicitly reflect the artificiality of truths that are forcefully interpreted as the natural ones. Paquito, impersonator of Sara Montiel and Zahara are involved in the drag culture. Ignacio continually involves in the homosexual relationship with Enrique and Father Manolo. Characters like Ignacio, Enrique, Paquito, and Zahara revolt against the society that has been guided by the traditional discourses concerning gender and sexuality.

Almodovar's *Bad Education* is a movie that proves to be an offspring of queer politics. It rejects the identity of an individual as unchangeable and stable, and amplifies the voice for multiple and contingent identity. In other words it believes that sexual and gender identities are fluid, not fixed and to categorize one in terms of some predetermined, idealized identity or norm is no longer acceptable in a new democratic society with multiple liberal choices. The movie specially critiques the human identity constructed on the basis of gender and sexuality. Almodovar, the director, dramatizes queer politics along with the gender performativity via the homosexual, gay, bisexual, drag and transgender characters where activities are anti-ethical from the perspective of social community that is guided by Christianity. The queer politics comes to be more subversive when the identity of Juan is revealed in the movie. Similarly, Angel's attempt to learn feminine qualities from the impersonator of Sara Montiel reflects the notion of reality which is often fashioned rather than discovered. Thus, the movie is colored with queer politics.

Queer theory begins when one sees the multiple possibilities, gaps, fissures and the lapses in the human identity that is defined on the basis of essentialist notion of gendered sexuality. Hence, queer politics is antithetical to the discourse of gender and sexuality. Moreover, Louise Tyson's argument on Queer politics runs as follows:

...queer theory defines individual subjectivity (selfhood) as a fluid, fragmented, dynamic collectivity of possible 'selves', queer theory defines individual sexuality as fluid, fragmented, dynamic collectivity of possible sexualities. Our sexuality may be different times over the course of the week because sexuality is a dynamic range of desire. Gay sexuality, lesbian sexuality, bisexuality, and heterosexuality are, for all

of us, possibilities along a continuum of sexual possibilities. (Critical Theory335)

As Louis Tyson asserts in the above argument, queer politics sees the multiple possibilities of human identity and sexuality. It presupposes the contingency of human self: there can be the multiple selves within an individual. Moreover, there is the possibility of sexualities rather than (hetero) sexuality. It has open perspective towards the all practices of sexuality: homosexuality and heterosexuality. Hence, queer politics undercuts the discourse of (essential) identity and (compulsory) heterosexuality.

Bad Education presents gay homosexuality as a possible variant of sexualities which negates the monopoly of heterosexuality. In the movie we can see the homoeroticism in different levels and age groups. All characters are males and their sexual orientation to the same sex seems highly performative. The destiny or future life of characters determines by gender roles and sexuality not vice versa. So, the feelings of well wishing, jealousy, revenge, sacrifice and act of murder are caused by homosexuality.

In the day of graduation celebration, school organizes a football match, where we can see the beautiful and innocent homoerotic sensibility of young Ignacio and Enrique. In this match, Enrique is a goalkeeper of opposite team and Ignacio gets opportunity of penalty kick. But Ignacio kicks ball outside the goalpost. It is his deliberate act because of emotion. At that time, their eyes reveal the purity of gay love. Next day, they go for cinema. On the way, they exchange their repression in the following manner:

Enrique: I thought you didn't like me.

Ignacio: No just the opposite!

Enrique: But every time I looked at you, you looked away.

Ignacio: Because you made me nervous.

According to the dialogue, they become unable to talk and face due to the nervousness, shyness and same sex attraction. But in reality, they like and desire each other. The boys then go to movie and while they are watching, it is clear that the boys are fondling each other in the theater. Their passion emerges thorough the help of movie scenes. After that action, Ignacio feels guilty for his sins and says: “What we did in the cinema wasn’t right. It was sin and God is going to punish us” (*Bad Education*). In comparison to Enrique he is religious mined man. And matter of sex is taboo for church. Both of the boys can’t sleep and they go to speak in the bathroom. As they are talking, they hear father Manolo come into check on all students. He is clearly looking for Ignacio. He finds boys hidden in a stall together and sends Enrique back to bed and drags Ignacio away to pray. But in the time of separation, Enrique resists against father and says: “I am not leaving Ignacio alone with you” (*Bad Education*). His words refer to homosexual jealousy.

