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A Wilde Touch: An Analysis to the Literary Genre LGBTQ

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ABSTRACT

In the course of development of the world into technological era, it still lacks one step behind to complete a full course development. The gender bias stands as a great barrier in welcoming contributions. Be it literature or any other stream, gender is still a barrier. While women have mostly come out, still the neutrals are stuck behind. However, science quotes it as hormonal imbalance, for literature it's always a new genre upcoming. It takes lot of history to deal with literature. To prove which many evidences are in hand to show the existence of a neutral gender. Though the Latin work of Petronious titled The Satyricon of 1st century AD is considered the beginning of promoting LGBTQ, it was Oscar Wilde whose Picture of Dorian Gray took the major influence. Taking his shoes were D.H Lawrence, Walt Whitman and others. Considering, the Indian stands, the Vedas have references to third gender as lord himself has taken up the role. The Mahabharata, a Great epic also show reference through their characters. The Greek mythology also refers to Achilles and Patroclus, the two most famous male lovers of Greece. A myth also prevails that people who write about the third gender are also one. To prove it wrong literature serves as a lens through which anything can be beautiful. Thus, breaking the barrier is the need of the hour to welcome new ideas and genres.

Keywords: Gender bias, hormonal imbalance, neutral gender, mythology, Vedas, LGBTQ.

INTRODUCTION

LGBTQIA+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, Transgender, queer, Intersex and asexual. As the acronym depicts the third gender, it also takes us back to history. The trial of Oscar Wilde had a great impact that it ended up in turning him an icon of the

community. A question arises about the beginning. The major influence was Greek mythology. It was Hermaphroditus, the first being to be born with features of both man and woman. He was born to Aphrodite and Hermes, the gods of sexuality. It was this winged youth who later became the god

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of effeminacy. Thus, he symbolized that men and women are equal. *The Iliad* by Homer gave out details of Achilles and Patroclus, the popular and passionate masculine lovers of ancient Greece.

The clergy also had influences of the third gender. Paulinus of Nola, A bishop had a ardent love on his fellow writer Ausonius which made him write a love poetry titled "*To Ausonius*". It was evident that the verses clearly indicate the relationship which was more erotic than friendship. Renaissance meant to be the revival of learning of classical literature and art depicted the nuances of the queer community Antonio Rocco's *Alcibiades: the school boy* was considered the first homosexual novel. The tale talks about the love of young Alcibiades towards Socrates. Leonardo da Vinci was said to have an affair with artist Fioravante di Domenico, who was a student at the Academia. The Renaissance was a great period in history which had profound information for people who frankly spoke about homosexuality. Works of Shakespeare like *Twelfth Night*, *Merchant of Venice* and his sonnets 18 and 20 were reported to have given out subtle details of homosexuality.

Things went on well; homosexuality was well addressed and was in verge of getting good recognition. A Storm hit the calm sea; the buggery act was passed during the reign of Henry VIII in 1533. The act had adverse effects on the LGBTQ community. It was declared that relationship between people of same sex is a crime and those who commit such are punishable by death. The first execution under this act took place on July 1540. Walter Hungerford and Thomas Cromwell who were considered the pioneers of the crime were hanged to death at the Tower hill, London. Several other executions took place all over England. The death penalty was abolished in 1861. In the course of brutal cases imposed, the punishments were slowly relaxed and were declared legal in 1967 at England and Wales and later in other parts of the world.

The first vampire story which involved characters of queer was Joseph Sheridan le famu's *first lesbian*. Another great gothic masterpiece by Matthew Lewis, features an erotic connection between the chief

monk and his fellow monk Rosario. Homosexuality was spread across the world. It represented a great fraternity. Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky was remarked for his subtle writing upon the homosexual behaviour through Sirotkin in his work *The house of the dead*.

The 19th century was less direct but more subversive on LGBTQ Literature. Writers like Arthur Rimbaud, Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde, Marcel Proust, Emily Dickinson, and Virginia Woolf wove a aesthetic reference to the community and their pride. The impact of Oscar Wilde in this turned out to be iconic. Known for his flamboyance and decadence he wholeheartedly accepted a movement called aestheticism that fell under the banner of "art for art's sake." It was time for literature to be etched with a new page of great history. The *picture of Dorian Gray* published in 1890 had a subject matter that was thinly veiled and it also described the deep roots of androgyny. He slowly moved to the theatre and reaped immense success on his publication of satirical comedies. Things went out of control when Wilde was accused by Marquess of Queensberry as posing sodomite on a public letter. Douglas decided to bite the bullet, he convinced Wilde to sue him for libel. The trials Wilde faced was dramatised by Moisés Kaufman in *Gross indecency: the trials of Oscar Wilde*. His trials were also presented as a drama film which was also titled as Trial of Oscar Wilde or the man with green carnation. *The Green Carnation* was a parody written by Robert Smythe Hichens. It was published in 1894. In 1892, Oscar Wilde made one of the actors in Lady Windermere's Fan wear a green carnation on opening night which later turned up to be a symbol as a mob of young men wore the same. He scandalized critics by appearing after the play on the stage smoking a cigarette. The author himself withdrew from publication during Oscar's trial because he felt it has helped to bring him down. Wilde was certainly being coy according to scholars. The green carnation was symbolic, it was a flower of an unnatural color. It was also believed that according to researchers of LGBTQ, green is supposed to be the favourite color of the community.

While Wilde was in full-fledged work of promoting homosexuality, D.H Lawrence published novels like *The Rainbow* which was prosecuted for obscenity in 1915. The novel was made unavailable until 1926 in Britain *Lady Chatterley's lover* was much more explicit and was only published with a number of cuts. Lawrence fascination towards themes of *homosexuality* and queer could also be related to his own sexual orientation. This theme was greatly manifested in his work *women in love*.

The female writers were also reported to be under the LGBTQIA banner. One such was the affair between Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West. This was the second intense romance after Oscar Wilde and Douglas. Although married, the two had a great attraction that they penned more than a hundred Poetic letters to each other. One of Woolf's novel *Orlando* of 1928 sought inspiration from those letters. The relationship is now in verge of becoming a film that would be titled as "Vita and Virginia" whose subject is from the letters they shared among.

The pioneer of consciousness met her love at a costume party. Vita was 10 years younger than Woolf. It was also noted that Virginia's husband Leonard found her in deep love with Vita and didn't object their relationship. Though published in 1920s the novel *Orlando* is still considered the best of Woolf's works. The novel features the protagonist who switches gender in a fantastical exploration of the self. The book was described as "the longest and most charming love letter in literature" by Vita's son Nigel Nicholson, and others have called it "the first trans novel in the English language." It is also said that the novel is a masterpiece and must be taught to students of upcoming generation.

Conclusion

In conclusion an evident point is that it was literature that broke the myth and exposed people that LGBTQ is a hormonal change and not a thing to avoid. References of writers like Charles Dickens, who secretly gave his characters a flashback of

third gender and Shakespeare, the bard of Avon's acknowledgement in his sonnet have also played a vital role in helping people understand. LGBTQIA is not a thing to avoid. It's a community to be looked after. They are also humans. They also hold a pride. They can also have aesthetic standards. The truth is always unpalatable yet conveys a profound message. Let's awake and also consider them and walk with pride in the prides they organize.

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