T.C.
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PERFORMATIVITY OF SEXUALITY AND GENDER IN SARAH WATERS' *TIPPING THE VELVET* AND MICHEL FABER'S *THE CRIMSON PETAL AND THE WHITE*

FAHRİYE NUR ÖZKAN DEMİREL

Danışman
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Papatya ALKAN GENCA

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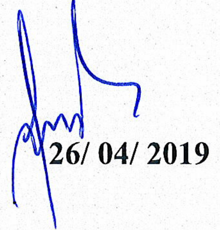

26/ 04/ 2019

Fahriye Nur Özkan Demirel

ÖZET

SARAH WATERS'IN *TIPPING THE VELVET* VE MICHEL FABER'IN *THE CRIMSON PETAL AND THE WHITE* ADLI ROMANLARINDA TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYETİN EDİMSELLİĞİ

***Cinsiyet Belası* adlı kitabında Judith Butler toplumsal cinsiyette edimsellik kavramını ortaya atmakta ve bunu gerçek bir cinsiyeti oluşturduğunu varsayan eylemlerin tekrarlanmasının sonucu olarak tanımlamaktadır. Toplumsal cinsiyet değişken olduğundan ve bir kişinin biyolojik cinsiyeti toplumsal cinsiyetini belirleyemeyeceğinden, toplumsal cinsiyetin edimsel olarak oluşturulduğu düşünülür. Bu yüzden toplumsal cinsiyet diye bir şey yoktur ve ancak cinsiyet tutarlılığı tarafından düzenlenmiş belirli eylemlerin sürekli tekrarlanması ile oluşur. Belirli edimsel eylemlerin tekrarlanması sonucu kimlikler "eril" ya da "dişi" olarak etiketlenir, ki bu da heteroseksüel kimliklerin oluşmasına yol açar. Bu edimsel eylemlerin tekrarlanması, cinsiyetin değişkenliğini ve bu eylemler öncesi bir cinsel kimliğin var olmadığını öne sürer. Bu nedenle toplumsal cinsiyet ve cinsel kimlik edimselliği, heteroseksüelliği doğal ve üstün gören normlara meydan okur ve toplumsal cinsiyetin eril egemen heteroseksüel kültürün bir ürünü olduğunu açığa çıkarır.**

Bu doğrultuda bu tez, toplumsal cinsiyetin edimselliği konusunu Neo-Viktoryen bağlamda edimsellik kullanımının iki farklı örneğini göstermek amacıyla, Sarah Waters'ın *Tipping the Velvet* ve Michel Faber'in *The Crimson Petal and the White* adli romanlarını inceler. Queer kuramı çerçevesinde, geleneğe aykırı karakterlerin toplumsal cinsiyetlerinin ve cinsel kimliklerinin değişkenliğini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlar. Sonuç olarak, bu tez, toplumsal cinsiyet edimselliğinin bu metinlerdeki iki ana karakterin eril egemen heteroseksüel normlardan kaçışları ve kendilerini gerçekleştirme amaçlarına nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu analiz eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edimsellik, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Sarah Waters, Michel Faber, *Tipping the Velvet*, *The Crimson Petal and the White*.

ABSTRACT

PERFORMATIVITY OF SEXUALITY AND GENDER IN SARAH WATERS' *TIPPING THE VELVET* AND MICHEL FABER'S *THE CRIMSON PETAL AND THE WHITE*

In her book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler coins gender performativity as a concept, and describes it as the result of repetitive acts that establish a supposed true gender. Since gender is fluid and cannot be determined or defined according to one's sex, gender is considered to be performatively produced. Hence, there is no gender, but it is only produced by means of some performative acts that are regularized by gender coherence. The repetition of certain acts brings about labeling the identity as either a "he" or a "she," which leads to formation of heterosexual identities. This repetition of performative acts suggests the fluidity of sexuality, and indicates that there is no sexuality before actions. As a result, performativity of gender and sexuality challenges heteronormativity and lays bare the constructed nature of heteropatriarchal norms.

As such, this thesis analyzes Sarah Waters' *Tipping the Velvet* and Michel Faber's *Crimson Petal and the White* to illustrate two different examples of the use of performativity in a NeoVictorian context. It aims to reveal the fluidity of gender and sexuality by the unconventional characters in a "queer" framework. As a result, it examines how the idea of performativity of gender and sexuality contributed to protagonists' flee from heteropatriarchal norms towards their self-realizations.

Keywords: Performativity, Queer, Sexuality, Gender, Judith Butler, Sarah Waters, Michel Faber, *Tipping the Velvet*, *The Crimson Petal and the White*.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Tipping	*Tipping the Velvet*
Crimson	*The Crimson Petal and the White*

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary novels revisit and reimagine the Victorian Era both on a topical and a technical level. From Jean Rhys to Alasdair Gray, various authors turn their gaze to nineteenth century either to rewrite well-known Victorian texts or to produce new material with a conscious emphasis on a specific historic era. Portraying the same time and space background within a contemporary perspective, Sarah Waters' *Tipping the Velvet* and Michel Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White* reproduce the concepts of sex, gender and sexuality. While putting performances in their center, both novels question the fixity and stability of sexuality that enables a Queer analysis and a critical Neo-Victorian reading.

Tipping the Velvet and *The Crimson Petal and the White*, which are analyzed in this thesis, could be categorized as examples of Neo-Victorianism, which basically centers on a reappropriation of Victorian values and aesthetics with a contemporary and critical outlook. To examine in detail, the characteristics of Neo-Victorianism should primarily be revealed so that the highlighted qualities of both Victorian and Neo-Victorian fiction can be illustrated and better understood in both of the novels. To begin with, Louisa Hadley defines Neo-Victorian fiction as "contemporary fiction that engages with the Victorian era, at either the level of plot, structure, or both" (*Neo-Victorian Fiction* 4). Thus, a Neo-Victorian novel is written by a contemporary author establishing the setting of the novel in the Victorian Era. Not only the plot and characterization of Victorian fiction but also the social and political issues of Victorian society are reflected in these novels with an attempt to recreate and rework the mindset of that era. Indeed, this attempt to re-create the nineteenth century with a contemporary viewpoint situates Neo-Victorian texts within the postmodern mode. Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn highlight postmodern elements in Neo-Victorian fiction and state that "texts must in some respect be self-consciously engaged with the act of (re)interpretation, (re)discovery and (re)vision concerning the Victorians" (4). In this respect, reinterpreting and reconstructing the past in contemporary times, Neo-Victorian novels revisit and reproduce Victorian culture including a perspective of "the silenced" or "marginalized" characters in Victorian novels such as women and lower classes.

Set in an era of political and social reform, Victorian literature consists of a variety of subjects such as the effects of Industrial revolution on society, child labor, unemployment, poverty and discrimination against women. *The Norton Anthology* describes the early period of Victorian era as "a Time of Troubles" (982): "the economic and social difficulties attendant on industrialization were so severe that the 1830s and 1840s became known as the Time of Troubles" (983). This "time of troubles" was also evidently reflected in Victorian fiction. Early Victorian novelists like Charles Dickens and Elisabeth Gaskell depicted and discussed the problems common people faced in the Victorian period. *Norton Anthology* notes that "[v]ivid records of these times are to be found in the fiction of Charles Kingsley, Elizabeth Gaskell and Benjamin Disraeli" (984). Reflecting the social and economic difficulties, literary texts revealed and higlighted the desperate conditions in which the British public struggled to live. Thus, Victorian fiction served as a mirror of the social conditions between 1837 and 1901, this role of fiction also had an impact in improving those conditions. As Heilmann and Lleweyn posit, "classic British novels from the nineteenth century not only reflect the values of Victorian society, they also shaped them" (1). The most evident manifestation of this can be observed in the way female writers portrayed the lack of educational and occupational opportunities for women. In *Norton Anthology*, it is stated that "[w]riters as diverse as Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Barret Browning, and Florence Nightingale complained that middle-class women were taught trivial accomplishments to fill up days" (991). Victorian women were seen as "angels in the house," whose main responsibility was attending to their husbands and children, and they were not supposed to have a job, possession or political right in society. Charlotte Brontë underscored the woman question in her novels and argued for the place and rights of women in society. Similarly, other female writers focused on the problems of women of their time, which was followed by gender roles and queer issues, and led to the rise of feminism in this era.

The idea of "New Woman" as opposed to "Victorian woman" emerged, which also demanded redefining gender roles and overcoming patriarchal supremacy. In addition, various Victorian novels explored themes like sexuality and marriage and depicted the struggles of both the lower and middle classes. Thus, these novels were socially conscious. They not only pointed at the problems but offered

possible solutions so as to reform society. In this respect, Victorian literature was considered to be reformative, it laid bare the social injustices and discussed the "unspoken" subjects. These subjects could include queer desires and variations of sex, albeit implicitly. Taking all these problems and developments into consideration, Neo-Victorian novels appropriated Victorian setting and plot, which already question the social issues of the time, into a new kind of novel with a postmodern perspective of reworking and recreating the period but this time giving a voice to "the marginalized" individuals more openly. In this respect, Neo-Victorian fiction appropriates this tendency of Victorian literature and reworks those subjects more explicitly. Heilmann and Lleweyn point out that Neo-Victorian fiction "often appears to be driven by a desire to illuminate and occasionally even correct aspects of the Victorian age, or the Victorians' attitudes to the specifics of sex, gender and erotic relationships" (8). Thus, Neo-Victorianism deployed Victorian aesthetics and values into a postmodern contemporary fiction not only reflecting Victorian realism and demanding social reforms, but also engaging with and emphasizing the "marginalized" or "taboo" ideas. One such idea is the Queer, which as a term and subject to be explored, has become a prominent subject matter in contemporary fiction.

"Queer"[1] as a sexual identity and "homosexual" desire did not explicitly appear in Victorian novels, which are regarded to be a reflection of the cultural norms of the nineteenth century. However, through the end of the century, like many other social issues that are discussed before, the secrecy of sexuality began to be explored by the writers of that period. Although the Victorian context of the nineteenth-century literature maintains a "heterosexual" normativity, that is, regarding sex and sexuality between male and female partners only with the purpose of procreation, "queer" identities or desires are implicitly existent in several literary texts in this era the most explicit example of which is Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray.* [2] Homoerotic desire and non-normative sexualities are present even in the texts that are not regarded as a Queer text. *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (Furneaux *Queer,* 21) and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë (Denenholz Morse "Brontë Violations," 1) are two of the many examples that include homosexual love and desire. Although there was a tendency to conceal "homosexuality" in the nineteenth-century novels, it still existed between the lines. It is stated in the

Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism that "[t]he sexual morés of Victorian England, for example, allowed for little overt discussion of homosexuality outside of the legal and medical fields" ("Introduction" n. pag.). In medical fields homosexual desire was seen as an illness to be treated, and outside these domains it was silenced and left out of public speech. Thus, the reflection of these mores could be followed in Victorian novels, as well. Victorian texts also silenced or disguised homosexual identities, which produces a suitable setting for a Queer reading since it revisits these "silent" texts and analyzes the "hidden" characters. However, through the end of the nineteenth-century and onwards, after homosexuality emerged and was acknowledged as a medical term, "queer" identities and relationships have started to pervade in novels especially in postmodern ones. In *Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism*, it is also mentioned that "in the twentieth century, this trend would develop into the image of gay and lesbian identity we find most familiar today" ("Introduction" n. pag.). In this respect, informed by feminist, poststructuralist, and Queer theories, "queer" culture and diversity of sexualities appeared and were acknowledged in the twentieth-century novels explicitly to emphasize the absence or the silence of queer identities. Many contemporary novels situate "queer" personalities and themes in their center within a Victorian setting. In particular, Neo-Victorian and postmodern literature had several representational "queer" novels such as Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* and Sarah Waters' *Fingersmith*. "Queer" both as a theory and a personality becomes a significant term to analyze. In this respect, the meanings of the word "queer" as a term play an important role in understanding the discourse and aims of Queer theory.