The story of Ignacio is different. The priest forces him to pray for the sake of liberation. As a consequence, Ignacio loses faith on god and hell. In this context, his innocent mind realizes the hypocrisy of church and true intension of father. He cries and says that he will do whatever father wants as long as he doesn’t expel Enrique. In his words, “If you don’t expel him, I’ll do what you want” (*Bad Education*). His sacrifice for the protection of Enrique proves the strength of gay bond. Thus, the dynamics of heterosexuality can be found in gay sexuality and other practices such as

lesbian sexuality, bisexuality and transsexuality. So, there is no basic difference between heterosexuality and non-heterosexuality.

From Butler's perspective gender is performative in two senses. In the first sense, the essence of gender appears to be the sedimented effect of repetition:

“Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated act within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (Butler, *Gender* 43-44). Here, we are reminded of Butler's assertion that gender is the cause of gender: “[T]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very

“expressions” that are said to be its result” (*Gender* 33). These expressions which are contingent constructions are produced and regularized by the normative discourse:

“[Gendered] acts, gestures, enactments, generally constructed are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are

fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means” (Butler, *Gender* 173). Those discursive fabrications are constrained or

compelled in the service of gender coherence by the practices of normativity as Judith Butler has argued:

[T]he substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative – that constitutes the identity it is purported to be. (*Gender* 33)

Almodovar's movie *Bad Education* conveys the performative and subversive vision of sex, sexuality and especially gender which are nothing more than a play or

performance then people choose to perform. All of these reveal the instability and the weakness of our dominant patriarchal society in Western culture. By breaking prejudices and dichotomies, Almodovar deconstructs the idea of normative heterosexuality which has always been linked to power in patriarchal society, particularly in Spain.

The film depicts the performative as well as constructive nature of sex, gender and body. Angel has different sexual orientations, which undo his gender as well as sexual identity. Angel manipulates his orientations and plays with different gender and sexual possibilities to suit his objectives. This kind of appropriation of possible gender and sexuality are performances. As both gender and sexuality are matters of performance, they are constructs, which can be appropriated to suit one's objectives. The blurring of gender and sexual identities by Angel in the forms of Juan (a young homosexual hustler), Zahara (a drag queen) and Ignacio in the film, too, proves the fact that his sexuality and gender are performance and constructs. Moreover, his brother Ignacio, a transgender, makes us see how gender as a performance as well as construct, can be transformed and subverted.

Almodovar has always refused to postulate any 'true-self'. As nothing is innate, but culturally interiorized, individuals are able to choose the gender they want to perform, the sexuality they wish and identity they dream of. They do so by following their passions and desires. Almodovar's deconstruction of patriarchal society through his staging of transsexuality leads to question the legitimacy of the heterosexual masculinity.

Angel Andrade, an ambitious actor from Bumblebee Theatre Group, illustrates that gender is performed reiteratively through the collection of acts, gestures and

desires. He first appears in the film as an ambitious male actor. Later on, we find him as a drag queen named Zahara. Likewise, we find Angel having sex with Enrique in his effort to continue the role of Zahara. This makes him appear as a homosexual. Finally, we come to learn that he is not Angel at all but Juan, Ignacio's younger brother, who is also a gay hustler.

Gender is simply a construct of the reiterative performance. In the film, when Enrique understands a crisis of subject matters, Angel brings a script "The Visit", which is a semi autobiographical piece of writing. "The Visit" retells the bygone days of Ignacio and Enrique passed together at the school. Angel also shows his interest in performing a role of Zahara in the film. Angel says Enrique, "I am ready to do anything" (*Bad Education*). This shows not only Angel's ambition but also his readiness for impersonation. He learns to impersonate Sara Montiel, the famous drag queen of the time, and later swallows his pride and becomes ready to let Enrique penetrate him. On the top of all these, he plays the role of a drag queen as well as transgender named Zahara. Once again implying that gender emerges as a matter of performance.

