

**Tribhuvan University**

**Queer Sensibility in David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly***

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**By**

**Khem Raj Khanal**

**University Campus**

**Kirtipur**

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**Tribhuvan University****Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

This thesis entitled "Queer Sensibility in David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Khem Raj Khanal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head  
Central Department of English

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Abstract**

Exposing the compulsory heterosexuality as a socially constructed category, David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1998) dramatizes the notion of fluidity of sexual identity. Hwang creates the characters of ambiguous nature who go through multiple sexual identities in the play. It reveals that compulsory heterosexuality as a norm is a means to exclude and dominate others. So it focuses on "queering" such categories like male/female, homosexual/heterosexual, gay/lesbians. And, it advocates for all inclusive society like a garden where all flowers can bloom.

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## I. Introduction

The present research work is a study of David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988) through a perspective of Queer identity. The main characters Rene Gallimard and Song Liling, and constant change in their gender and sexual identity are the basic focus of the research. 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 answer the problem, why the main character Rene Gallimard had twenty years love affair without exactly knowing that his beloved was not a woman but a man, and to reveal the thematic aspect that 'identity' can never be fixed rather it characterizes 'fluidity'.

### Hwang Among His Creators and Creations

David Henry Hwang in his life goes through multi-cultural contexts, therefore he finds himself in a difficult situation to find his own 'identity'. Born in 1957 and raised in a wealthy Los Angeles suburb by a first generation, Chinese American Fundamentalist Christian family, Hwang wrote and directed his first play *F.O.B.* (Slang for "Fresh off the Boat") (1980) which explores the tension within and between recent and assimilated Chinese immigrants. *F.O.B.* won an Obie when it moved to New York in 1980 and since then many of Hwang's plays including *The Dance of the Railroad* (1981), *Family Devotions* (1981), *The Sound of a Voice* (1983), *The House of Sleeping Beauties* (1983), *Rich Relations* (1986), *M. Butterfly* (1988), and *Bondage* (1992), have addressed issues of individual identity, group identity and some other issues.

Hwang as an individual trapped between, basically, two cultures: Western and Eastern finds himself in difficult situation to 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 issue 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 things 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 idea 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 theater 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 preestablished identity and try to have that become you or you become that thing" (Lyons 2).

Hwang's plays can be seen as confrontation between two opposing forces or two opposing characters. They do have an ideological duality in them. For instance

his play *Golden Child* (1996) develops the Chinese vs. Christian theme that is also found in *Family Devotion* and *Rich Relations*. He has attempted to trace back the roots of the Chinese/Christian conflict. *Golden Child* is about his grandfather who converted to Christianity in China in the 20s and the effects of his conversion on his three wives. The conversion obviously created a conflict, so in a sense *Golden Child* ends up being an ensemble piece about the opposition between Christianity and ancestor worship in terms of duality. Hwang feels a conflict between honoring the past and progressive ideas. That is one of the things *Golden Child* is about. In this play he attempts to leave a message that neither ignoring the past nor idealizing it is useful to better oneself or one's society. We can not judge our past realistically since we do not know what really happened. We can only try to interpret the past through the filter of our current perspective. In *Golden Child* family history functions in the same way as scriptures or mythology or literature. Hwang's focus on interpretation and reinterpretation goes back to his rejection of his fundamentalism that his family carried out. *Golden Child*, giving an importance to possibility or reinterpretation, suggests there is no objective knowledge of history, and that each generation searches for its own truths. So the idea of fluidity of identity works not only at individual level but also at historical as well as cultural level. Hwang in the interview with Lyons says:

Culture is what people create at any given time, culture lives and changes. So I think it's accurate to say that while society is going to change me, I am also going to change society. This is simultaneous process. In a model of dynamic assimilation we are constantly moving to create culture. (233)



So, his personal identity and his views on identity; that is multiple, progressive and fluid, can be traced out in his work too.

### ***M. Butterfly* Audience and the Readers**

*M. Butterfly* has been an international success, winning a Tony Award for the best play of the year 1988. The play was received with great enthusiasm. After its great success in New York run, it turned across the United States and has enjoyed revivals in major cities of USA and abroad. It has proven to be a durable drama with a major appeal to a wide variety of audience. Besides the audience, it has also been able to provoke a lot of thoughts and give entertainment to its readers, and received wide range of responses from the critics.

Lee A. Jacobus in the anthology *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 make up, get past the archetype" [. . .]. She is trying to get to something personal. (235)

Similarly, commenting on identity of Gallimard Hwang in an interview with John Louis Digaetani 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).

Some critics have examined *M. Butterfly* as a play that has dramatized the relation between the east and the west. Song Liling is an easterner and Gallimard is the westerner. They are also from different race and ethnicity. The problem in their relation indicates east-west relationship. Digaetani opines that Hwang's plays suggest the western naivety about the East. He adds, "it's a kind of racism combined with sexism" (1575). Showing the possibilities of various themes in *M. Butterfly* John cross states that Hwang has seized on a story that fairly bristles with opportunities for exploring social, cultural and sexual theme" (1979). He further tells, "It represents a chance to air some of his concerns about racism, sexism and imperialism (1779).

Sexuality is the central issue for many critics in *M. Butterfly*. The characters, their sexual activities and social responses on their sexuality have drawn attention of many critics. Rajendra Kumar Panthee in his *Sexuality As Performance* finds sexuality tilted to postmodern/poststructural tendencies. He writes:

*M. Butterfly* dismantles the sexual mythology informing orientalism deconstructing the oppositions that structure the worlds of East and West. Hwang's work doesn't simply elaborate these poststructuralist moves; it addresses a specific historical context: *M. Butterfly* interprets the Vietnam era through the metaphor of the gay male body. (65)

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 men [. . .]. Gallimard 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 nonwhite 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 heterosexual, 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, in his essay "The Theatre of Punishment: David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* and Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*", analyzes theater and prison house operating in a similar fashion with similar purpose. He analyzes the performance of *M. Butterfly* rather than its thematical aspects. However, his analysis shows Gallimard as a character that rebels against oppressive power that dominates his sexual potentiality. He states, "I will

discuss how these powers transform our theater from one of traditional, observational arrangement into a spectacular theater 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 valorize 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 Asian opera singer in communist China, he exposes the prison house of heterosexism. (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 operate 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 thematical 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 identity category? Is heterosexuality only a natural form of sexuality practice?