Queer as a term is simply defined as "strange, odd" as well as "homosexual" in *Oxford Dictionaries* ("Queer"). It is a loaded word which is regarded as "often offensive" ("Queer"). Considering this, the use of the word queer, which can be regarded as the product of heteronormative discourse, must seem primarily ironical within the discourse of Queer theory, which aims to subvert the heterosexual hegemony of society. The negative connotations of the term may still exist; however, the deliberate use of queer indicates the aim of subverting heterosexual hegemony and removing the negativity of the word in Queer theory. It is also noted in *Oxford Dictonaries* that

> The word queer was first used to mean "homosexual" in the early twentieth century: it was originally, and usually still is, a deliberately offensive and aggressive term when used by heterosexual people. In recent years, however, gay people have taken the word queer and deliberately used it in place of gay or homosexual, in an attempt, by using the word positively, to deprive it of its negative power. This use of queer is now well established and widely used among gay people and at present exists alongside the other use. ("Queer")

While it was considered to be offensive to use the word "queer" in the past, the word has been adopted to criticize the norms and notions which determine the "normal" in society. In her book, Sara Salih suggests that "[q]ueer is a radical appropriation of a term which had previously been used to wound and abuse, and at least part of its radicalism lies in its resistance of straightforward definition" (*Judith* 8). Therefore, the deliberate choice of the current use of the term enables it to refute the previous use and the negative meaning connoted to the term. The term was reappropriated by queer people to give a new and positive meaning to it. Moreover, David Halperin suggests that "[q]ueer is by definition whatever is at odd with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant" (62). Halperin avoids giving a specific definition of a queer identity. Instead, he suggests "[q]ueer describes a horizon of possibility whose precise extent and heterogeneous scope cannot in principle be delimited in advance" (62). Queer as a term does not have a specific identity definition as it is already against the normative and sexist definitions dividing sexualities. In this respect, it can be implied that queer does not have an essence and that it questions the social and cultural norms which claim to govern sexuality and gender. The tendency of using the word queer in a positive meaning has been achieved by giving it a powerful stance against heteronormativity.

One aim of Queer theory is to deconstruct and oppose the "traditional" views that tend to label the identities which do not conform to the heteronormative norms as "unnatural," "not normal," or "queer." Holly Furneaux asserts that "[q]ueer theory works to question the idea that our understanding of ourselves and the world should depend on the opposition of heterosexuality and homosexuality; it scrutinizes the naturalization of these cultural terms, and looks at diverse, messy, overlapping nature of desire" ("Victorian"). Thus, it is possible to assume that the term "queer" in Queer theory is used with the aim to subvert homophobic inclinations of the traditional

society which accepts heterosexuality as the "true" medium for a reproductive and secure social order.

The use of queer instead of "homosexual" also suggests another aspect of the theory. Queer theory refuses an understanding that holds the superiority of a single sexuality such as homosexuality as it already limits beings into a way of desire. Thus, arguing for homosexuality accepts a heterosexual hegemony which divides sexes into male and female with heterosexual desires, and discriminates against all other sexual possibilities. Halperin maintains that "since queer is a positionality rather than an identity in the humanist sense, it is not restricted to gays and lesbians, but can be taken up by anyone who feels marginalized as a result of their sexual practices" (62). In this respect, "queer" is not a randomly chosen term. It serves as an umbrella term and does not suggest an essence. Rather, it implies variety as Eve Sedgwick states; queer can refer to "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically" (*Tendencies* 8). Sedgwick emphasizes the encompassing quality of the word queer. Besides, queer as a term has come to symbolize all non-heteronormative sexualities, hinting its understanding of identity. In his essay "Sexualities," Tony Purvis states that "the queer of Queer theory lacks the sexual fixity and coherence once thought to typify heterosexuals, homosexuals, lesbians and gay men" (428). Since using a fixed-sexed term which can denote either a heterosexual or a homosexual tendency would be in complete conflict with the aim of the theory, the use of a nonsexist term has been adopted.

Queer celebrates and embraces all sexual differences both as a term and a theory. Moreover, Michael Warner claims in his essay "Fear of a Queer Planet" that "[q]ueer also suggests the difficulty in defining the population whose interests are at stake in queer politics" (16). The population that opposes "heterosexual" desire lacks a single-term definition as there are not merely "homosexual" entities in terms of sexuality. At the same time, they refuse a single-term to define and legalize their existence, anyway. Additionally, there is a variety of sexual identities such as gay, lesbian, transsexual, and bisexual that are represented in Queer theory, and Queer theory ignores the differences between that diversity since it regards sexuality beyond categories such as gender, class and race. Nikki Sullivan proposes this idea in

his book as follows: “queer veils over the differences between, for example, lesbianism and gayness,… and ignores differences of class, race, age, once again positing sexuality as a unified and unifying factor” (44). Therefore, queer as a term consists of many meanings and many identities regardless of any political or cultural division because sexuality is regarded as the key concept joining all. On the other hand, for Sedgwick, “the terminological complication is closely responsive to real ambiguities and struggles of gay/ lesbian politics and identities” (*Epistemology* 17). The ambiguity of the term queer stands as a mirror reflecting the problems related to the “ambiguous” identities of queer people in society. Thus, indicating the issues about “unnatural” identities, the term queer acts as an umbrella term and is used against the “normal” as a sign of challenging heterosexist ideas which prioritize opposite sex relationships and regard queer people as inferior.

The conflicts about the terminology lie behind the construction of what is seen as normal and not normal according to sexual desires. According to Purvis, “‘normal’ sexuality is traditionally associated with heterosexual genital relations” (432). If heterosexual is the norm, then it “naturally” assumes its opposite homosexuality as the deviation. Therefore, the “homosexual” is regarded as the “abnormal,” “unnatural,” and “queer.” People who behave against the heterosexual expectancy are considered to be opposing nature, and they are treated in a homophobic discourse where the “unnatural” personalities are discriminated and deprived of certain qualities and rights in social relations. Purvis also states that

> The unnatural homosexual subject is figured as someone whose actions and performances will reveal something at odds with the way in which dominant social groups will read and visualize his or her sexed body. If society’s legal and medical discourses have reflected ambivalent suppositions about recognition and identifications of homosexuals, then clearly, how the (in)visible homosexual subject is represented will have been ambivalent and queer. (434)

In accordance with this idea, the ambivalent nature of the word queer suggests that it is indefinable, and not easily understandable in a heteronormative approach. As it resists being part of binary hierarchy, queer is marginalized and recognized as inferior. The queer identities are disregarded within heterosexuality as they are

unable to be identified and understood. However, in Queer theory, sexualities are accepted as diverse and fluid. The major argument takes its strength from that instability. Salih states that "queer theorists affirm the instability and indeterminacy of all gendered and sexed identities," (*Judith* 9) which also shows the logic and the aim of Queer theory. Therefore, to disclaim all the assumptions and discourses about queer identities, the queer of Queer theory tries to undermine the categories of sex or gender which are drawn by heterosexual hegemonic order. Queer theory does not reduce sexuality on a specific gender like gay or lesbian theories which focus on either male or female gender. Instead, Queer theory examines all sexual differences without taking singular gender positioning into consideration.

Although Queer theory emerged from gay and lesbian theories, it separates itself from gay and lesbian movements, which demand inclusion in society. Queer identities refuse to be accepted in society as opposed to assimilationist groups with which gay and lesbian identities are mostly associated. Assimilationist groups claim that "homosexuality is biologically determined and should not be punished by law" (Sullivan 23). Sullivan gives CAMP and Mattachine Society as examples of assimilationist organizations and reveals that they "lent power to the normalizing imperative of medical discourses and discursive practices" (24). It is implied that such groups yield to the "heterosexual" norms and demand to be included as "normal" in society. However, unlike those gay/ lesbian societies, the queer maintain a more liberationist position, protest against inclusion, and emphasize their "queerness" in society. According to Sullivan, liberationist groups' "imperative was to experience homosexuality as something positive in and through the creation of alternative values, beliefs, lifestyles" (29). Thus, unlike gay and lesbian movements which lacked the diversity of sexualities that "queer" symbolizes, Queer theory rejects any normative sexuality which is socially constructed. It investigates non-normative sexualities more broadly than gay and lesbian theories. Annamarie Jagose states that "its non-specificity guarantees it against recent criticisms made of the exclusionist tendencies of 'lesbian' and 'gay' as identity categories" (*Queer* 76). Thus, while gay and lesbian theories focus on merely two categories of sexuality and exclude other sexualities, Queer theory investigates any kind of sexuality that is regarded as "deviant" or "non-normative." In this respect, Queer theory avoids

assimilationist or exclusionist perspectives that gay and lesbian theories support, and it includes and embraces all non-normative sexual identities.

Moreover, summarizing the development of the context of Queer theory and queer identities, Jonathan Kemp argues in his article that "queers want nothing to do with the status quo, instead regarding the most vibrant and radical aspect of homosexuality as being precisely its opposition to normative sexuality and society" (8). Kemp also describes this perspective as "revolutionary" or "postmodern." Whereas gay and lesbian movements are considered to have a minoritizing view, "the universalizing view is exemplified by the term queer" (Kemp 7). These terms were primarily suggested by Sedgwick in her seminal work *Epistemology of the Closet*. Sedgwick describes the minoritizing view "as seeing homo/heterosexual definition as an issue of active importance primarily for a small, distinct, relatively fixed homosexual minority" (1); on the other hand she refers to the universalizing view when she states "seeing it as an issue of continuing, determinative importance in the lives of people across the spectrum of sexualities" (1). She presents the distinction between the two perspectives and proclaims the need for a universalizing view for all sexualities. It can be deduced that there is a small minority with which homosexuality is associated in the minoritizing view, which demand assimilation into society and equal rights such as being accepted to politics or military. However, in the universalizing view, the queer views "societal norms as oppressive, sexophobic and in need of radical change" (Kemp 8). The highlighted feature of queer is thus its questioning and rejecting the social norms and existing attitudes towards queer identities. In addition, it is also stated that "before the term queer came in to common currency as a critical, affirmative and radical self-denomination as opposed to a term of abuse from others, the term 'lesbian and gay' stood for progressive and radical political engagement with changing the ways homosexuality was perceived and treated in heteronormative culture" (Kemp 10-1). Employing the word queer may have provided an umbrella concept since lesbian and gay do not suffice for the identities they aim to represent.