Nothing prevents a man from being a masculine or feminine when he decides to do so (the inverse is obviously possible). A scene in *Bad Education* relevantly illustrates this idea. Angel wants to play Zahara, a transsexual in Enrique's new movie, and goes to a drag queen show to study how to behave in a feminine way. He takes notes and carefully reproduces drag queen's gestures during the imitation of Sara Montiel. Then he goes to the dressing room to ask her for lesson:

Drag queen: What are doing here if you are not a journalist?

Angel: I am an actor and I would like you to help me to prepare a role.

Drag queen: Which role?

Angel: A transsexual who imitates Sara Montiel...

Drag queen: That's me! Why don't they give me the role?

Angel: Because, man, you are not an actor... you are just a fag...

Drag queen: what you need to learn first is manners in order to be a lady.

Angel: Ok, sorry...so, what else do you teach me?

Drag queen: (in an extreme effeminate way) and with what are you going to pay me, honey?

Angel: (laughing) that's exactly the type of things I need to learn!

These above mentioned lines illustrate the idea that womanhood is a matter of lessons: just as a young girl learns how to behave in a feminine way, man can also learn it as well. So gender is a mutable category that is learned and performed.

Similarly, the conversation between Enrique and Angel also shows that gender and sexuality are presented as qualities that can be cultivated and constructed. In the first glance Enrique rejects Angel for a role of Zahara because he has strong masculine physical built up in the following manner:

Angel: I think I'd rather play Zahara.

Enrique: Zahara, you? You are crazy.

Angel: why?

Enrique: Well, you're too well- built.

Angel: I can slim down. I can get into the part!

I am used to that in the theatre.

These lines explain that Enrique's disbelief on Angel's ability to perform the role of transgender Zahara. This is because Angel's physical construction looks too well – built and manly. Despite such limitations Angel insists to play the role of Zahara and works hard to adopt the feminine qualities, doing drag performances in Bumblebee Theater many times. In this way, the movie *Bad Education* shows explicit gender imitation process which refers the performative nature of gender and sexuality.

After the homoerotic activities in the swimming pool, Angel becomes ready to depart for the theatre. Where Enrique wants Angel's night long company, but Angel is not much interested, and once again he talks about the flexibility of his body: "If you want I will stay. But talking about bodies, if I look too manly I can slim down. I am very flexible, I can do anything". Angel seems to be suggesting that human body can be modeled in terms of desires. Traditionally, body is thought as something fixed and stable because it is a biological thing, and so unalterable. As different from such traditional perspective, *Bad Education* shows the performative aspects of body in the following way:

Enrique: Have you lost your weight?

Angel: yes, I am really working at it. I want to lose even more. And I am taking classes.

Enrique: classes on what?

Angel: In how to be a drag queen. I'm working with the best Sara Montiel impersonator. She performs at Bombola, a gay club. I am working as a waiter there. So, I can study the queens more closely.

According to the opinion of Angel human can change his/her body as per the desire and situation. We can use it to fulfill our interest. Here, Angel notes the activities, manners, gestures and behaviors of impersonator of Sara Montiel, so that he can perform the role of transsexual Zahara completely as a female.

Pedro Almodovar rejects the heterosexual norms and values. His character sketches concerning homosexual, bisexual, transgender, gay and pedophile subjects supports the notion that gender and sexuality are matter of individual choice. Throughout the movie, characters adopt the multiple modes of gender and sexuality. They go beyond the boundaries of patriarchal heterosexuality.

Butler focuses on the absence of essential core of body. Just like gender, it is also a construct. After all, both of them are constitutive in nature. Body is a set of possibilities. It is not predetermined by some manner of internal essence. According to Butler, the body is a "materiality that bears meaning, if nothing else and the manner of this bearing is fundamentally dramatic" (Performative Acts, 122). She also exposes the performative nature of body. In the same essay, she claims, "One is not one's body..." (Performative Acts, 122). According to Butler, one performs one's body, sex and gender. Of course, the body's possibilities of embodiment are "conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention" (122). The body, therefore, "is a manner of doing, dramatizing and reproducing a historical situation" (122). The childhood experience of Ignacio was very docile and religious whereas Enrique was a self claimed hedonist. However, their fondness towards each other began to grow, Father