The present research work attempts to answer the questions raised above. The research work attempts to deconstruct compulsory "heterosexuality" by revealing its constructedness. For this project relevant Queer theory will be helpful theoretical insights for the researcher. The term "Queer", according to OALD (5<sup>th</sup> edition), means 1. "strange, odd", 2. "Homosexual" 3. "Slightly ill". The term was first used in academic circles by Teresa de Lauretis (1991) in a copy of a feminist cultural studies journal "*difference*" to offer a way out of hegemony of white, male, middle class model of analysis" (Qtd. in Cranny-Francis et al. 76).

For Queer theory categories of sexuality can not be defined by such simple oppositions as homosexual/heterosexual. Building on deconstructive insights into human subjectivity (selfhood) as a fluid, fragmented, dynamic collectivity of possible sexualities. Sex, sexuality, gender and identity are the basic components that must be addressed for better understanding of Queer theory.

### **Sex, Sexuality, Gender and Identity**

"Sex", "sexuality", "gender" and "identity" are highly interrelated terms in the field of Gender/sexuality studies. These terms are used to define an individual and the society one lives in. Hence they are related to an individual and society, they are catchwords in various social theories like feminism, sexuality studies and gender studies.

"Sex" in general 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

young. It is an action that involves sexual organs and results in the pregnancy of the females according to the Oxford Dictionary. 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. This definition guarantees that sex is a "natural biological coupling" (Cranny-Francis 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. Simone 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 phenomena.

However, these definitions alone can not 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 Lecan, it is "only through being subjected to the process of heterosexualized gendering that human subjects are produced" (Cranny- Francis et al. 6). For Levi-Strauss and Lecan, 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 heteronormativity 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 Sedwick 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". Genders 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 calls "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. (18)

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 heteronormative 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 acts [. . .] 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 heteronormative 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).

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": that 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 can not be separated from "sex", "sexuality" and "gender". Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (5<sup>th</sup> edition) 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.

However, identity is seen as fluid rather than fixed, in postmodern concept. As identity is viable to change, the minority groups also can use this notion of fluid identity to improve their present marginalized identity. One need not always stick to one identity. Due to this dynamism it is also a strong political weapon for the inclusion and respect of multiple ethnic racial or sexuality groups. Quoting the cultural critic bell hooks Crany– Francis et al. write "essentialist notions of identity is regulatory or a normative force" (34). Therefore, unified and regulatory notion of identity is brought under the domain of deconstruction. Historically speaking, Foucault draws the history of homosexuality in which we see the change in identity: once who was called "sodomist" was called with different names like "sexual pervert" later homosexual and finally "gay". Identity categories are changing as the history changes. Foucault says that identity is culturally constructed by the power position operating through different discourses in the society. So when the power changes the discourse operating in the society also get changed and the identity of an individual also gets changed. Foucault's idea of discourse gives rise to the notion of fluidity of identity.

Judith Butler is one of the influential theorists in gender/sexuality studies. She also tends "to replace the notion of set identity with a claimer that reveals identity as a fiction" (Beasley 105). For Butler also identity is, as Foucault says, a product of power. Identity is "immanent site" which does not offer means of political resistance but offers a continuing entrapment. The identity conformist create a "political closure". The notion of developing or fluid identity serves as a better tool for change. This idea gives birth to Queer notion of gender and sexuality.

## II. Modern and Postmodern Theory of Sexuality and Gender

"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.

The terms "gender" and/or "sexuality" are constructed through and within other relations of power such as "class", "race"/"ethnicity" or "imperialism" and "colonialism". The organization of "sex", "gender" and "sexuality" is not taken as

given but seen as potentially problematic associated with power. The "gender" and "sexuality" studies can be seen in three major sub-fields as feminist, sexuality and masculinity studies.

Sexuality studies deals with two crucial elements in all areas 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.

Sexuality studies focuses on gay men's sexual positioning. As the main subject of gender studies to these days remains women, then central subject of sexuality studies has been gay men. This "focus has been laid more upon gay men than the lesbian because lesbians have been seen earlier at least under feminist issues in relation to homosexualities" (Jackson qtd. in Beasley 117).

However, while gender studies continues to be more dominated by discussion of women's marginality, sexuality studies has become, in both analysis both gay and lesbian agendas, as well as transgender, transsexual and intersex issues.

Sexuality studies has various debates over time how sexuality and sexual identities might be complicit in power. Sexuality writers have also considered "how sexuality might be the means to overcoming power" (Beasley 118). They see existing sexual regimes as problematic but frequently view not just as marginalized sexual identities but sexuality as a whole in a quite positive way. They claim that sexual drive is oriented to multiplicity at different time and circumstances.

Sexuality study can not be alienated from power and its uses. It is rather concerned with "whether sexuality can positively disrupt oppressive power relations" (Beasley 118). Both gender and sexuality thinkers have increasingly adopted the more positive orientation towards sexuality and power within the sexuality studies subfields.

Feminism begins with nineteenth century liberalism whereas "sexuality studies as a fully critical theory form 1960s and 70s" (Rubin qtd. in Beasley 119). If feminism and gender studies are Marxist-inspired theories then sexuality studies developed out of gender studies with sexual orientation.