After discarding the minoritizing view of gay and lesbian theories, Queer theory establishes a more radical, non-essentialist, and universalizing view. As Salih asserts "queer is not concerned with definition, fixity or statis, but is transitive, multiple and anti-assimilationist" (*Judith* 9). Queer refers to a diversity, multiplicity

and variety, which underscores its deconstructive and anti-essentialist nature towards ideas of identity and sexuality. Queer does not only refer to the sexualities which are against heterosexuality but also it is "a practice or process of critique, an ongoing challenge to whatever stands as the norm" (Kemp 13). Ever since its inception, the word queer has developed theoretically and critically to represent various ideas and to criticize the normative tendency of the society regarding sexuality. This tendency could be followed in the discourse about sex and gender, two political and social constructs, which were formed and developed with societal norms throughout centuries.

In understanding the formation of identities in terms of sex, gender, and sexuality, Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality Volume I* proves to be useful as it provides the historical and social development, and discourse of the construction of sexual norms. Foucault presents a detailed data about how the discourses about sex were initiated by several institutions such as medicine and the Church throughout centuries starting from the late seventeenth century to the early twentieth century. Foucault refuses what he calls the "Repressive Hypothesis," the idea that sexuality was repressed and denied since the seventeenth century, and argues that discourses about sex were produced by modern society in various fields such as psychiatry, religion, and criminal justice. The discourse of sex, gender, and sexuality was mainly formed in these centuries though it seems to be constantly changing. For Foucault, the discursive functioning of sexuality by several institutions was "set out to formulate the uniform truth of sex" (*History* 69). Thus, there was apparently an essentialist search for knowledge of sex which will again serve to perpetuate heterosexual hegemony. It is also suggested that "these discourses ensured that almost every aspect of life was sexualized" (Purvis 429). Seeing sexuality as a common commodity rather than secrecy was thus attained by these institutions. Sexuality is turned into a clinical, objectively knowable entity.

In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault examines how the discourse of sexualities is organized, initiated, and succeeded in repressing sex in the West. He suggests that the seventeenth century bourgeois society ensured that no one spoke of sex by using an "interplay of prohibitions that referred back to another: instances of muteness which, by dint of saying nothing imposed silence, censorship" (17). However, later on, a production of discourses is encouraged which implied sex

must be spoken out. Foucault points to this "institutional incitement to speak about it […] through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail" (18) in the appearance of Catholic pastoral which promoted confession. Sex was the possession of the Church which claimed to own and control it through language. Not only by confessions to church but also by medical consultations were discourses of sex generated. Roy Hornsby argues that "sex became increasingly an object of administration and management through government inquiry" ("Foucault"). Foucault also emphasizes that not only the Church but also a variety of other institutions launched "a political, economic and technical incitement to talk about sex" at the beginning of the eighteenth century (*History* 23). By promoting speech about the most private aspect of individual life, sex was put through a period of neutralization to become a common thing of everyday life. Therefore, all these made it possible to control sex which was regulated through public discourses.

Repression was not initiated by means of silence; rather, it was started and accomplished by means of speech. Foucault states that "a whole machinery for speechifying, analyzing and investigating" (32) came into being in different institutions. Thus, it was possible to categorize sex, sexual desires and identities according to sexual preferences. In medicine, sexuality was classified according to "homosexual" and "normal" sexual object choices whereas in justice, certain rules and prohibitions concerning sexual perversions emerged. In this respect, Foucault clarifies that sex was seen as a danger, so it was necessary to control and regulate it. The aim for this body of control which increased during the nineteenth century was "to ensure population, to reproduce labor capacity, to perpetuate the form of social relations: in short, to constitute a sexuality that is economically useful and politically conservative" (Foucault 36-7). The social order of the heterosexual society was established within this perspective.

Butler agrees with Foucault's "regulatory ideal," yet she argues that "sex not only functions as a norm but is a part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power to produce the bodies it controls" (*Bodies* 1). Thus, it is clear that Butler suggests sex is materialized and controlled through repetitive practices, but it also produces the bodies or the subjects it controls. She claims that sex is itself a regulatory practice and she asserts that she disagrees with "Foucault's repressive

hypothesis as merely an instance of juridicial power, and argue that such an account does not address the ways in which repression operates as a modality of productive power" (*Bodies* 22). For Butler, "regulatory power" is repeated, thus performative, and constitutive of sex which is a part of that regulatory scheme and produces the bodies it materializes. Therefore, Foucault's regulatory ideal and Butler's idea of performative gender that repeats itself unite in such a way that sex becomes a social and political entity that is open to manipulation.

In this respect, sex became the subject of knowledge which had no limits of power, so sex was manipulated for the interests of heteronormative order which privileged opposite-sex choice as it was seen as "natural." In this respect, sex has been identified and defined in terms of "natural" and "unnatural" sexual desires. The emergence of "homosexual" as an "unnatural" category of sex is the result of that organization of knowledge. Ki Namaste suggests that "the proliferation of discourses on sexuality gave rise to the category of homosexual. The term gained currency in juridical and psychiatric fields of knowledge" (221). Therefore, the homosexual indeed first came into view as a medical illness or perversion. The term was later used as a manifestation of the homophobic attitude towards this "unnatural" category of people within the heteronormative order. However, a set of variations on sexuality such as bisexual, gay, and lesbian appeared as a challenge to the idea that connects sexuality to identity. Thus, while they divide people into categories of sex, all these terms accept and underscore the diversity of sexualities, and therefore, aim to overthrow the heteronormative hierarchy in social institutions. As Purvis claims, "queer deviations and perversions have been deployed to contest sex-gender norms, celebrate sexual difference and dislodge a heteronormative framework which assumed that perversion and inversion were illnesses which only non-heterosexual subjects experienced" (429). Challenging the heteronormative system, based on opposite-sex desire which is expected from "normal" male and female identities, required firstly the questioning of the relationship between sex and gender.

The concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality and the relationship between them have been questioned throughout decades most explicitly within the frame of feminist theories. Many theorists such as Monique Wittig argued against the conventional idea that one's sex and gender are coherent and that sex with which people are born should predetermine one's gender as either male or female. In

addition to being predeterministic, a bipolar division as male and female or an equation between sex and gender implies a prioritized heteronormativity. Indeed, there is an obvious opposing distinction between gender and sex that expels the direct relationship between the two. Judith Butler posits that "gender is culturally constructed. It is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex" (*Gender* 9-10). Thus, she suggests a discrepancy between the supposedly inherent sex and culturally constructed gender, and she implies that gender is unstable as it is performatively produced, which constitutes the primary discussion of Butlerian performativity theory. For Butler, gender is not determined by sex, and she emphasizes that "a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way" (*Gender* 10). Butler refutes the heterosexist premise that claims gender and sex are coherent. In heterosexist discourses, gender is the main constituent of sex in social discourse which supports heterosexuality. It is considered that either a man or a woman, a person is supposed to conform to his/her cultural gender norms according to his/her sex. Therefore, this heterosexual hierarchy excludes other possible identities by giving only female and male gender regulations.

On the other hand, Monique Wittig explains in "The Category of Sex" that "[T]he category of sex is the political category that founds society as heterosexual" (3). For Wittig, the categories of sex solely serve to the social dominance which aims at building heterosexual relationships. The categories of men and women are "submitted to the heterosexual economy" (Wittig 3). Therefore, she claims that there is no sex, and the category of sex is only the products of heterosexual society. Butler interprets Wittig's idea and states that "[f]or Wittig, there is no distinction between sex and gender, the category of sex is itself a gendered category fully politically invested, naturalized, but not natural" (*Gender* 143). It is implied that sexes are always already divided into genders as male and female for the continuation of the primary position of heterosexuality in society. Butler agrees with Wittig's idea that sex and gender are political categories; there is no difference between them in the conventional sense. Butler accepts this notion and excludes the necessity to divide people into categories of sex because "such a division suits the economic needs of heterosexuality and lends a naturalistic gloss to the institutions of heterosexuality" (143). Both Butler and Wittig claim that gender is built into sex by the conventional norms and needs of society, which offers the idea that both gender and sex are

merely constructed notions that are presented as natural. However, unlike Wittig, Butler also focuses on corporeality and considers body as a gendered identity. In her article "On Judith Butler and Performativity," Sara Salih proposes that "Butler has collapsed the sex/gender distinction in order to argue that there is no sex that is not always already gender. All bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence" (55). Since social existence is the key factor defining gender of a being and since a being without social existence is not possible, Butler suggests a coexistence between sex and gender. Thus, a sex is actually a gender in social context. However, she disproves this coexistence by referring to Herculine Barbin, a hermaphrodite, thus uncategorizable within gender binaries. Salih gives an account of Butler's idea of Herculine by stating that "Barbin's failure to conform to gender binarisms reveals the instability of those categories" (*Judith* 49). In this respect, it can be regarded that by giving Herculine as an example, Butler points at the constructedness of gender, which leads her to consider gender as performative. The basis of her argument behind "gender is not something one is, it is something one does, an act" (*Gender* 25) could be her understanding gender as "doing rather than being." Butler's theory of performativity emerges out of this idea of "doing" and provides the main argument of this thesis.

However, the interrelation between sex and gender is discussed differently by Eve Sedgwick. Sedgwick states that "the study of sexuality is not coextensive with the study of gender […] Sex is seen as the raw material on which is based the social construction of gender. Gender, then, is the far more elaborated, more fully and rigidly dichotomized social production and reproduction of male and female identities and behaviours in a cultural system" (27). Sex and gender are interrelated and coexistent; however, gender is built into sexuality. It can be claimed that gender which is created according to the sexual desires of identities enables the identity to have a sexuality, an identity. Within this context, Sedgwick implies that gender is used in heterosexual hegemony to maintain heterosexual relations since without the categories of female and male, the concepts of homosexuality and heterosexuality cannot exist. As Sedgwick posits, "the questions of gender and the question of sexuality, inextricable from one another, though they are in that each can be expressed only in the terms of the other, are nonetheless not the same question" (29). For her, these ideas are not separable from each other, but what they represent is very

different. Nevertheless, even though according to Salih "gender is radically independent of sex" (*Judith* 49), Butler's idea that "heterosexist culture establishes the coherence of those categories in order to perpetuate and maintain what 'compulsory heterosexuality'" (*Judith* 49) proves to be significant to be able follow the discourse and the relation between sex and gender. In this respect, the common idea Sedgwick and Butler share is that the formations of sex and gender norms only serve to the heterosexual normativity, which is aimed to be displaced by the theory of performativity, together with the fixity and stability of these categories. The fixity is challenged with the idea of fluid genders and sexualities. The inability of categorization discloses the fluidity and indeterminacy of gender and sexualities which is the main argument of Butlerian idea of performativity. This also forms the theoretical basis of this thesis.