Manolo, who was rather possessive to Ignacio, in addition to be a pedophile, interfered. As they were caught together doing sexual act by father, Ignacio sold himself for the sake of Enrique. Ignacio says, “I sold myself for the first time in that sacristy to avoid Enrique being expelled” (*Bad Education*). It was at this time that Ignacio’s beliefs about the normalcy regarding god, sex and life as a whole got shattered: “I think I’ve just lost my faith at the moment, so I no longer believe in God or hell. As I am not afraid and without fear I’m capable of anything” (*Bad Education*). From this point he turned into hedonist like his lover Enrique. This disillusionment can be regarded as Ignacio’s disillusionment from normative heterosexuality apart from other things. As he realized that the heterosexuality, just like homosexuality, was constructive as well as performative, in its nature, he dared to be homosexual.

Shame emerges as a constitutive element of all the things that make up identity. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in her essay “Queer Performativity” (1993), argues that the “structure of identity... may be established and naturalized in the first instance through shame” (12). The same thing happens with gender identity. Only the shame forces one to maintain the normalcy about gender identity attached to heterosexuality and does not allow one to see the constitutive as well as the performative nature of gender identities. After all, there are heterosexual norms concerning sex, gender and body even before one is born. This is because the society is primarily a heterosexual one. Gender, in the opinion of Butler, “is an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene” (*Performative Acts*, 127). In the film we see Father Manolo as a priest at first. Though he is a homosexual, he behaves as if he is a so called normal heterosexual man due to a sense of shame. Later on, we find Father Manolo in a different get up. He is known as Mr. Berenguer. Now he is no longer a priest as well as teacher, but he is a publisher with wife and children.

Nevertheless, he is still a gay. His wife and children work as a camouflage to conceal the fact that his real sexual interest lies in males. Out of shame, he, however, is compelled to live as a heterosexual man in the society; a chance that has made him rather vulnerable. Ignacio, whom he had molested during the childhood, tries to blackmail him through the script, which retells how Mr. Berenguer, the then church Father, molested Ignacio. Mr. Berenguer, out of shame attempts his best not to publish “The Visit”. He is even ready to pay Ignacio one million pesetas to shut the letter’s mouth by Ignacio to Manolo’s wife and media. This is how shame plays a vital role in regulating the normative heterosexuality.

Theories of gender performativity have multiple sources. The first source consists of feminism, psychoanalysis and language. Sarah E. Chinn, in her essay “Gender Performativity”, adds, “The second has its roots mostly outside academia, in what Kath Watson has called ‘street theory’ and comes out of ways queer people have imagined the spaces their own gendered identities – of queen, dyke, butch, transsexual, nelly, femme occupy” (295). Interestingly, the very concept of gender performativity has been derived from the street theory, which deals with the people having various gender and sexual identities. According to Butler,

The transvestite challenges, at least implicitly, the distinction between appearance and reality that structures a good deal of popular thinking about gender identity. If the ‘reality’ of gender is constituted by the performance itself, then there is no recourse to an essential and unrealized ‘sex’ or ‘gender’ which gender performance ostensibly express. (128)

Here, Butler presents the transvestite as such kind of gender category, which challenges the normalcy about the gender identity attached to heterosexuality, showing the performative characteristic of gender and sex. *Bad Education* is fairly rich in this regard. We can see the transvestites at two layers. Ignacio, Juan's brother, is a transvestite in reality. He was born as a boy. Because of his fascination towards a male friend like Enrique and sexual molestation inflicted on him by Fr. Manolo, he turns into a transvestite. He is a male, but dresses like a female. And he has also grown breasts to look like a female. He challenges the normativity about gender, sex and body beyond doubt. We can see Almodovar's brilliant play with transvestites in his portrayal of the fictional character of Ignacio in the form of Zahara enacted by Angel (Juan in reality) in Enrique's adaptation of the Ignacio's story "The Visit". We can also see the process of making a film within a film. *Bad Education* is a metafilm as well. This dimension of the film, too, lays emphasis on the constructive nature of body, sex and gender challenging the existing heterosexual norms about them.