The characteristics of sexuality studies are more contextualized ones. The first direction of sexuality study is "emancipatory". The second one is "sexuality differences" (Singular identity politics frameworks). The remaining three offer critiques of singular differences. The third one focuses on "multiple differences – for example race/ethnicity/imperialism (REI) approaches; the fourth focuses on social constructionism and; the fifth-postmodernism (that is Queer theory) focuses on fluidity of identity categories. The theoretical direction of sexuality studies are discussed below in short.

Modernity has its direct links with the 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 dispel the darkness of superstition, prejudice and barbarity. It's "purpose was to free humanity from its earlier reliance on mere authority and unexamined tradition" (Abrams 75). So, modernity as a cultural movement contributed for the emancipatory thoughts on gender and sexuality. The ethos of this movement took all human beings as equal as they possessed rationality whether they are women or homosexuals or blacks.



'Liberal human rights' approaches first developed antidiscrimination stance for woman and homosexuals. Feminism along with some issues of gender develops from Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792, originally published in 1792). In this essay she rejected the divine right of kings, heredity, power fixed social hierarchy and arbitrary rule over any being who possessed reason. However, there were not fully developed ideas on sexuality. Yet, they regarded homosexuals also as the members of universal human beings. The liberal human right's approach had a sort of sympathetic attitude towards the homosexuals. Some medicinal or social movements like 'homophile' movement advocated for assimilation of homosexuals, latter, in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

By the 1960s and 70s the liberal humanist's ineffective assimilationist's model was slowly replaced by more radical same-sex position. This approach offered a liberationist and libertarian stance under the banner of Gay liberation and the notion of sexual revolution. When Lesbian and gay people in the United States began to organize and press for social change, they did so in an atmosphere that defined them as sinful, sick and criminal. The social groups like "Mattachine society were the first world war homophile organization who could speak unpopular truth from behind mask" (Gross, 508). Gay liberation movement viewed the history of critical sexuality studies as beginning after stonewall protest. Stonewall was a name of an inn where a gay men's riot protested against police raid. It was a big protest against the socially legitimate attack on the homosexual community. The struggle was described in terms of liberation for all. It drew on political model of African-American political struggle. Gay liberation took a form of coalition between gays and lesbians. It was "a movement for human sexual liberation" (Seidman 11-15). In so far sexual liberation

was seen as the struggle against romanticized, marital, genital and singularly male penetrative desire as the perspective norms of sexuality" (Beasley 121).

Homosexual activists were "marking significant new territory in the context overshadowed by antiwar movements of 1960s" (Gross, 510). Gay liberation was viewed as the vanguard of the revolution. Its intention was to throw off repression and assert an innate polymorphous sexuality. It was to throw off repressive structures of social conditioning. The movement tried to set up a foundation that believes in formless sexuality that doesn't demarcate or prohibit desires and pleasures. To this idea Denis Altman summarizes as "sexuality overthrowing power" in his *Homosexual: Operation and Liberation*, 1971. Gay liberation movement combined modernist liberatarianism and liberationism, "synthesizing notion of throwing off power with conception of a natural, currently repressed sexuality on the source of true self and true society" (Beasley 121).

Liberationist feminists, in the 1960s and 70s developed a critique of patriarchal society and heterosexuality. In the process of examining men's power over women, they drew attention to power within exuality, conceiving sexuality as reflecting unequal social relations rather than having an innocent or natural beneficent status. The feminist like Kate Millett published a book *Sexual Politics* (1969), in which, by "politics" Millett signifies the "mechanisms that express and enforce the relation of power in society" (Abrams 88). She 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 sexuality encouraged to discuss about other forms of sexuality such as masturbation and celibacy. They noted a link between heterosexuality and rape, child abuse and violence. The idea of sexuality as innate need of men was criticized. The idea that heterosexuality as natural was a norm but when it came under the domain of political debate in relation to power relation, it caused split between the feminists favouring heterosexuality and Lesbian feminist. Therefore, both, the gay liberation movement and women's liberation movement remained significant in sexuality politics studies.

By the late 1980s and early 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 centered approach of women liberationists. They began to promote new lesbian coalition. They "denounced women centered 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 notion 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) was expelled as not belonging to within homosexual collective politics in 1994 from ILGA (a world wide 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 led to a greater stress on plural identities and increasing fragmentation, in other words to postmodern/Queer identity.

To bridge modernist fixed identity politics, suspicions that arose on it and the postmodern plurality social constructionism plays a vital role. Social constructionists like Dennis Altman, Jeffrey Weeks and others question the essentialists notion of

gender and sex, and argue that gender and sexuality differences are particular forms of identity constituted through hierarchical social relations analogous to class relations and founded upon concrete material oppression in social life. They did not necessarily disrupt identity categories completely-indeed they typically continued to validate the categories. Their framework rather than assuming that sexual identity categories have a set essence, outlined the changing historical forms of gender/sexual identities and their links to wider social and material processes.

Altman developed gay liberation theoretical model in his *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation* (1971 and 1996). His model sees "power as oppression/repression (negative). Power is viewed here as something you can throw off, to reveal a self liberation from power, a self that is free" (Beasley 127) .

Social constructionists have basically two features: critique of "essentialism" and material/historical approach to sexuality studies. Firstly, social constructionism rejects biological as well as psychological essentialism. Freud analyzed that all evils of society are "repressive practice" of sex. So for him rather than economy alone "sexual rebellion" can make the cultures healthy. It frees society from all shame, guilt and sin from the rigidity of gender and sexuality. So by abolishing sexual repression we can have cultural revolution. However, Freud took sexuality a timeless, universal natural – that is purely psychological but at odds with social organization and power. He viewed sexuality as a force like a gushing stream that, may be dangerously dammed up into socially appropriate direction. He prescribed medical/pathological correction for "sexual deviants."