Butler discusses the distinction and the correlation between sex and gender within the theory of performativity. In Queer theory, sexualities are seen as fluid and performative. It is suggested that sexuality is only formed by some repetitive actions that are socially attributed to gender binaries. As a result, sexualities fail to be categorized monolithically as they are fluid and tend to change according to social gender performance. Purvis maintains that in this theory, "sexualities are conceptualized in terms of fluidity, contradiction, indeterminacy," (444) which expresses the main hypothesis of Queer theory to dispossess the discursive and linguistic elements of heterosexuality that correlates sex to gender and identity in binarized perspectives.

Ki Namaste also suggests in his article entitled "Politics of Inside/Out" that Queer theory "examines the discursive production of homosexual subject-positions […] and interrogates the construction and regulations of borders in sexual identities, communities and politics" (226). In this respect, Namaste offers a poststructuralist Queer theory that questions the validity of the presumed significance of heterosexuality. As binary opposites, heterosexuality and homosexuality are obviously interrelated. However, the latter is seen as the periphery or the variant binary whereas the former is acknowledged as the center and the norm. In this respect, to contest this idea, although the opposite is assumed, homosexuality as a term was coined eleven years earlier than heterosexuality. Florence Tamagne claims that "In 1869, the Hungarian writer-journalist Karoly Maria Kertbeny apparently

used the term "homosexual" for the first time in an anonymous report calling for the abolition of criminal laws on "unnatural acts" " (18). However, heterosexuality was coined later than homosexuality. As Rictor Norton states in "1880, when a text written by Kertbeny was published in a popular-science book (*Entdeckung der Seele*) by a zoologist and anthropologist at the University of Stuttgart, Gustav Jaeger, the word *Heterosexualität* first appeared. Thus heterosexuals were invented eleven years later than homosexuals" (Norton, no pag.). As such, the alleged "superiority" of heterosexuality is questioned and the subversion of the previous relationship between these terms is ensured within Queer theory. From a poststructuralist perspective, the supposed supremacy of heterosexuality can be preserved only by its dependence upon homosexuality. Therefore, the "unprivileged" binary homosexual can gain value over heterosexual by undermining the supposed dependence upon the heterosexual. For Namaste, since the articulation of homosexuality will only strengthen the power of heterosexuality, "the most effective sites of resistance are those created by people who refuse both options" (230). Hence, the refusal of any sexual determinacy is the central method of struggle in Queer theory against the supposed supremacy of heterosexual order.

Since sex is indeterminate and fluid, identities cannot and should not be classified into categories according to a supposed hierarchy. The most important aspect of this theory is, then, it overthrows all and any categories of sex, gender, and identity since developing a lesbian or a gay theory will refute and deceive itself from within. Queer theorists avoid adopting a theory which is based upon a lesbian or a gay identity or a sexuality as it will recreate a binarized or categorized ideology which will start another intellectual crisis. Instead, they do not accept the limited categorization of sexuality and celebrate diverse sexualities. Brent Pickett confirms this argument and states that by adopting such a sexuality theory "it appeared even though the goal was to critique a heterosexist regime for its exclusion and marginalization of those whose sexuality is different, any specific or "essentialist" account of gay or lesbian sexuality had the same effect" ("Homosexuality"). In order to avoid such drawbacks, Queer theory focuses on diverse sexualities. To displace homophobic thought, queer criticism not only concentrates on texts that reflect the heteronormative attitude by challenging and subverting the regulations but also

bolsters the texts and ideas that fight against the norms of categorization of sexualities.

One of the major ideas that support the notion of fluidity and variety of sexualities in Queer theory is performativity. The concept of gender performativity was coined by Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble*. With this term, she describes gender as the result of repetitive acts that establish a supposed true gender. Since gender is fluid and cannot be determined or defined according to one's sex, Butler suggests that "the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced […] Gender proves to be performative, that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be" (33). Hence, the underscored idea is that there is no naturally existing gender, but it is only produced by means of some performative acts that are regularized by gender coherence. The repetition of certain acts brings about the labeling identity as either a he or a she, which leads to formation of sexual identities. Furthermore, Butler states that "[g]ender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (44). Thus, repetition of acts that are socially and politically attributed to one of the concerned binary opposites results in defining a gender. Butler argues that the repetitive acts that form the gender or the sexuality in heteronormative norms are stylized and performed. This repetition of performative acts suggests the idea behind the fluidity of sexuality, and it indicates that there is no sexuality before actions. In other words, there is no performer behind the performance. Rather, it is the acts in the performance that defines the performer as a sexual identity. For this reason, the performance of gender implies that gender regulations and the binarized idea of gender are subverted by these recurring acts. With all these assertions, Butler underscores the power of performance on identity. She states that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results" (25). Therefore, performativity constitutes identity instead of identity constructing a certain series of performances.

It is also essential to know, however, that a voluntary act of choosing a gender is not implied here. The subject does not intentionally perform a gender; rather, the repeated actions performed by the subject create the gender of the subject. For Butler, performativity "consists in a reiteration of norms which precede,

constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer's will or choice" (*Bodies* 234). It is not an action of choice by the performer. Instead, it exceeds the performer's preference, and the repetition forms the identity of the subject. Salih also notes the involuntary or unconscious act of performing in Butler's argument and contends that "Butler is not suggesting that subject is free to choose which gender she or he is going to enact" (56). The regulatory frame decides upon the action that the subject portrays. Thus, one's gender is predetermined by the society in which he or she lives. Salih maintains that "gender acts are not performed by the subject but they performatively constitute a subject that is the effect of discourse rather than cause of it" (57). The statement once again points at the inextricable relationship between the gendered body and acts that stylize it. In this respect, the prospect of a true or authentic gender is refuted since gender is seen as the produced effect of discourse. In a similar vein, Amy Hollywood also points at the same misconception of gender performance as a voluntary action, and she states that "[o]ne problem with the term performativity, as Butler shows in *BTM* [*Bodies that Matter*] and *ES* [*Excitable Speech*], is the implication, when the theatrical meaning of the term comes to the fore, that the subject intentionally performs" (270). However, the performativity that is analyzed in this thesis is discussed through the idea that because gender is performative, the performativity itself constitutes the performer in terms of sexuality. The role of repetition in performativity constitutes meaning through various sexuality performances. Thus, the subjects are aware of the power of the performativity of gender and use it as a tool for subverting and resisting the heterosexual dominance. On the other hand, in her article "Agency, Performativity and the Feminist Subject" Saba Mahmood claims that "Butler's conception of performativity is also at the core of her theory of agency; she claims that the iterable and repetitive character of the performatives makes the structure of norms vulnerable and unstable because the reiteration may fail, be resignified or be reappropriated for purposes other than the consolidation of norms" (200). Therefore, the theory of performativity indicates the problems and drawbacks of the norms and the possibilities of undoing the normative practices related to gender and sexuality. In this problematization, drag performance stands out as an important tool to point at the fluidity of gender identity.

Drag can be considered as a parody of conventional genders. It stands out as a significant means of laying bare their constructedness. Indeed, Butler puts forward the example of drag as a parodic stylization of gender to highlight its imitative aspect. Drag artists put on either a male or female impersonation and perform a gender based on the actions that are supposedly inscribed on that gender. Butler emphasizes the imitation of gender acts by drag artists and she asserts "[i]n imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself- as well as its contingency" (*Gender* 137). That gender is a repetition of acts exposes its fluidity and performativity, which also hints that there cannot be a natural, true, or authentic gender. Salih also claims that "if gender is a regulated process of repetition taking place in language, then it will be possible to repeat one's gender differently as drag artists do" (58). The performer's identity is maintained in relation to the performed gender, which also supposes gender as a copy of copy. This leads to the constructedness of gender and its subversive effect on heterosexual hegemony.

However, in *Bodies*, Butler makes clear that she does not imply "a proliferation of drag performances as a way of subverting dominant gender norms," (*Bodies* 125) which was proposed by some readers of *Gender Trouble*[3]. For Butler, drag is an instrument to emphasize the constructedness of gender norms. It reproduces and reveals the instability of the gender and sexuality system. It is an ambivalent idea which could be used both to subvert and reflect the heterosexual idealizations of gender. She states "drag may well be used in the service of both denaturalization and reidealization of hyperbolic heterosexual gender norms" (*Bodies* 125). Through the idea of drag, it is implied that it is not only drag that is regarded as the imitation of an "original" gender, but imitation is at the centre of idealization of heterosexuality. Butler argues for the subversive nature of drag to expose the "imitative structure by which hegemonic gender is itself produced and disputes heterosexuality's claim on naturalness and originality" (*Bodies* 125). Since gender is a construct, the performative quality is used to subvert heterosexual formation of identities. Drag artists imitate and parody the heterosexual claim of originality in order to subvert and reflect the nature of gender and sexuality. Drag is used to destabilize and question the gender formations with which heterosexual hegemony operates. Moreover, Salih argues that "it must be possible to act that gender in ways which will draw attention to the constructedness of heterosexual identities that may

have a vested interest in presenting themselves as essential and natural so that it would be true to say that all gender is a form of parody" (57). In this respect, the idea of gender as a form of parody could reveal the imitative nature of gender and subvert the presumed heterosexist "superiority."

In the traditional framework, there is a tendency to ignore or exclude the "homosexual" population from society because they are considered to have no categories of sex. Butler argues in "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" that "lesbians and gay men have been traditionally designated as impossible identities, errors of classification, unnatural disasters within juridico-medical discourses" (309). Thus, as they are regarded as "failures;" they are ignored or excluded from society. Butler asserts that "the oppression works through the production of a domain of unthinkability and unnameability" ("Imitation" 312). The discursive production of an ambiguous identity, which is determined by sexual desire of the subject, results in the exclusion of the identity from the social context. In this respect, the connection between sexuality and identity is explored to resolve the issues which seem to indicate an identity by using such terms as lesbian and gay. Butler also asserts that there are "intelligible genders that maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice and desire" (*Gender* 23). Gay/ lesbian disturbs the conventionand are thus unintelligible. It can be deduced that the people who are not coherent and continuous are seen as "failures" as they fail to conform to the norms of "intelligibility." It is the regulation of heterosexual order that produce these identities. Since "heterosexuality" is claimed to be the universal "truth of sex," the sexuality of the "homosexual" is seen as the dominant key figure to define and constitute a "failing" identity. Within this prospect, Butler quotes from Wittig "sex is a category produced and circulated by the system of compulsory heterosexuality in an effort to restrict the production of identities along the axis of heterosexual desire" (*Gender* 34). Therefore, the system that decides upon identity turns out to be the regulatory practices of discursive elements. In accordance with this idea, sexuality is claimed to qualify people with "intelligible" or "unintelligible" identities. Thus, if the sexuality of a person is defined as "unintelligible," his/her social existence also becomes unintelligible: they are deprived of a proper social identity or recognition.