Undoubtedly, the incoherent gender performativity, too does have its problems. In many cases, the incoherent gender performativity leads to the reinforcement of power of discourse either through a fear that one's subjectivity is being compromised or through active punishment of inappropriate behaviors. But there", as Minn argues, "can be times when incoherent gender performativity can expose the constructedness of gender and hetero(sexuality)" (300). In this connection, "Butler", as Minn says, lands on a drag as possible place this can happen. Drag is self-conscious, larger than life reiteration of heterosexual normativity" (300). Drag queens "reveal how women imitate femininity as well and how hard work it is. Through parody, drag can expose the seeming naturalness and effortless of gender itself: it doesn't imitate original that there is no original, only of the layers performance"

(Minn 300-301). For Butler, “drag can get us out of the inevitability that surrounds the gender performativity” (Minn 30). According to her “drag is an example of performativity” (Bodies That Matter, 230). Drag serves a subversive function to the extent that it reflects the mundane impersonations by which heterosexually ideal genders are preformed and naturalized. Likewise, a man performing woman can naturalize and romanticize womanhood as much as a real woman can do. Thus, drag is about repeating heterosexual constructs in anti-heterosexual contexts, challenging the primacy of the supposed heterosexual originals. Drag self-consciously denaturalizes gender. Drag culture can be shown through cross-dressing, drag balls, street walking, parade, and so on. If gender role is the outcome of the performance, drag culture is the counter performance that laughs at the false essentialization of gendered sexuality. It is also a practice of transgendering and transsexuality that attacks the constructedness of gender and sexuality. Judith Butler throws light on drag performance in the following ways:

The performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed. But we are actually in the presence of three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance...then the performance suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance. (Bodies 175)

In these lines, Butler describes the subversive aspects of drag culture. Drag performance is what she calls the “gender parody”; “it questions the far- fetched relationship between sex, gender and the performance” (175). Drag performance

hence is the counter performance that blurs the traditional boundary of gendered identity invented by means of performance. The same writer in *Bodies that Matter* presents her view on drag as: “.... It is important to underscore that drag is an effort to negotiate cross- gendered identification....” (235). In this way, drag culture endeavors to strike a compromise between masculinity and femininity, heterosexuality and homosexuality. Chris Barker reads the above mentioned ideas of Butler in the following ways:

Butler argues that drag can destabilize and recast gender norms through re- signification of the ideals of gender. Through a miming of gender norms, drag can be subversive to the extent that it reflects the performative character of gender. Drag suggests that gender is performativity and as such destabilizes the claims of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity as the origin that is imitated. (Cultural Studies, 299- 300)

Hence, as Barker explains the lines of Butler, drag culture is the subversive act that deconstructs the gender and sexuality roles of the traditional discourse. It presupposes the performative aspect of the identity in its heart, thereby destabilizing it by means of performance. Moreover, Hans Berton’s idea on drag culture, like that of Butler and Barker, runs as follows:

Because of their parodic character, drag and other deviant sexualities thus come to function as the heavy artillery in the war against the fixed categorizations of ‘phallogocentric’ centre. They are important instruments in the development of what Judith Halberstam has called ‘new sexual vocabularies that acknowledge sexualities and genders as

styles rather than life-styles, as fictions rather than facts of life, and potentialities rather than as fixed identities'. (qtd. in *Literary Theory* 230)

As the above lines suggest, drag performance is one of the vital aspects of gay practice that undermines the fixed identities constructed as per the discourse of gender and sexuality. Moreover, it strengthens the logic that gender is not the essential factor of human identity rather it is the product of social performance. It is a fiction that can be questioned, critiqued, doubted, interrogated and even negated.

In this manner, we can generalize from the above argument that drag culture is a sort of radical practice that blurs the boundary of gender and sexuality. It also parodies at the false naturalization of these categories regarding them as the discursive performance. Thus, drag culture is a practice of transgendering that presupposes the performative aspect of gender and sexuality.