Weeks in the first stance rejects "biological essentialism" – sexuality as natural at odds with social organization and power. In the second stance he rejects "identity based essentialism – that is the presumption of sexual/gender categories as set eternal

that are expressed in a linear unchanging stream through out history" (Weeks 6). Such a perspective refuses the notion of power as acting to repress their essential identities and instead supports an account of social power as actually involved in the construction of (sexual) identities. It is a perspective which has much in common with the work of Michel Foucault.

Altman integrates Marx via Marcuse. He relates Gay Liberation of 1960s and 70s with the social theory of revolution of Karl Marx in which conflict is the heart of class divided society. "Altman through Marcus placed heterosexual community at the place of owner of means of production, the bourgeois and the homosexuals at the place of oppressed proletarians" (Beasley 135).

The critique of identity politics that arose in 1980s and 90s produced an increasing emphasis upon social construction. Social constructionism follows Foucault's rejection of sexuality as simply natural and biological drive, and his insistence on cultural historical character of sexual categories. Like Foucault, it argues that sexualities are the matter of social sexual categories. However, its writers do not totally reject, as Foucault does, the importance of body. For them "body is not emptied meaning, nor is passive surface that is essentially socially shaped, as in the case of Queer theory writers like Judith Buttlers" (Seidman 127). They believe that there are limits imposed by the body. So, social constructionist also ultimately rest almost upon modernist identity political stance. But, the Queer theorist like Butler and Steven Seidman in line of Foucault deny this identity stance and focus upon fluidity, fragmentation and Queerness.

Poststructuralist as well as post world war socio-political and cultural movements have had an important influence on the development of Queer theory. Queer theory is interested in exploring the borders of sexual identities, communities,

and politics. Queer theory is the post modernist deconstructive mode of identity politics of gender and sexuality studies. The theory analyzes theoretical assumptions of feminist, Marxian, psychoanalyst and structuralist about formation of self (or identity) and finally rests upon the post structural notion – fluidity of identity.

Marxist political philosopher Louis Althusser was influenced by Lacan's rewriting of Freudian subjectivity and Marxist theory of the subject. The Marxist subject is defined by its relation to the mode of production. Marx argued that a worker's self was defined by their relationship to their work and the way in which the worker could carry it out. Marx imagined that subjectivity would be developed collectively, who you were was also defined by the people you worked with. In this line of thought, Althusser believed that "we are all necessarily part of the system of ideology in which we live; that is, we are interpellated by ideology" (Althusser 131-87). The subject is never outside ideology, the system of culture, government, Church, school, media and so on. The subject is directly affected by these institutions, 'ideological apparatuses'. Althusser argues that ideology and subjectivity are inextricably connected and that no one is outside ideology, although one of the effects of ideology is that it appears natural and inevitable (ideology never says, "I am ideological"). So, for Althusser, the individual can never be outside ideology, since it is through interaction with ideology that the individual subject comes into being. So, language and culture transmit and reproduce subject position.

Michel Foucault replaces Althusserian ideological apparatus model with "discursive" model of subject formation. Foucault argued that discourses such as medicine or psychiatry-yoked together power and knowledge, and then subjected individual to them. A discourse such as medicine defines a position that someone can hold patient - doctor relation and the power or lack of it in that position. The subject

is not something that exists in advance, but is produced through the operation of discourse. This is a fluid model of the way the subject and social field interact.

Foucault "conceptualizes 'subject' as produced by and in the negotiation of discourses that constitute our (social) life." (Cranny-Francis et al. 48). Foucault argues that to understand our subjectivity we need to understand how these relations of power on the individual constituting our bodies, the way we behave, even our body language. In Foucault's word:

The individual is, an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of articulation.

The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle. So these relations of power constitute an individual. (Foucault, qtd. in Cranny-Francis et al.)

Foucault's *The History of Sexuality: Volume One* 1976 has been a pervasively influential book in sexuality studies. It was first published in French in 1976 and was available in English translation in 1978. In this book, he argues convincingly that sexuality is socially and historically, rather than biologically, derived. He focuses that 'homosexuals' are social products rather than sexual deviants. Drawing upon the history of sexuality he shows that sexuality categories are products of social discourses.

Foucault reconceptualizes identity in ways that have reworked sexuality studies along the Queer lines. In *The History of Sexuality* ([1976] 1980), he examines the organization of sexuality in the west. He begins his analysis with a powerful critique of what he terms as "the repressive hypothesis." Conventional understandings of western sexuality appeal to the repressive nature of Victorian society. Sexuality is a taboo, something about which nothing can be said. Silence and censorship are the law.



In contrast to this view, Foucault suggests that sexuality is talked about all the time in Victorian society. From the rise of sexology to judicial institution sexuality was profusely discussed and regulated entity. It is something which is produced through discourse, not repressed through censorship. If this is so, as a postmodernist theorist he argues that the question of silence itself must be considered. Foucault offers an account of social production of identities which are assumed to be natural in current dominant knowledge.

Jacques Derrida offers a somewhat different perspective, through his concept of "supplementarity." "Supplement" suggests that meanings are organized through differences in a dynamic play of presence and absence. Derrida elaborates on the notion:

Supplementarity, which is nothing, neither to presence nor an absence, is neither a substance nor an essence of man [sic]. It is precisely the play of presence and absence, the opening of this play that no metaphysical or ontological concept can comprehend. (Derrida qtd. in Seidman 196)

Derrida maintains that a focus on this play is useful because it reveals that what appears to be "outside" a given system is always already fully "inside" it, that which seems to be natural, is fully historical. In this view heterosexuality needs homosexuality for its own definition: a macho homophobic male can define himself as "straight" only in opposition to that which he is not – an effeminate gay man. Homosexuality is not excluded from such homophobia, it is integral to its very assertion. Deconstructing Levi Struss's (1955) nature/culture binaries Derrida proposes an inclusive domain in which all are included.

