

The Fashioning of Homosexuality; Queering the Contemporary Sri Lankan English Novel

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Queer studies are based on the social production and regulation of sexuality by focusing on sexual minorities who are vilified and marginalized within the hegemonic discourse. This study engages with the representation of queer identities to scrutinize homosexuality and homosexual relationships in selected Sri Lankan English novels. It identifies literary work which have voiced the queer identity within the dominant discourse that superimposes the establishment of a 'compulsory heterosexuality.' The methodology of this study is based on a textual examination of two novels by two contemporary Sri Lankan English writers who voice such non-conformist sexualities in their fiction. The primary novels which are examined for this study comprise of *Funny Boy* (1994) by Shyam Selvadurai and *Living their Lie* (2009) by Brandon Ingram. The objective of this paper is to problematize the representation of homosexuality in these novels by incorporating insights of a number of theorists including those of queer theorists. The research problem of this study is grounded on a queering approach to the selected literary works. This is incorporated to analyse whether their queer representations challenge or affirm the dominant societal heteronormative discourse. The discussion of the selected novels unearths the ubiquitous and pervasive heteronormative ideology and its ideological expectations in representing homosexuality and homosexual relationships. The representation of queer identities are thus exclusively perceived through a lens of heteronormativity which has enabled an essentialist perception of sexuality. It is through this essentialist perception that, the non-normative sexualities are regarded as deviant, unnatural, marginal and in opposition to heterosexuality which is established as the norm. This study concludes by establishing that, despite the subversive and radical attempts of the selected novels in addressing queer identities, they still cater to the superimposition of heteronormativity. This is realised by how the novels contribute to the dominant heterosexual expectations of the society to perceive homosexuality and homosexual relationships as taboo and forbidden identities.

Keywords: dominant ideologies, heteronormativity, homosexuality, queer theory, Sri Lankan English novel