In the film, Angel enacts the role of drag named Zahara, looks like a female. Actually, he looks like Julia Roberts. When he enters the school to see Father Manolo, he introduces himself as the sister to the late Ignacio and Father Manolo fails to recognize him. Zahara's performance is as believable as the gender performances of any woman. Her performances forcibly remind us that drag is inscribed not just in dress and gender codes but in the body itself in habitual and unconscious physical and psychological attitudes, styles and bodily relations and responses. This is how Zahara subverts the seemingly naturalness of gender. She is citing the performative rules of gender and acts them naturally. According to Judith Butler:

All gender is like drag, or is to suggest that imitation is at the heart of the heterosexual project and its binarisms, that drag is not a secondary

imitation that presupposes a prior that original gender but that hegemonic heterosexuality is itself a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealization. (Bodies That Matter, 125)

Butler opines that the characteristics of drag resemble to the crux of all gender. Heterosexual discourse is based on reiteration and citation. So, imitation is common to drag and heterosexuality. In this line of statement, normative sexuality loses its authenticity and originality.

Once again, Zahara's frequent transvestite or drag role is most typical of gender parody which plays upon the distinction between the exterior and the interior as Judith Butler has argued: "The performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed" (Gender 175). The performance of drag does away with the relationship between appearance and the reality. Esther Newton remarks:

At its most complex [Drag] is a double inversion that says, "Appearance is an illusion". Drag says... "My 'outside' appearance is feminine, but my essence 'inside' [the body] is masculine". At the same time it symbolizes the opposite inversion; "my appearance 'outside' [my body, my gender] is masculine but my essence 'inside' [myself] is feminine". (qtd. in Butler, Gender 174)

Zahara firmly establishes her appearance as an illusion. What is outside is not true presentation of what is inside; on the contrary, the outside is dramatically opposite of what is inside. Zahara not only performs single cross dresser role of a man but she switches between a feminine and masculine role many times, even performing the roles of an ambiguous gender within the period of time.

Minn considers transgender as a liminal space to subvert the normalcy attached to gender. She claims that “there is a portion of the transsexual/transgender community that has tried to use that in-between space as a place to undo gender” (304). Jay Prosser in his essay “Transgender” published in “*Lesbian and Gay Studies*” reinforces the very fact. He says, “Queer put transgender to crucial theoretical and political use: to challenge the naturalization of heterosexuality and gender” (312). Transgender is just like Derrida’s ‘play’ in its subversion of the binaries. It also reveals how transgender is no more than performance. Minn argues, ‘Transgender by contrast put in question the binary of gender versus sex, and that of heterosexuality versus homosexuality in addition to those of man versus woman, masculine versus feminine, male versus female’ (312). And adds, “The transgendered exemplar suggested that all gender is a case of passing or doing or performing rather than being that biology is not the grounds for gender: that, as Judith Butler has written, sex is “gender all along” (1990, 8)...” (312). Kat Bornstein, a celebrated transsexual writer, was a male at first. But as he was interested to have a female body, he got the female genital parts accompanied by the breasts. Now s/he got a female’s body. Actually, s/he is a transgender. Ignacio, the protagonist of *Bad Education* is just like Bornstein. He has already got breasts the way females have, and he is in the process of getting everything fixed up to get female genital organ as well. Though he is drugged to death before he fulfills his desire, the fact remaining that, s/he is a transgender and transvestite. Her/his liminality in terms of sex, gender and body play havoc with the heterosexual norms about these phenomena and illustrates their construction and performative features.

In the movie *Bad Education*, Father Manolo is responsible for Ignacio’s transvestism, because he abused Ignacio in his childhood. As a result, Ignacio

becomes confused about his sexual identity. The brilliant students are taken to the countryside by their literature teacher on the occasion of graduation. Ignacio sings the song “Moon River”. It is at this time that, Father Manolo attempts to have sex with him. In his effort to escape, Ignacio stumbled and fell on the ground breaking his forehead: “A tickle of blood divided my forehead in two. I had the same feeling thing would happen with my life. It would always be divided and I couldn’t help it” (*Bad Education*). Right at this moment, we see the use of montage. Father Manolo’s overpowering face emerges between two pieces of Ignacio’s face on the screen. Indeed, Ignacio, just as he fears turns into a transvestite as well as transgender. Adult Ignacio blackmails Father Manolo; it is a kind of revenge and compensation for his deed of sexual harassment. When Ignacio is going to meet his mother before clinical check up, he blames Father for his present condition by saying that, “I want to see my mother before I check in. she has to see me with these teeth and this face, and it’s your fault”. In a sense, sexual molestation causes the split of Ignacio’s self.