Exploiting Derridian ideas of "supplementarity" Diann Fuss writes one of the landmark texts in Queer theory titled *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (1991). Fuss explains:

The philosophical opposition between "heterosexual" and "homosexual," like so many other conventional boundaries, has always been constructed on the foundations of another related opposition: the couple "inside" and "outside". But nothing can be fully "outside" or "inside" these binaries. (Fuss qtd. in Seidman 198).

Fuss argues that Queer theory recognizes the impossibility of moving "outside" current conceptions of sexuality. We can not assert ourselves to be entirely "outside" heterosexuality, nor entirely "inside", because each of these terms achieves its meaning in relation to the other. Queer theory questions how these "boundaries" are created, regulated and contested. The emphasis on the production and management of heterosexuality and homosexuality characterizes the poststructuralist Queer theory project. Fuss argues that not only we have an identity something rather fixed, but that we are also constantly caught up in 'process of identification.' "Identification" is a process of constant negotiation between "self" and "other", "inside" and "outside", "desires" and "social demands" which are inclusively important in this negotiation.

Identification is carried out through "stereotyping" according to Stuart Hall. Sexuality categories are the constructions of stereotyping also. It is a way of "seeing" and the ways of "representing" "others". It sets up boundaries and divides "normal" and "abnormal". In this context in *Representation: Cultural Presentations and Signifying Practices* (1996) Hall writes:

Stereotyping . . . is part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order. It sets up a symbolic frontier between the 'normal' and the

'pathological', the 'acceptable' and the 'unacceptable' what 'belongs' and what 'does not' or is 'other' between 'insider' and 'outsider', '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, equips itself with positive stereotypes and represents non-heterosexuals with negative stereotypes, and maintains them. Different stereotypes applied to a particular social community may attribute to them conflicting characteristics. This "apparent contradiction reveals the fact that stereotypes are: generated by those outside the group and they are a part of political strategy for managing the groups" (Cranny-Francis et al. 146). Contesting stereotyped regime of representation is difficult, however, as Stuart Hall calls, is possible through "parody" and "irony", and sometimes by creating "self images." Queer theory exploits these strategies in dismantling stereotyped binaries like heterosexuality/homosexuality, masculinity/femininity, gays/lesbians.

In her essay "Womanliness as Masquerade" 1986. Joan Revere suggested that genuine womanliness and masquerade are one and the same. She argues that there is a "performative", 'masquerading' aspect to the assumption of normal masculine and feminine subjectivity. To some extent, patriarchal femininity and masculinity are 'masquerades' in which both sexes adopt a role which covers over the ambivalence and anxiety of subjectivity and sexual identity. In theatrical masquerading and performance both femininity and masculinity appear real in their effects. So masculinity and femininity as well as other sexuality categories are the masquerades of regular performance. Therefore, according to Riviere, "sexual categories of identity are constructed and represented" (Cranny-Francis et al. 168).

"Transvestism" is another practice that parodies the sexuality categories. It is a practice of dressing in the clothes of the opposite sex although clothes often includes cosmetics and body language. It is not about wanting to be sexually different from what one is but is rather an interrogation of how sexuality itself is determined and made manifest. It problematizes the notion the system of sexual classification. Marjorie Garber writes of transvestism: "if it is not a critique of gender roles, that may be because it is a critique of 'gender' itself as a category" (Garber qtd. in Cranny-Francis et al. 170). Transvestism intrigues people of all sexualities because of its concern with the borders or boundaries that maintain the sexes in a particular configuration Transvestism is sometimes overtly and deliberately shocking because of the way it reveals one of the mechanism by which the sexes are constructed. Cranny - Francis et al. write:

A big hairy man wearing a dress and make-up is not just a deconstruction of conventional heterosexual femininity, but questions the ways in which a society chooses to define sex and gender. The shock value associated with public transvestism derives from its play with the conventions of both sex and gender, the ways in which the institution of (compulsory) heterosexuality sexes and genders individual subjects via social conventions such as appearance. (170)

Thus, "Transvestism" is a radical, because it is visible deconstruction of performativity of gender. In this regard, transvestism supports Queer thinking.

A prominent theorist, Judith Butler questions the need for a 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 that congeal 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 heterosexism, 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 parodic 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 of 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 parodic 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 parodic 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 that 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 heteronormative hegemony. She claims that sex itself is historical and constructed idea. Sex can not 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 pathologizes others.

To contest the ideas that sexual identity reveals the truth Butler takes "drag" as a tool. He parodizes the concept of compulsory heterosexuality. "Parody" is linked to the idea of mocking the very notion of an original gender identity. "All gender is parodic in the sense that it is all imitative, but some forms [like drag] are more parodic than others because they expose that imitativeness" (Iloyd 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 as "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 iterability. 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. Austine's performative model of communication similarly Butler deconstructs the heteronormative hegemony upon sexuality in western culture. The claim that sexuality is a matter of "performativity" rather than of identity, challenges the heterosexuality's claim to "naturalness" on theoretical grounds.

The Queer theory became a very influential postmodern theory in western literary, cultural as well as social theories. however, the term "Queer Theory" had entered the theoretical discussion in 1990:

In 1990 Teresa de Lauretis used the term "Queer Theory" as the title of a conference held at University of California, Santa Cruz, and the rest is history of consciousness [. . .]. Queer theory became the hot new thing in academia. It seemed, the "Queering" of anything and everything. (Harlperin qtd. in Gross 508-526)

By "Queer theory" she refers to the necessary critical work of deconstructing our discourse and what they silence. Queer theory is aligned with anti-essentialism. It has a postmodern turn in theorizing Queer theory marks the suspension of identity as something fixed, coherent and natural. Queer theory's primary focus is on "denaturalization of natural identity categories" (Beasley 164).