To sum up, gender is a social and cultural product which heterosexual hegemony creates to maintain the reproductive continuity of social order; therefore,

sex is determined and defined by means of gender distinction. Queer theory develops a subversive philosophy against the heterosexist formation of gender and identities. It criticizes the fixity of genders by arguing for the indeterminacy of sexualities. In this respect, Queer theory challenges heterosexist perspective of sex, gender, and sexuality by showing how sex and gender are constructed, and claiming that sexuality is not limited to binarized gender formations. The perception of sexualities in Queer theory defies a uniform idea of sex. Rather, it celebrates the fluidity and variety of sexes. A queer analysis or an antihomophobic inquiry refuses the essentialist search for a "truth of sex" and attempts to subvert the view that tends to categorize sex, gender, and identity according to the heterosexual norms. Therefore, Queer theory focuses on texts that give voice to queer identities and demonstrate the discursive problems they encounter within the conventional framework of society. Queer identities refer to the personalities that do not conform to heterosexual normativity, and are identified as unnatural, erring or not normal. Hence, Queer theory tries to overthrow the homophobic inclinations, and it challenges heterosexual perspective which disregards the existence of "queer" sexualities in society. According to Tony Purvis, "[q]ueer readings complement lesbian and gay hermeneutics and queering of literary movements and genres displaces practices which seek to preserve an uncontaminated literary and critical past" (444). Since one of its main objectives is to separate sex from gender and identity, which are constituted by the matrix of heterosexuality, Queer theory aims to develop a queer criticism of canonical texts as well as contemporary ones by pointing out the absence or silence of various sexualities. Thus, by creating awareness, Queer theory and criticism demand the acceptance of sexualities in the plural.

As divergent sexualities that are otherised and silenced by the heteronormativity could not be put into binary opposites of heterosexuality and homosexuality, they are seen as unintelligible identities. However, Queer theory defies this idea and resists the social and political production of gender. Butler argues that "a lesbian is not a woman, because she is not a binary of man. A lesbian transcends the binary between woman and man; a lesbian is neither a man nor a woman. But further, a lesbian has no sex; she is beyond the categories of sex" (*Gender* 144). Thus, binary formations of gender fall short in explaining queer identities. The assumption is that the queer have no category of sex. They are

excluded as they cannot be identified as a sexual identity, and they are not placed within the conventional gender norms. In this respect, they are ignored to secure heterosexuality. In the frame of feminist inquiry, Wittig believes in the need "to overthrow both the category of sex and the system of compulsory heterosexuality" which oppress women, lesbians, and gay men (147). The compulsory heterosexuality that Wittig mentions maintains a homophobic opinion towards the "queer" identities which could not be categorized as either male or female as they do not conform to heterosexuality. Thus, Queer theory takes an opposite stance to this homophobic perception. Therefore, the antihomophobic inquiry of Queer theory establishes in its argument the same idea of the downfall of heterosexual society by overthrowing the category of sex and gender construction. That gender is a cultural product may be obvious. However, the fact that gender is specified according to sex is problematized and aimed to be dismantled in this theory.

This problematization of the binary understanding of gender is most evident in Sarah Waters' *Tipping the Velvet* and Michel Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White*. Both of these novels are set in Victorian London although their authors are contemporary ones. This thesis analyzes *Tipping the Velvet* and *The Crimson Petal and the White* in terms of their protagonists' performative acts with which they aim for self-realization and liberating their "closeted" sexuality and gender. In both novels, the protagonists' sexual identities are only realized through performativity. Nancy in *Tipping* changes her gender by changing her appearance and the way she acts several times throughout the story only to find her "true" identity in the end, which denotes that she indeed discovers the strength of performance in social discourse and plays with the idea of performativity. While at the beginning of the novel she introduces herself as an oyster girl who works in her family's oyster restaurant and lives with her family unaware of her sexual desires; for instance, upon meeting Kitty and discovering her theatrical skills, she becomes a male impersonator in London theatres. She likes the idea of theatricality of sexualities and decides to perform identities considering the city as a stage. Thus, she becomes a rent boy who sexually fulfills other men's desires for money. Later on, she turns into a housewife cleaning house and looking after children. With every sexual identity she performs, she discovers the power of performance. Through imitation and acting, she realizes the nature of gender performativity. After comprehending the fluidity of sexuality,

her queer identity comes out, and eventually she liberates her sexuality. Nancy gains her freedom from heterosexuality and asserts her identity as a "came-out" lesbian through acting different sexualities in different spaces.

Performativity observed in Michel Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White*, on the other hand, operates differently. The main character, Sugar, who is a prostitute, defies conventional Victorian gender roles as she displays very "male" characteristics throughout the novel. The traits of conventional Victorian women are depicted by the foil character Agnes, who is William Rackham's wife and she is presented as an angel in the house. Agnes is interested in fashion, music, and social events. She seems devoid of sexual desires and she can be considered as an innocent woman compared to Sugar's experience and knowledge about sexual desires as a prostitute. On the other hand, when Sugar is analyzed, her identity lacks the typical characteristics of a Victorian woman such as being interested in themes like music, art, or fashion. Instead, she has a sharp intellect and a keen eye for business and trade, all of which are qualities attributed to men in the Victorian setting. Her intellect, desire to learn, and her interest in education and business remind of Victorian male attitudes. The fact that she writes a horror novel also adds to her masculine traits since writing as an act has always been perceived to belong to males. These traits of Sugar are repetitively seen as "queer," which is a term used frequently to describe Sugar's personality and habits, by the other "conventional" Victorians in the novel.

Moreover, Sugar possesses physical features that clash with the presumed beauty standards of the time. She has a skin condition which makes her look almost unappealing. In other words, she is the opposite of a delicate, fair maiden that men lust after. Her unconventional look is one of the reasons for her defiance against the strict rules of Victorian society. However, the idea of performativity prevails in Sugar's ability to perform just the opposite of what she really thinks and intends to do, which is made clear to the reader by the narrator of the story. For her own economic needs and for a safer future, she pretends to be "an angel in the house" changing her interests and actions after becoming William's mistress and later governess of Sophie who is William's daughter. She enacts "female" roles to climb up the social ladder and gain voice and visibility. She adapts herself to what is expected of her as a governess; she stylizes the way she behaves and reconstructs an

identity to act in the presence of William and Sophie. She acts submissively and benevolently towards William. In addition, she looks after Sophie and teaches her several subjects like geography and history. However, the subjects she teaches are not considered to be a necessary and relevant part of a woman's education, which denotes her way of challenging regulations determining the gender roles and interests attributed to genders. At the beginning of the novel she is portrayed as an enigmatic prostitute having male interests and attitudes, yet her repetitive social acts turn her into an affectionate governess that is an enactment of a conventional female character. Thus, her performance on gender denotes that performativity dominates and assists Sugar's maturation process of challenging gender restrictions.

As such, this thesis has an Introduction, two Chapters, and a Conclusion. The Introduction provides a theoretical and historical framework on how Queer theory has developed critically and gives information about how performativity subverts gender regulations. Chapter I focuses on Sarah Waters' *Tipping the Velvet* and how the writer relates to performativity by the protagonist Nancy both in theatres and the city. In Chapter II, Michel Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White* is analyzed through how its protagonist Sugar subverts Victorian conventions and flees from heteropatriarchal society with the use of performativity. In the Conclusion, the uses of performativity of sexuality and gender are compared to reveal the fluid nature of the protagonists' gender and sexuality. Finally, this thesis concludes that although both Nancy and Sugar represent Victorian characters that are on the periphery, they succeed to gain their sexual identity after discovering the power of performativity and using it as an instrument in various spaces so as to displace the heteropatriarchal norms and become independent and self-confident identities in society.

CHAPTER I

PERFORMATIVITY OF SEXUALITY IN SARAH WATERS' *TIPPING THE VELVET*

1.1 SARAH WATERS' BIOGRAPHY

Born in Wales in 1966, Sarah Waters is a contemporary British novelist, essayist, and lecturer. She entered the literary arena with the publication of her first novel *Tipping the Velvet* in 1998. Her other novels are *Affinity* (1999), *Fingersmith* (2002), *The Nightwatch* (2006), *The Little Stranger* (2009), and *The Paying Guests (*2014).[4] Waters received her PhD from Queen Mary University of London on lesbian and gay historical fiction entitled "Wolfskins and Togas: Lesbian and Gay Historical Fictions, 1870 to the Present" and has several articles on gender, sexuality, and history. She has also worked as an associate lecturer in the Open University. With her first novel *Tipping*, Waters won The Betty Trask Award (1999), Mail on Sunday/John Llewellyn Rhys Prize (1999), Lambda Literary Award for Fiction (2000), and it was chosen as Library Journal's Best Book of the Year, and New York Times Notable Book of the Year in 1999. *Tipping* was also shortlisted for Ferro-Grumley Award for Lesbian and Gay Fiction (2000). Waters won American Library Association GLBT Roundtable Book Award and Ferro-Grumley Award for Lesbian and Gay Fiction, Somerset Maugham Award, Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award in 2000 with her second novel *Affinity*. *Affinity* was also shortlisted for Arts Council of Wales Book of the Year Award, Lambda Literary Award for Fiction and Mail on Sunday/John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in 2000. In addition, Sarah Waters was chosen British Book Awards Author of the Year (2002) and won Crime Writers' Association Ellis Peters Historical Dagger (2002) with *Fingersmith*. The same book was shortlisted for Man Booker Prize for Fiction, Orange Prize for Fiction in 2002. Her next novel The *Nightwatch* was shortlisted for Man Booker Prize (2002), Orange Prize for Fiction (2006), British Book Awards Book of the Year (2006) and James Tait Black Memorial Prize (2007). With the publication of *The Little Stranger*, Waters won South Bank Show Literature Award, Waterstone Author of the Year

Award, and was also shortlisted for Man Booker Prize for Fiction (2009). Her last novel, *The Paying Guests* was shortlisted for the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction. Waters was included in *Granta* "Best of Young British Novelists" in 2003. Besides, Sarah Waters has found popularity with the TV adaptations of her four novels, *Tipping the Velvet*, *Affinity*, *Fingersmith*, and *The Nightwatch* either as mini-series or feature films.

Waters is regarded as "a lesbian writer" since she has mainly produced novels concerning lesbian protagonists and lesbian love with the exception of *The Little Stranger*. In an interview with Kirstie McCrum, she accepts that label and asserts that "it's been such a part of my project to take on things like the Victorian period and to inject lesbianism into it and see what happens. I've done so much to label myself a lesbian writer" ("On Being"). As it can be understood, her aim was to produce lesbian works and she embraces the lesbian tag unlike other lesbian writers like Jeanette Winterson, who does not want to be called lesbian.[5] Waters does not consider being a lesbian writer could be a hindrance to her authorship. She states in her own words that "I'm writing with a clear lesbian agenda in the novels[…] That's how it is in my life" (*LitLovers* n. pag.). In this respect, her own sexual orientation had an important role in her authorship and success as a writer of lesbian novels. In addition, she emphasizes her identity as a lesbian for the sake of creating a lesbian readership and a lesbian canon.