Almodovar exposes the performative nature of gender and sexuality through Juan’s dizzying performing roles as Juan, Ignacio, Zahara and Ángel. It explicitly shows that drag is performance in itself. Moya Lloyd notes in her essay “Performativity, Parody, and Politics” eloquently that “As a practice, drag suggests that constituted subjects can ‘act out’ fictional gender roles” (201). This “acting out” as Lloyd notes, can be arguably considered as performance in itself. Through the fictional roles of Paquito and Zahara in the script of “The Visit” we can see the drag performance of both characters at “La Bomba”. The same can be seen through the character of Paquito, a comical element is introduced by Almodóvar. Paquito portrays and performs the epitome of a stereotypical, effeminate drag queen. Andy Medhurst, in his study of farce in Pedro Almodóvar’s cinema, states that “it is notable

that the cross-dressing figure of Paquito (Javier Cámara)... provides an injection of both humor and femininity” (Heart of Farce122). This light-heartedness of Paquito’s act delivers a sense of comedy in a considerably dark narrative, which is part of the ‘game’ of playing the women. This game-playing can be considered to add to the sense of Butler’s theory of “Gender performativity” throughout the film narrative. Both Zahara and Paquito are performing, blurring the dichotomy of gender identity once they put “female” clothes and makeup onto a “male” body. However, in addition to the comic element of Paquito’s performance, s/he is also characterized by Almodóvar as a vehicle for the exploration of the oppressive role of the Catholic Church. Steven Marsh and Parvati Nair suggest that “the symbolism and rituals of the Catholic Church have provided rich pickings for ironic inversion”(Gender and Spanish Cinema, 4) which can be directly witnessed through Paquito’s comic statement that both himself and Ignacio will be beaten with a whip and sent out if they enter the church. In this context the dialogue between Zahara and Paquito moves in the following manner:

Zahara: Are you backing out bitch?

Paquito: But, this chapel is tiny, there is nowhere to hide.

He sees us; he will do what Christ did to the buyers.

He drove them out with a whip and he was Christ!

In this dialogue, Paquito compares Zahara and herself with the buyers and the Father Manolo with the Christ. This shows the real position of transsexual (marginal) in the society and religion. They cannot do anything for their protection as opposed to the

priests having a god like status; especially in the context of that oppression committed by church and priest is legalized by the authority.

As Father Manolo in his prayers at Mass states “You may now go in peace”, Paquito immediately responds with “If only!” Although this statement seems comical in itself through Paquito’s portrayal of the phrase in his effeminate ‘sissy’ voice; it could be suggested that they will never be able to be at peace living in a society which oppresses and subordinates them to a marginal status in the eyes of heterosexual patriarchy.

In fact, Zahara is a drag queen, performed by a man with a phallus. It is an irony, which refers to Almodovar’s challenge against dominant heterosexuality. To fulfill this purpose, he provides protagonism to marginalized groups. This challenge is continued even further, as Zahara mimes the music in theatre suggesting that females along with men in drag, transgender people, transvestites, homosexuals, and other marginalized group do not actually have a voice of their own in a phallogocentric society.

The act of miming suggests the opening of the mouth from which no sound comes out; the mime act is therefore mute and silenced. Zahara and Paquito go to the Catholic boys' boarding school with the script of “The Visit” to blackmail Father Manolo and they take drug before entering the school. Through this scene Almodóvar presents the subversion of Catholic moral values. The conversation of Zahara and Paquito subverts the moral values of church in the following way:

Zahara: Oh fag!

Paquito: Come on.

Zahara: A naliful for my gal Paca.

Paquito: One more. I believe in couples, two fucks and two bumps.

Zahara: You are such a pig! Right let's go to school!

Paquito: Gee up, girl! Come on.