Queer theory involves both a challenge to the notion of unitary identity as in gay or straight, and rejection of binary models, gay/lesbian, homosexual/heterosexual, masculinity/femininity, man/women. Queer theory assumes that such identity based categories are reproducing the silencing exclusionary practices of power that they precisely arose to resist.

For Queer theory "identity" is "provisional". Postmodern interpretation of psychoanalysis and language questions a fixing of meanings including the meaning of

self (remind Derrida, Foucault, Butler). Queer theory for Steven Seidman, is a social liberating theory. She writes:

Queer theory is not just about making a new space for the non-heterosexuals, for the non-conformists it is about the reform of the social. In this usage, 'Queer' is a verb not an identity, and the aim is to Queer society by fully recognizing differences to the point of declaring war on all norms, all authorities. This socialized Queering strategy serves as a model for new radical democracy. (Seidman 132-3)

Seidman argues that such Queer thinking would also remove moral assessment from a number of areas related to bodies, desires, and intimacies to allow for a flowering of a society with no privileged center of the 'normal'.

To sum up, queer theory focuses on how respect and reciprocity can be developed among people, disavow exclusionary practices and make a society a garden where all flowers can blossom.



### III. Textual Analysis

#### Queer Sensibility in David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*

*M. Butterfly*, through its sexually ambiguous characters Rene Gullimard and Song Liling denaturalizes identity categories like masculinity/femininity, gender/sex and heterosexuality/homosexuality by revealing that heterosexuality, which is the foundation of these identities, is itself a construct. This denaturalization of the mentioned binary identity categories create a situation in which an individual's identity, rather than natural unitary and fixed, it is ambiguous, fluid and fragmented. The situation of unstable identity of the characters reveals Queer sensibility.

The play is based on a bizarre true story of a French diplomat who carries on a twenty-year affair with a Chinese actor and opera singer, not realizing that his partner is in fact a man masquerading as a woman. The diplomat apparently became aware of the deception only in 1986, when he is charged by the French government and passed on a very sensitive political information that he has acquired from the diplomat. This almost unbelievable story stimulates our imagination and compels us to think why a man could deceive another man for twenty years and make him think that "he" was "she". Song Liling's fluctuating identity sometimes as "he" and sometimes as "she" reveals that compulsory heterosexuality as well as categories like male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, masculinity/femininity as such are discursive constructions, a matter of masquerade and performance rather than essential core identity categories.

*M. Butterfly* is a modern tragedy. The protagonist Rene Gallimard has got multiple sexual orientations. So it is difficult for him to stick into only one sexual orientation. He married Helga late at age thirty-one. He says, "I was faithful to my marriage for eight years" (1.V. 1522). He started an affair with Song Liling in 1961

assuming that song was a "fairest maiden". He explains how he got pleasure in her company:

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 more rare than to find a woman who passionately listens. (3. IV. 1563)

Similarly, Gallimard also had heterosexual affair with a school girl, Isabelle. In conversation with his friend Marc we come to know this fact. At the same time it is known that Marc was practicing homosexuality with Gallimard as well as had sex with other girls.

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 and down on my loins. (1. IX. 1558)

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 a madam Butterfly, a perfect woman. Gallimard practices various kinds of sexuality like "hetero", "homo", "bi" but almost always assumed the heteronormative homophobic position. In practice he is Queer who embraces all sexuality practices as natural but in thoughts he took the "heteronormative homophobic" position, as Judith Butler calls. Because of this split in his personality he could not overcome the homophobic conception he was imposed by the "social discourses" (Foucault) and kills himself finally when he was accused of being homosexual as well as a traitor.

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 assumes 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 can not resist the hegemony through living. His life will be a life full of embarrassment, if he chooses to obey the punishment he would be more meek 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 honor." The drama ends in tragedy. However, by dramatizing Gallimards multiple sexual orientations and exposing that it is power that creates truth the play opens the way to Queer analysis.

The major problem in *M. Butterfly* is that why Gallimard could not know the real "identity" of his beloved. It was because he assumed "identity" as pure and single as he was a subject of heteronormative society which believed in single unitary identity. But "identity" or "subject" as such are fragmented, fluid and unstable. The identity categories like masculine/feminine, heterosexual/homosexual are constructed through various processes like stereotyping, masquerade and performance.

Rene Gallimard assumes himself a privileged position in his heterosexual society. He aligns himself with 'Us' and assumes homosexuals as "Others" in social dealing however his sexual orientations are multiple. Exploiting Derridian idea of deconstruction Diana fuss in her *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (1991) points out that heterosexuality/homosexuality binaries are constructed. 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 "can not

totally move outside the current conception of sexuality (Seidman 198). We can not 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 can not fall 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 Liling, for him, is a female even capable of bearing child. Some months ago Song said that she was pregnant. 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. I 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 dishonor" (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 through out the western world. (1. III. 1551)

And he further describes:

GALLIMARD. And why not? Its heroine, Cio-Cio-San, also known as Butterfly, is a feminine ideal, beautiful and brave. And here, 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. 111. 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. Gillmard'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 parodizing 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 that 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.

Gallimard's ignorance helps to make Song's lies more effective. Though Gallimard is imprisoned for treason, a part of his "crime" is his misunderstanding of the body – of his own body and Song's body. Not only does Gallimard lack a biological understanding, he also ignores the historical, political and geographical specificity of Song's body. Gallimard would have known that Song was a man if he had known some details about Chinese cultures. In a particularly effective scene between Song and Comrade Chin, Song asks and answers her question about "why in the Peking Opera, are all women's roles played by men? . . . only a man knows how a woman is supposed to act" (2. VII. 1567). Song recognizes what Gallimard wants to see and, as an experienced actor, carries out lies. Song's lies are so powerful as to make physical information virtually insignificant. While on trial, Song explains her sexual relationship with Gallimard: "he never saw me completely naked . . . I did all the work . . . I suppose 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). Only at the end of the play Gallimard does recognize Song's "job" and realizes that he has loved and been manipulated by an impersonation, a collection of carefully coordinated lies. Gallimard's fantasy of how power operates his adoption of a liberal definition of power, prevents him from recognizing his lover's physical body and from seeing his own body as a homosexual body in disguise of heterosexual body.