As a lesbian writer who writes about lesbian experiences, it can be deduced that Sarah Waters aims to produce a lesbian canon. Bonnie Zimmerman asserts that "[t]he establishment of a literary tradition, a canon, has been the primary task of critics writing from a lesbian feminist perspective" (2353). This quest of creating lesbian tradition is observable in her fiction. As she accepts being a writer of lesbian fiction, it is possible to deduce she writes to maintain a collection of lesbian works. Accordingly, Paulina Palmer states that "Waters consciously writes in relation to a lesbian canon, a lesbian tradition and connects with the interests of her lesbian readership" ("Lesbian Reading" 70). Hence, Sarah Waters' objective in her first novel *Tipping the Velvet* becomes more obvious. She recreates a Victorian era where same-sex relationships are rendered visible. As Palmer posits, Waters "makes an imaginative attempt to recreate them in her novels" (70). With this novel, another step has been taken to create a lesbian canon in which lesbian love is composed and

the consciousness of their existence is promoted in the struggle of making a lesbian tradition in literature. Moreover, the author's intention for a lesbian readership in *Tipping* is also mentioned by the author herself and other critics. In the interview by Lucie Armitt, Waters asserts "if I'm imagining a reader at all, it is somebody with a similar collection of interests to me. I'm imagining a reader who will get the lesbian stuff" (117). Waters locates her own interests in her stories, so it is understood that her intended reader is one that has similar interests with her, one that will understand and empathize with the lesbian experience in the story.

Not only Waters' sexual orientation but also her academic upbringing has affected her fiction. Since she had her PhD on lesbian and gay historical fiction (*Wolfskins*), it is obvious that she employs her academic knowledge of the period in her novels. Discussions of gender and sexuality theories and characteristics of Queer theory are present in her novels. Besides an overt lesbian focus, Waters works within a Neo-Victorian framework in her three novels, *Tipping the Velvet*, *Fingersmith*, and *Affinity*. Tom Wright emphasizes the reason behind her success when he states that "Waters' early popularity was due in part to this risqué subject matter, combined with the thrilling menace of her historical settings" ("Literature " n. pag.). Thus, not only the lesbian theme which she presents explicitly, but also the Victorian time period she integrates in her novels enabled her success and popularity as a writer. In her fiction, Victorian period is depicted with an unconventional and bold perspective. Her first three novels of Sarah Waters feature a lesbian theme with an appropriation of Victorian novel characteristics, and many critics acknowledge Waters' success in integrating the lesbian theme in the Victorian period and creating a lesbian historical fiction. Abigail Dennis suggests that "her work is also increasingly of interest to scholars intrigued by the skilful appropriation of Victorian plotting and stylistic techniques, combined with embedded references to twentieth-century literary, cultural, and Queer theory – hardly surprising from an author who holds a PhD in English Literature from Queen Mary, University of London" ("Ladies in Peril" 42). Upon completing her Ph.D. dissertation, Sarah Waters began writing *Tipping*, which is "a picaresque adventure based around Victorian music hall, with a lesbian love story at its centre" ("Literature Matters" n. pag.). With an emphasis on lesbian love, she brought a new perspective to historical fiction. *Tipping* is regarded as the beginning of a new genre both thematically and critically because it is accepted as a

bold "lesbian romp" with a deliberate aim to integrate lesbian agenda into Victorian past. Kaye Mitchell asserts in *Sarah Waters: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* that "Waters' novels are ripe for critical analysis because of their ambitious and insightful use of historical material and popular genres; they touch on topical themes of history, memory, trauma, sexuality, gender and class" (5-6). Mitchell emphasizes Waters' use of history in creating a lesbian novel and inventing lesbian histories in this way by creating a mixture of those themes which "are utterly intertwined and utterly to the fore in all of Waters' fiction but her handling of these topics is always alert to contradiction, ambiguity and irresolution" (11). In this respect, Waters' novels are considered unconventional not only because of their subject matter but also the way the writer presents these themes seem to be open to discussion and suggest ambiguity.

The fact that Waters produced mainly Neo-Victorian novels is highlighted by several critics. Tom Wright, for example, resembles characters in Waters' early work (*Tipping* and *Fingersmith*) to Dickensian characters such as thieves, rent boys, prisoners with a slight move towards lesbians ("Literature" n. pag.). This important thematic similarity is also a proof to writer's interest and the novels' relations to Neo-Victorian fiction. However, handling of Victorian themes and characters differ from Dickens. Waters reappropriates these characters and deals with politically or socially silenced characters such as lesbians or prostitutes more. Wright states that Waters "continues to bring literary power and seriousness to the British historical novel, and suggest ways in which fiction can help re-imagine and revitalise a sense of a nation's own hidden histories" ("Literature" n. pag.). Waters is indeed an accepted writer of lesbian literature who brought a "queer" past into contemporary British novels with a rare frankness. The novelist Philip Hensher asserts that Waters has made "a great link between the secrecy of queer sexualities and secrets and revelations of the Gothic tradition" ("What Lies" n pag.). Thus, the writer's success in combining queer sexualities with Gothic qualities in Victorian period had a big effect on her mainstream popularity. On the other hand, in another article Hensher states that

> [i]n three brilliant novels, Waters turned the British belle epoque on its head, exploring Victorian worlds the Victorians never got around to writing about. One of the slightly infuriating things for any reader of

> Victorian fiction is that women in real life had, as it were, a far greater range of plot options than women characters in fiction of the time. ("Smoother" n pag.)

In this respect, reviews on Waters' generally focus on the thematic singularity and the writer's ability to blend a "bawdy" theme with the Victorian "prudishness" in a fun realistic way. It can be deduced that Waters' focus on lesbianism and the positioning of such a taboo theme in Victorian age results from her aim to create a lesbian canon in Neo-Victorian context, and makes her a writer of singular vision that mainly focuses on a lesbian re-existence in the Victorian period.

1.2 *TIPPING* AND THE THEORY OF PERFORMATIVITY

Set in the late 1890s London, *Tipping the Velvet* centers on its protagonist Nancy Astley's journey towards her rising awareness of sexuality. The novel begins in Whitstable where Nancy and her family run an oyster parlour. Here, she is a "regular" oyster girl who is not conscious of her "queer" desires yet. However, when she meets Kitty Butler who works as a male impersonator in a music hall, Nancy's regular life changes once and for all. Nancy becomes aware of her "homosexuality" once they form an intimate relationship. Firstly, she works as Kitty's dresser but later she joins Kitty in her act in male disguise, which eventually contributes much to her self-realization of her sexual identity. Their lesbian relationship comes to an end since Kitty decides to get married to their manager Walter. Kitty does not want to lose her job and fame, and chooses a "heterosexual" marriage to have a secure place in society. After some time of isolation from society, frustrated and aware of the power of disguise, Nancy decides to have a career as a cross-dressed rent boy to make some money, which unravels her fluid and instable gender identity. She works in the streets discovering the freedom cross-dressing lends her. Later, she is taken as a pleasure slave by a wealthy woman, Diana Lethaby, who manipulates Nancy for her own "queer" desires. In Diana's house and small lesbian community called The Cavendish Club, Nancy lives as a boy and performs for the lesbian ladies for some time. However, upon being discovered to have a relationship with the housemaid Zena, Nancy is thrown out of Diana's house. Eventually, so miserable and alone, Nancy finds Florence whom she has met when she works as a rentboy. Nancy helps Florence and her brother for the housework and looking after Florence's adopted

baby and stays with them. Finally finding out more about her sexuality, she develops a confidently "out" lesbian relationship with Florence in the end, which she finds herself the most comfortable in a sexuality which she developed by means of fluidity and performativity.

The significance of *Tipping the Velvet* is its subsequent publication to the emergence of Queer theory and its links to Judith Butler's theory of performativity. Kaye Mitchell asserts that "[t]he publication of *Tipping the Velvet* coincided with the rise of Queer theory within academy and Judith Butler's notion of performativity is a crucial reference point for critical readings of Waters' early work" (8). It is vital to see that the way *Tipping's* main theme is constructed overlaps with the ideas of performance and performativity of gender with regard to Nancy's shifting identity in several different places. From the music hall to streets of London, then to a wealthy lady's mansion and her secret community and at last the socialist meeting, Nancy chooses to perform her fluid sexuality and identity like a performing actor. Firstly acting as a male impersonator, Nancy performs in a music hall. Later, while working in the streets as a rent boy, she is in a male disguise and she regards the streets as a theatre stage and her customers as audience. Hence, wherever she lives, she considers that she is acting repeatedly, which draws the attention to Butler's idea of theatricality and performativity of gender. In her MA thesis, Funda Yavaş also claims that "Butler's gender performativity is used to explore how Nancy finds her queer identity through on and off stage performances" (3). Nancy discovers the constructed binaries of gender and the roles she performs has a performative effect on her queer identity. In this sense, *Tipping* can be claimed to cover the essential themes of fluidity of identities, performativity of gender, the disclosure of the heterosexism of the society, and its emphasis on the diversity of sexualities that are apparent in Victorian society which is known for its strict social rules.

With regard to the plot and setting of the novel, sexual diversity and fluid identities are emphasized and presented throughout *Tipping*. The ideas and the concerns of the text intersect with those of Queer theory. The objective of this theory is to separate sex from gender and identity which are constituted by the matrix of heterosexuality. In parallel with this, many sexual identities are seen as diverse, fluid and performative. In this respect, Tony Purvis states that "sexualities are conceptualized in terms of fluidity, contradiction, indeterminacy," (444) which

expresses the main hypothesis to dispossess the discursive and linguistic elements of heterosexuality that correlates sex to gender and identity in binarized perspectives. Thus, it is possible to claim that *Tipping* establishes and recreates many fluid and diverse sexualities in its fictional Victorian England, through which the concept of "true" sexuality is challenged and the existence of sexual variety in society is emphasized.

"Homosexual" desires and identities among public are revealed once the relationship between Kitty and Nancy starts. When Nancy becomes a fan of Kitty, her desire for Kitty is stimulated and it is only then she realizes other female fans and performers, and their desire for the same sex. Therefore, it is not only Kitty and Nancy that *Tipping* puts forward as the example of same sex love. After joining Kitty in her act, Nancy likes the idea that her girl fans look at her just like she looked at Kitty previously. She states that "what astonished and thrilled me now was the thought that girls might look at me… one or two female hearts beat exclusively for me" (*Tipping* 130). She is rather happy to think and see that there are many others like her. Accordingly, the sexual desire and love towards the same sex are depicted among both males and females through the novel. Primarily, it is evident between the other actors and dancers, so Nancy realizes that other people are also like them in their "queer" relationship. Nancy says "one night in the change room of a theatre we met a pair of women - a comic singer and her dresser - who, I thought, were rather like ourselves" (*Tipping* 131). Although Kitty never likes the idea that they resemble the "toms" (i.e. lesbians/prostitutes) to whom Nancy refers, Nancy always enjoys the existence of them and becomes more confident in her love for Kitty. Later, when she disguises herself as a boy and becomes a rent boy, she becomes aware of the gay girls in London. She states "[t]he gay girls in Haymarket, I believe, transformed themselves in the public lavatories of Piccadilly" (*Tipping* 190). Nancy's different genders provide her the possibility of seeing the diversity in the city. She becomes aware of the various sexualities in London which is presented as a multicultural and diverse city. In this respect, a gay life is depicted in London and Nancy becomes more conscious of this variety as she experiences and enacts different genders.