This conversation occurs in the course of taking drug. They use quite offensive words such as “fag”, “fucks” and “bumps” which are restricted and taboo for Christianity. Clearly, in the eyes of the Church, a patriarchal institution known for its teachings of morality, both characters (as homosexuals, dressed in drag, taking prohibited substances) would not be accepted by the Church and would be seen to be committing a sin. However, Almodóvar purposely places these characters in this particular situation in order to place another coded attack on the Catholic religion and its teachings through the film narrative. Almodóvar's coded attack on the Church could also be subsequently suggested as a coded attack on Spain under the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, and his oppressive regime's links to the Catholic Church.

The intense accusation evoked by Father Manolo as he says “You're in no position to threaten anyone. Whatever you say, people will believe me, not you”. This can be considered a clear attack on the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church and its teachings, as Padre Manolo focuses on the fact that the “believed” morality of religion and the work of God that he and the other priests devote themselves to be enough for anyone to believe them and not the transvestite Zahara, who according to Father Manolo is in no position to make threatening remarks. After the death of General Francisco Franco and his right-wing regime, Zahara continues “No, people have changed. This is 1977. This society puts my freedom above your hypocrisy”. This overt challenge can only be considered a clear statement against the hypocritical values and religious beliefs and should continue to change after the death of Franco in 1975. The date being crucial in the narrative – a statement that would not have been

allowed to prevail in censored Spanish cinema under Franco. Here, Franco regime refers to the heterosexual patriarchy where males and priests are all powerful. The water tide demarcation between male and female is strictly followed. In such society, male is in privileged position and female plays subordinate role. This conflict moves to anti-direction after 1970s and 80s. Marginal voices in terms of gender and sexuality begin to revolt against oppression in all over the world. The movie *Bad Education* reflects resistance of those people who are forming their gender and sexual identity quiet performatively.

III. Conclusion

Pedro Almodovar's movie *Bad Education* subverts the traditional grand narrative notion of gender and sexuality by taking the support of issue like queer politics, performativity, transgending and drag culture. Ignacio, Father Manolo, Juan and Enrique involve themselves in homosexual relationship and drag culture to challenge the normative heterosexuality.

Juan, the protagonist is a gay and transgender as well as heterosexual. He has homosexual relationship with priest and film director Enrique for different purposes. After that he plays the transgender role of Zahara for the movie "The Visit" and in theatrical performances. But ultimately he married a girl named Monica with whom he has a son. All of his roles seem perfect and genuine. So, through the portrayal of Juan it proved that one person can perform multiple gender and sexual identities as per the situations and circumstances. Moreover, the prime concerns of Juan are no other than the bodily desires, needs and the emotional pleasure. His utilization of body comes antithetically to the heterosexual society.

In this manner, the film depicts the performative as well as constructive nature of sex, gender and body. Juan doesn't believe in the essential truth, identity and subjectivity. If heterosexuality is the single truth of the society, homosexuality is also an option for him. He has different sexual orientations, which undo his gender and sexual identity. He manipulates his sexual orientations. Moreover, he plays with various gender and sexual possibilities to suit his objectives. In transgending the discourse of sexuality, Juan is subverting the gender roles and social duties that are performatively created. He defines himself neither male nor female as patriarchal heterosexuality does. Hence, performative identity of social discourse is the central

point of this thesis. This kind of appropriation of probable sexual and gender possibilities leads us to see how both the gender and sexuality are performances. As both gender and sexuality are matters of performance, they can be constructed, which can be appropriate to fulfill one's interests. The blurring of gender and sexual identities by Juan in the form of a young homosexual hustler, Zahara (a drag queen) and Angel (an actor) in the film, too, proves the fact that his sexuality and gender are performances and constructs. Moreover, his brother Ignacio, a transgender, makes us see how gender as a performance, can be transformed and subverted.

The movie deals with queer politics while rejecting the essential identity, subjectivity, purity, and reality. Juan, Ignacio, Enrique, Father Manolo represent themselves the multiple identities rather than monolithic one. The society of the characters tries to repeat the roles of gender and heterosexual practices severely criticizing the homosexual or non-heterosexual practices. That is performatively constructs, iterates and reiterates the heterosexual discourse. All in all Pedro Almodovar's *Bad Education* dramatizes gender and sexuality as a social construction that is created performatively. If gender and sexuality are matter of performance, the counter performances like homosexuality, drag culture, transsexuality are prominent in the movie.

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