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 argued 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). Similarly, Song appears "dressed elegantly in a black gown from the twenties" (I. ix. 1556). 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 dressings, way of speaking, use of make up and a set of behaviours, comes later. But through masquerade Song Lilling and Gallimard parody 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 heteronormative idea of gender that he was stucked to was false, in the ending part of the play

Gallimard says, "I'm a man who loved a woman created by a 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 body 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 hegemonized 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 and Song's gendered identity is achieved through the process of "(re)-citation". Shift of "gender" of Song from female to male and Gallimard's acceptance at the end of the play:

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

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

suggests that one never is 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 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 or primary gender identity. There is no heterosexual 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 viril 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 who would writhe on 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 she 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 hoophobia 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 there after, the French

ambassador promotes him to a vice-consul, a position from which he can exert his newfound mastery on French policy in Vietnam. This political status gained through masculine performance was ridiculed when he was accused of treason again.

Gallimard here enacts gender, as Judith Butler puts it "a corporeal style, an 'act' . . . both intentional and performative, where "performative", itself carries the double meaning of 'dramatic' and 'non-referential.'" (Butler qtd. in Lloyd 40).

Gallimard's mimic identity is realized in the mirror:

GALLIMARD. Alone, in my cell, I have long since faced the truth . . .  
 Love wrapped my judgement, blinded my eyes, rearranged the  
 very lines on my face . . . until I could look in the mirror and see  
 nothing but . . . a woman." (3. 111. 1973)

Ultimately, Gallimard identifies himself with the shame of the image, being unable to capitalize on the artifice of masquerade, unlike Song, who associates womanliness with the freedom of imagination, performativity, and non-referentiality. When Song acts out her homoerotic impulses by repeatedly reinventing herself through drag – a necessary strategy for a gay Asian man subject to the double bind of orientalism and a homophobic culture – for Gallimard, recognition of feminine nature of his desires repulses her and prefaces self annihilation:

GALLIMARD. The love of Butterfly can withstand many things –  
 unfaithfulness loss, even abandonment. But how can it face the  
 one sin that implies all others? The devastating knowledge that  
 underneath it all, the object of her love was nothing more, nothing  
 less than . . . a man. (3. III. 1573)

Deprived of the fetishistic fantasy that enabled him to express his femininity and sensuality covertly, characteristics degrading to western men, Gallimard comes face

to face with his homosexuality. In assuming the comparison of Butterfly, Gallimard acknowledges the truth, but in literalizing desires through drag, he loses the fantasy. All that remains to him is the queen, the grotesquery of an ageing French man in garish make up. This ultimate revelation of homosexuality again reveals that homosexuality is not an unnatural, and an identity to be excluded and punished rather it is to be included openly without any identity biasness. Rather than sustaining the binaries: heterosexual/homosexual, the situation reveals the necessity of blurring the boundaries between these two. The sense of blurring the boundaries reveals queer sensibility dominant in the play.

In the final scene of the play, Gallimard costumes himself as Butterfly and commits the Japanese ritual suicide, Seppuku, which involves disemboweling oneself with a hara-kiri knife. Before he plunges the knife into his body he makes this announcement to his observers:

GALLIMARD. Death with honor is better than life . . . life with dishonor . . . And, I have found her at last. In a prison on the outskirts of Paris. My name is Rene Gallimard – also known as Madame Butterfly. (3. III. 1573)

Gallimard is in a prison cell because of his sexuality. This reveals that sex is not an activity that is out of the grip of power operation. Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* says "Power is essentially what dictates its law to sex" (82), which means first of all that "sex is placed by power in a binary system: licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden" (81). Secondly, "power prescribes an order for sex" that operates at the same time as a form intelligibility: sex is to be deciphered on the basis of its relation to the law. And finally, power acts by laying down the rule: power's hold on sex is maintained through language, or rather through the act of discourses that creates, from

the very fact that it is articulated, a rule of law. Mode of action with regard to sex is of a juridico 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 can not love you, it is taboo, but something deep inside her heart . . . she can not 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. Galimard

would have proceeded the relation differently. This can be proved from 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 at 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 experiences 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 themselves. 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 heteronormative 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 who 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 says 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 the 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 through submissiveness milking him for the secrets she passes on to her superiors. America did not have embassy in China. So, Toulon, the French Ambassador says, "the American's are asking us to be their eyes and ears. Say 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 latter, they have come back to grab the territory for themselves. Its 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 whimp 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] gave 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 *Belshazzar*, 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 are believing. 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" life.

Gallimard rebels by creating a punishment by himself 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 can not 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 body, mind and feelings viable to have multiple interests, pleasures and mode of behaviours. But, the identity categories are limited and above all constructed. There may be as many individuals as many identity categories.

An individual rebels 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 heteronormative 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 truth; 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 that 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 die in the world of fantasy where his sexuality, his dreams, and his desires can remain enact. This is Queer sensibility that gives him "honor [able]" life he wants to live or die. By creating a different form 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, the representation of public morality.

Gallimard's suicide/resistance shows the 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 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 honorable 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 honorable hero who created meaning of life and death by a public ritual suicide "seppuku" with a hara-kiri knife.

*M. Butterfly* thus dramatizes the 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 weaknesses of 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 heteronormative homophobic culture and by creating a new rather a fictional identity for himself. 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*.