The same-sex desire is not only observed through female characters in the novel but also homosexuality among men is mentioned during Nancy's career as a rent boy. Since she is recognized as a boy, her male customers constitute the proof of

homosexual diversity among men which is revealed only in secret places. When she becomes a rent boy, she becomes the sexual object of male customers. She talks about a nicely clothed gentleman courting her when she is disguised in a guardsman's uniform. In this part of her life, various male characters desire Nancy without knowing that she is a cross-dressed boy. Therefore, the existence of the variety of sexualities is underlined.

As a city of diverse cultures and classes, London provides the suitable location to inhabit diverse sexualities. The variety is explicitly voiced by Nancy. Upon observing the people out on the streets of London, Nancy states that "Variety! I had looked variety, brought together in one extraordinary place. I had seen rich and poor, splendid and squalid, white man and black man, all bustling side by side, I had seen them make a harmonious whole, and been thrilled to think I was about to find my own particular place in it, as Kitty's friend" (198). The variety that Nancy observes consists of different classes and races, yet lacks the existence of different sexualities. Thus, she is not able to find her place in society as a "lesbian." She is aware that people from various backgrounds can coexist harmoniously. Nancy's search for a harmonious place to live in seems in parallel with Waters' desire for all sexualities to exist side by side. In an interview, Waters accepts that she intentionally chose London to be able to locate gay people in it: "London seemed to me the best place to go to perhaps slightly reinvent yourself, or to find communities of people- in my case, gay people- that you could not find at home" ("Interview" 119). Therefore, Waters makes use of the existence of the multicultural variety of many ideas in London. It is clear that for Waters London is the perfect location to represent the existence of various and diverse sexualities. Moreover, she wishes for a peaceful place where all "homosexuals" and "heterosexuals" can live together with no conflict. To illustrate the peaceful relationship in society, the friendship between Nancy and Alice may be taken as an example. Alice is a girlish boy or a mary-anne, who is depicted as a transvestite. He is dressed as a girl; he earns money by having intercourse with other men. All the "queer" characters like Alice respect each other, and they want to live together peacefully, which possibly reflects Waters' desire for a harmonious variety.

Diversity is only one of the many issues concerning the performativity of genders in *Tipping*. The fluidity of sexual identities is also another central topic

through which Butlerian concepts of gender trouble and indeterminate sexualities are presented. As Judith Butler argues, “sex qualifies the human as a necessary attribute. But sex does not cause gender, and gender cannot be understood to reflect or express sex” (*Gender* 142). Since any human is a sexed being, sex is an important element. However, establishing somebody’s gender according to a sex is problematized in Queer theory. Sex and gender do not have a causal relationship. Therefore, gender cannot be the result of a sex, and queer theorists consider gender to be fluid and independent of someone’s sex. Likewise, it is clear that there is no single or determined gender or sexuality which is attributed to Nancy throughout *Tipping*. As the protagonist, Nancy switches from one gender to another in various phases of her life. From the very beginning of the novel, the notion of gender fluidity is underlined with the concept of the hermaphrodite fish oyster. Indeed, the choice of Nancy’s beginnings at anoyster house is a deliberate one. Nancy’s father explains the issue as follows: “For the oyster, you see, is what you might call a real queer fish- now a he, now a she, as quite takes its fancy. A regular morphodite, in fact!” (*Tipping* 51). He refers to hermaphrodite to inform about the fluid sexuality of the animal. There is no definite gender, as a male or female, that can be attuned to the oyster. Metaphorically, Nancy becomes the oyster as she changes her sexuality from a man to a woman. Emily Jeremiah, likewise, posits that “*Tipping*’s interest in gender and sexuality is signaled early on by detail of the oysters. Already, then, a challenge to the boundaries between male and female is posed” (136). For this reason, the image of sexless oyster often appears in the novel to remind this notion of fluidity of gender and sexuality for people.

Moreover, it is through Nancy and her shifting sexuality that the major image of multiple sexualities occurs. In one part of her life, she is an oyster-girl, and then she becomes a male impersonator. After that, she appears as a rentboy, later she becomes a housewife doing housework in Florence’s house. All her travel from one sexuality to another reveals her unsteady and fluid position in gender norms. The first time when she becomes a boy in disguise for the music hall, she is regarded as “too boyish, too real” by the other people, which also suggests that it is impossible to define a gender of a person from appearance. Another example where gender trouble is implied is when Nancy discovers the hyphenated term on the door of a house “Respectible Lady Seeks Fe -Male Lodger” (*Tipping* 207). Nancy is quite conscious

of her shifting and fluid identity and accepts it when she declares “I saw myself in it - in the hyphen” (207). She cannot be classified as a female or a male; she is rather in-between like the hyphen. There is a certain problematization of gender difference, which eventually leads to the idea that there is no definite gender, and gender and sexuality are fluid and changeable. In another interview, Sarah Waters also states that “gender’s never fixed and how we feel about women changes all the time, and how we feel about sex and sexuality and class, these things change all the time” (Dennis 48). Likewise, *Tipping* presents all these examples with the aim of challenging the heterosexist claim that there is an explicit border between female and male. As an important feature which can be observed in lesbian novels, gender is presented as ambiguous and inconsistent in *Tipping*. Zimmerman argues that “[l]esbian literature, as lesbian culture in general, is particularly flexible on issues of gender and role identification” (2359). The problem of gender fixity in heterosexual society is clearly examined in this novel. Emily Jeremiah also asserts that “questioning the fixity of the terms man and woman, the novel in fact queers heterosexuality, proposing new fluid forms of desire and relationality” (139). Therefore, *Tipping the Velvet* succeeds in illustrating the notion of challenging heterosexual norms by presenting fluid and diverse identities to imply gender trouble.

Gender trouble and fluidity that are underscored throughout the novel consequently paves the way to the performativity of genders, one of the major arguments of Queer theory. Yavaş asserts that *Tipping* “echoes Judith Butler’s notion of performativity and offers instances of gender trouble through the protagonist Nancy by juxtaposing historical references to the dominant culture with its marginalized subjects” (3). The gender indeterminacy or trouble is illustrated through Nancy in her journey of exploring sexuality in *Tipping*. Since gender is fluid and cannot be determined or defined according to one’s sex, Butler suggests that “the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced […] Gender proves to be performative, that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be” (*Gender* 33). Hence, there is no fixed gender, but it is only produced by means of some performative acts that are regularized by gender coherence. Therefore, the notion of performativity questions the accuracy of gender roles which are assigned to identities as a result of physical and biological factors. In lesbian tradition, the incoherence of genders is emphasized by various signals to the theory of performativity such as

Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* in which the protagonist "recognizes no borders of time, gender or sexuality" (Craps 53) and performs different genders throughout the novel. Similarly, Nancy recognizes no fixed gender or sexuality and puts on several enactments of sexualities which originate in a repetition of acts. The theory of performativity implies that repetition of certain acts brings about the labeling the identity as either a he or she, so gender can be performed enabling vast opportunities and identities. Thus, gender identities are constructed of certain behaviours that are performed by genders. Furthermore, Butler states that "[g]ender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (*Gender* 44). Therefore, repetition over time defines a gender, which can be analyzed and tracked in the maturation process of Nancy's sexual identities in *Tipping*. In this respect, Pauline MacPherson posits that "[i]n *Tipping the Velvet*, the audience/ reader is presented with instability and the loss of inherent identity through the presentation of Nan Astley's ever-changing performance of identity" (274). Nancy's indeterminate gender identity accounts for the argument of fluidity, hence, the performativity of gender construction. Nancy takes up several different gender performances which eventually lead to her self-realization and accepting her queer sexuality. In other words, the theory of gender performativity reveals itself in onstage and offstage performances by Nancy through her sexual maturation process in *Tipping*, firstly in her theatrical drag performances and later as a cross-dressed rent boy in the streets of London, and lastly as a pleasure slave in Diana Lethaby's house.

Initially, the notion of performance is presented in Nancy's job as a male impersonator on stage together with Kitty. Performing as a male, Nancy wears male costumes and changes her voice to sound like a man. Besides, Walter suggests her to observe men to be able to become one of them: "Catch their characters, their little habits, their mannerisms and gaits […] You must know it, and you must copy them, and make your audience know it in their turn" (*Tipping* 85). According to Walter's suggestion, imitation is an essential part of their becoming a man. They need to observe and learn the practices of men. Later, when they become "men" on stage, people, especially girl fans, are amazed by their success, which suggests that their impersonation becomes real in the audience's eyes. They pass as men on stage

successfully by imitation and dressing like them. It is implied that by copying and observing, transforming into a gender is possible regardless of one's inborn sex. Therefore, the "naturalized heterosexuality" is deconstructed with these performances as Butler suggests. The performative nature of gender reveals the constructedness of heterosexuality. Moreover, Cheryl Wilson asserts that "*Tipping the Velvet* reveals Waters' awareness of twentieth century relationships between performance and sexuality for women (286). As Nancy discovers her talent to perform in a theatre, she also becomes aware of her desires for Kitty. Thus, while she is learning how to act on a theatre stage as a man, she is learning and discovering her own sexuality and desire for Kitty at the same time. When Nancy becomes male, her "saucy" dreams for Kitty awaken and come true eventually (*Tipping* 125). Nancy states that "I seemed to want her more and more, the further into boyishness I ventured" (*Tipping* 125). She realizes her desires for Kitty when she begins to act, dress and behave like a boy. Wilson also suggests that "Waters describes Nan's sexual awakening in detail, maintaining the connection between Nan's emerging senses of identity- specifically her lesbian identity- and her education in the London theatre" (295). Thus, Nancy's lesbian identity is discovered through her performance in theatre, and her other identities follow the theatrical performance, as well. As she realizes the arbitrariness of genders and considers changing genders as a stage performance, she experiments with different genders offstage and finds out her sexual identity.

The repetition of performative acts transforms Nancy into different gender identities, which can be read as a challenge to and subversion of the fixity of genders in "heterosexual" society. As such, one can see that the use of copying and performance abound in the novel. The explanation for the constant use of acts and imitation of the opposite gender resides in Butler's theory. For Butler, the acts of gender construction resemble theatrical acts in which dramatizing and copying play significant roles. Thus, Butler suggests her readers to "[c]onsider gender as a corporeal style, an act, which is both intentional and performative, where performative itself carries the double meaning of dramatic and non-referential" ("Performative Acts" 521-2). Therefore, it is understood that one is not born with a gender; rather one can only become one through doing, acting and dramatizing acts. Nancy's multiple identities in separate parts in *Tipping* by doing some performance

which she always likens to the acts in music halls, refer to this relationality between gender and performativity. When Nancy becomes a rent boy, she is conscious of the importance of disguise and imitation. Hence, she studies and copies the world of men and makes herself a renter persona just like an actor makes his persona. She makes use of her experience in theatrical performances and easily settles in her new career. She states that "[i]n fact, the world of actors and artistes [sic] and the gay world in which I now found myself working, are not so very different" (*Tipping* 200). Therefore, one can realize that Nancy lives by the help of her abilities in performing. Moreover, when Nancy serves Diana as a pleasure slave, she becomes another sexual identity. She considers her new identity as a performance in theatres. She thinks that "[i]t was quite like dressing for the halls again" (259). She puts on male clothes and uses her theatrical skills to be attractive to Diana.