#### IV. Conclusion

The present study attempts to show that *M. Butterfly* is a play that dramatizes Queer sensibility through the character of Rene Gallimard and Song Liling. The major character Rene Gallimard and Song Liling are the developing characters of the play. Their appearances attitudes, mode of behaviour are in constant transformation, therefore their identities are also constantly changing. They have different sexual orientations in different situations. The research work therefore gives its focus on how the characters behave in different situations, what they speak how they do dressings and how and why they get on changing. What is the underline cause of change in the identity of the characters, and why they can not fit themselves into the identity categories like male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, is the central issue of the research. By taking help of some theoretical insights form theorists like Michel Foucault, John Riverie, Judith Butler, Steven Seidman and many other poststructuralist feminist and sexuality theorists who contributed to Queer theory, the research work attempts to answer the questions raised above. From the analysis the answer to why can't the characters fit themselves into a fixed identity categories is that the identity categories are simply constructed.

Rene Gallimard is a French diplomat who had a twenty-year affair with an actor in the Peking opera, during which time the Chinese actor Song Liling was also a spy for communist China. Eventually the diplomat learnt that the actor was not a woman, as he thought, but a man. To some extent the research work is designed to begin answering the question of how the diplomat could have spent twenty years not knowing his lover was a man. So the research examines the cause of identity problem of the characters, sexuality.

Gallimard could not know that his lover was a male for twenty years of their affair. Song Liling since her first meeting what Gallimard was dressed as beautiful butterfly. She spoke like a woman. She behaved like a woman, because as a Chinese spy she had to milk various secrets about American politics in dealing with Vietnam. She presented herself as a perfect, modest and beautiful oriental woman that was Galimard's wish to possess. She very cleverly had the sexual affairs with Gallimard either in the dark or did not expose herself totally naked. However, she gave complete sexual pleasure to Gallimard. She even added support to Gallimard's fantasy to be a perfect man by saying that Song was pregnated by Gallimard. After a departure of around some months Song comes up with a child and says that it is both of their child. These all activities support Gallimards wish to possess the beautiful woman like that of Puccini opera's 'Butterfly'. Galimard through out the play assumed that an individual has a single identity that is pure and unchanging. He was hegemonied by the heteronormative society that female has certain characteristics that create a certain fixed identity as female. As a 'subject' of heteronormative society he believed in a single unitary identity of an individual. But identity or subject as such is fragmented, fluid and unstable. An individual is in the process of constant change as the socio-political, cultural and spatio-temporal situation gets changed. The identity categories like male/female, heterosexual/homosexual are constructed through various processes like stereotyping masquerading and performance.

Rene Gallimard assumes himself in a privileged position in heterosexual society which has constructed binary opposite categories like heterosexual/homosexual, male/female. At the beginning of his affair he aligns himself with heterosexual male that is "Us" and Song Liling is an oriental female that is "Other" for Gallimard. But finally when Song was discovered to be male Gallimard realizes that



Song as well as himself can not fit into the sexuality identity categories that the society has constructed. He finds himself unable to follow the norms of the society which assumes that only heterosexuality is natural and other types of sexuality practices are "deviations" or "unnatural". They are unnatural and therefore inferior. Society wants to see Gallimard be corrected from that kind of "deviation." He is humiliated and even prescribed imprisonment. He is forced to stick into a category and bear the plight. 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 rather chooses to live or die in the world of fantasy where his sexuality, his dreams and his desires can remain enact. He realizes that the sexuality categories prescribed by the society are very much exclusive. The "homophobic" society has tried to transform him into a docile, observable body and meek "self". He rebels and refuses to be the ends and means of the functioning of power. Gallimard refuses to operate as a moral lesson, the discourse the representation of public morality.

Gallimard's suicide is not a suicide of defeated mentality. He creates his own type of suicide by adopting a cultural and public model of suicide, "Seppuku". His death is honorable like that of Socrates. Gallimard at the end says that death with honor is better than the life – life with dishonour. There is a great transformation in Gallimard's character. Initially a blind follower of homophobic heterosexual norms turns into a rebellious man of Queer sensibility. He refuses to be placed into rigid sexuality categories that are just constructed for the exclusion of diversities.

*M. Butterfly* through these characters of ambiguous identities reveals the Queers identity that is the belief in fluidity of identity and advocacy for inclusiveness.

*M. Butterfly* reveals that the presently available identity categories are narrowly constructed through stereotyping, masquerading and imitative performances.

Identity has become problematic in *M. Butterfly*. It replaces the notion of fixed gender/sexuality identity with a claimer, with a resistance to identity by revealing it to be a fiction. As Judith Butler says identity is a product of power not a means of overcoming it (no matter how many identity categories are embraced by identity politics). Had Gallimard been stuck to a fixed identity perhaps he would have never been able to resist the hegemony of heterosexuality imposed upon him. Identity position do not offer a means of political resistance, as Butler says rather they help continuing entrapment. On this basis *M. Butterfly* offers a critique of identity and identity politics by revealing that gender is a performative production, a socially compulsory act.

*M. Butterfly* dramatizes the notion of identity with postmodern skepticism. Postmodernism is a skeptical critical mode questioning all foundation, of fixed identities. Queer theory has much of the similarities with postmodernism. Queer theory takes identity as fluid and fragmented. Postmodernism refuses objective knowledge. Perhaps we can draw some similarities between Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and postmodernism. Similarly, Queer criticism questions the boundaries of themselves (criticisms). Both postmodernism and Queer theory do not assume their positioning as God-like capable of offering a final truth. They are always seeking, but perhaps do now know what. *M. Butterfly* dramatises this uncertainty through parodizing the established identity norms.

David Henry Hwang through *M. Butterfly* imagines a Queer society, like that of social Queer thinker Steven Seidman, which removes all the moral rigidity and exclusionary practices of gender and sexuality to allow a full flowering form of society with no privileged center of the "normal".

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