Whereas Nancy performs and lives as a "man" with Diana, she becomes a "woman" through the end of the novel when she starts living with Florence. Nancy adopts domestic works in Florence's house, and she assumes the roles of an obedient housewife, who does cooking, cleaning, and babysitting. She repeats these kinds of acts and transforms into a "female" in that part of her life. Hence, Nancy's instable identities constitute her life, so copying and performing are indispensable from her world. She achieves her gendered identity through repetition over time. Nevertheless, she still lacks a gender category, which is the result of her shifting roles. She refuses to categorise herself in a singular fashion. Butler claims that "[t]he body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time" ("Performative Acts" 523). In this sense, by various examples from Nancy's shifting gender, the reality of performance in becoming a gender is highlighted. As a result, it is suggested that there is no essential and determinate gender. Although Butler warns that performativity is not meant to be understood like one chooses a gender from a wardrobe as if choosing a costume, Nancy "puts on" a gender in each of her identities in this novel to suggest and highlight the instable and fluid nature of sexuality. In an interview, Butler presents the misunderstanding about performativity as follows: "[t]he bad reading goes something like this: I can get up in the morning, look in my closet, and decide which gender I want to be today. I can take out a piece of clothing and change my gender stylize it, and then that evening I can change it again and be something radically other" ("The Body" 83). Butler argues that

performance of genders is not volitional but the repetition of gender norms. Thus, Nancy's gender performance starts with literal or theatrical performances and develops into a Butlerian concept of performativity through the end. As Cheryl Wilson suggests, with Florence "Nan does not have to hide her feelings, as she did with Kitty, or live in a state of constant performance, as she did with Diana, and she begins the painful separation of her sexual identity from her music hall performances and the memories of Kitty that have pursued her" (302). Wilson suggests that Nancy leaves her performances with Florence. However, performance is a repetition which produces itself. Thus, it is only the literal performances she leaves. Nancy continues to perform during her time with Florence. Theatrical performances have enabled her to question binaries and understand gender to be fluid, which helps her through self-realization.

Nancy's fluid sexualities are maintained by gender performances, which also highlight the Butlerian idea of "drag" as the parody of genders. This idea includes the refusal of an essential truth of sex and gender and emphasizes the constructedness of heterosexual identities. The relation between performance and gender suggest the invalidity of heteronormative distinction between genders. Sara Salih argues that "[g]ender performatives that do not try to conceal their genealogy, indeed that go out of their way to accentuate it, displace heterocentric assumptions by revealing that heterosexual identities are as constructed and 'unoriginal' as the imitations of them" ("On Butler" 58). Thus, all genders become constructed and imitated forms of certain actions, which brings the idea of parody (i.e. a work imitating an original work to make fun of or criticize it). In terms of gender parody, Butler argues that drag "effectively mocks both expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity" (*Gender* 174). Hence, drags show the discontinuity between inner identity which refers to the sexuality a person feels to be and outer identity which refers to the theatrical enactment of the sexuality of that person. Therefore, the idea of the discontinuity between the two destabilizes gender and proposes fluidity. Salih also comments on the issue of drag identities to point out the deconstruction of gender distinction. She asserts that "parody and drag are modes of queer performance that subversively allegorize heterosexual melancholy, thereby revealing the allegorical nature of all sexual identities" (66). As a result, Kitty and Nancy's impersonation can be analyzed as drag performances which stand for the heterosexual entertainment. However, their performance is used to displace the heterosexual dependency on

separate genders. The audience knows that the men on stage are actually women in real life. They are affected by Kitty's and Nancy's roles and convinced that they are "mashers" (i.e. fashionable men) by imitation. In this respect, Kitty's and Nancy's jobs as drags are intentionally built to argue for fluidity of genders and reveal "illusioned" heterosexuality of society. Nancy as a drag artist understands that gender identity is fluid, flexible, and open to performing. She imitates men in her performances with Kitty, which also implies that there is no original gender and gender can be reproduced by repetition of certain acts.

In the theory of performativity of genders, cross-dressing is another method of deconstructing gender, which is presented in *Tipping* by Nancy's changing sexualities, especially when she is disguised as a rent boy in the streets. Emilia Heimonen claims that "[i]n *Tipping the Velvet*, Nan explores her sexual identity through cross-dressing, expressing her masculinity by dressing up in men's clothing" (17). She discovers the power of disguise and uses this to perform her queer identity freely firstly onstage and later in the street when she became a rent boy. However, cross-dressing not only renders her the freedom to express her queer identity but also in this way she tries to make a living on her own. Moreover, with the use of imitation and cross-dressing, Nancy discovers the constructedness of genders and subverts them in this way. Yavaş also states that "Nancy's cross-dressing performances do not only lead to a reconstruction of her gender identity, but a deconstruction of received gender identities" (6). Her fluid identity teaches her that the "supposed" relation between sex and gender can be subverted. While cross-dressing opens Nancy's mind to the variety and transferability of genders, and so transforms her identity, it does not have such an effect on Kitty. Although Kitty is also depicted as a drag artist who cross-dresses onstage, she fits into the drag type that does not subvert genders. Butler suggests that not every drag is subversive of genders despite the fact that it reflects the imitative structure of genders. She claims that "there are forms of drag that heterosexual culture produces for itself […] where the anxiety over a possible homosexual consequence is both produced and deflected" (*Bodies* 126). In this respect, Kitty might be considered as the drag that heterosexual culture creates only to be entertained and finally to eliminate it from society. Since Kitty does not "come out" as a lesbian and makes a heterosexual marriage, her performance as a drag artist

does not transform her sexuality like Nancy. However, it still challenges heterosexual claim of "originality."

1.3 THE CONCEPTS OF "CLOSET" AND "COMING OUT" IN *TIPPING*

Similar to Kitty's staying in the "closet" (her choice of not announcing her lesbian identity in public), Nancy's coming-out as a lesbian is a significant development in her maturation process, which she gains through her enactments. Before Nancy's coming-out, she encounters and observes several hidden or "closeted" identities. In this respect, in the way towards Nancy's self-realization, the concepts of the "closet" and "coming out" assist Nancy with her gender performances and the realization of her fluid identity, so it becomes an important theme for analysis in this thesis. In Queer theory, it is argued that the concept of the "closet" invokes the notion of "coming out of the closet," which implies revealing of the sexual identity to public. Therefore, the closet of "homosexual" identities represents a "homophobic" attitude. As Eve K. Sedgwick claims, "the closet is the defining structure for gay oppression" (*Epistemology* 71). The closet is primarily seen as a private part of the individual life, and as a place where a secret is kept hidden from society. Therefore, for the "queer," the image of the closet signals the inability of the "homosexual" identity to reveal his/ her "unintelligible" sexual existence in society. The privacy provided by the closet is intervened by the concept of "coming out of the closet" since the image of coming out of the closet also bears the notion of homophobia. Indeed, Sedgwick posits that "vibrantly resonant as the image of the closet is for many modern oppressions, it is indicative for homophobia" (75). Encouraging people to come out of the closet and express themselves discloses the identity to be classified according to heteronormative society. As a result, it is possible to deduce that although it promotes a public disclosure of "gay" identities, coming out of the closet is another homophobic oppression of the society. Secrecy is revealed as sexuality is made public. Coming out may bring other damages to these identities socially, individually or even economically. In this respect, Butler proposes that "being out must produce the closet again and again in order to maintain itself as out" ("Imitation" 309). It is implied that coming out may produce a disclosure which will reproduce the closet. Being out signals to the being in the closet. Thus, the exposure and assertion of homosexuality can create more homophobic attitudes. However, the main argument of the antihomophobic inquiry is to be able to exist and

stand up to the regulations of heterosexuality, which requires revealing the "hidden" identity out of the closet. In this respect, "coming out" becomes an instrument of protest against the regulatory oppression of heterosexual hegemonic order and destroys the categories of sex, gender and identity that have been produced on political and economic bases.

Tipping illustrates the variety of sexual identities with regard to the notions of "closet" and "coming out." Until Nancy meets Florence and her friends, all the sexual identities that are depicted in the novel are "closeted," hidden and scared of being revealed in public. Nan and Kitty's relationship is hidden from the public. Thus, as Cheryl Wilson asserts "Nan dons a painful mask of heterosexuality" ("From" 296). Although Nancy does not want to hide her feelings for Kitty, she agrees to pretend to be heterosexual among other people and live her love in the "closet." It is Kitty who wants to conceal her sexual relationship with Nancy and does not want to be labeled as a "tom" as she is afraid of losing recognition and money. Indeed, it is the exact reason why Kitty decides to have a heterosexual marriage with their manager Walter. However, Kitty wants to continue her relationship with Nancy secretly, which Nancy furiously rejects at the end of the novel, as well. Emily Jeremiah states that "Kitty marries Walter in part so that she may pass as straight, respectable, wanting Nan only as a covert source of pleasure" (139). Thus, Kitty is the example of a hidden or closeted lesbian who cannot live and love freely and has to yield to the heterosexist norms of the society. The lesbian couple whom Kitty does not like is also another signifier of Kitty's closeted lesbianism. Even though Nancy wants to be friends with them, Kitty says that they are "Toms. They make a - *a career* - out of kissing girls. We're not like that" (*Tipping* 132) (italics in the original). Thus, the reader learns Kitty's attitude towards other lesbians and that she does not want to identify herself with them. Emilia Heimonen explains that "Kitty is afraid of her own sexual identity to herself, which then leads to wanting to keep the relationship secret" (81). Apart from being afraid of losing money, Kitty does not want to and cannot admit her sexual identity which can be regarded as a reason for hiding her sexual orientation from public. Thus, Kitty cannot come out as a lesbian and fails to be openly lesbian.

Moreover, after leaving Kitty, the people with whom Nancy encounters in the streets can only disclose their sexual desires in the dark, filthy, and unknown places

of London. In this respect, it can be inferred that Waters highlights the "veiled" sexualities among public; and therefore, Nancy becomes aware of their existence only when she becomes one of them. Nancy refers to them as people "out of fear, kept themselves hidden, and only exposed to those whose sympathies they could be sure" (*Tipping* 198). Now that she sees them in the streets, she identifies herself with them as she also has to conceal her identity. In addition, when Nancy begins living with Diana, the number of diverse sexualities seems to increase around her. Diana and the Cavendish Ladies' Club is more "out" compared with the previous ones. They have a relatively known and exclusive society. Their identities are more overt and confident. Stefania Ciocia claims that Diana "in virtue of the greater power and freedom attached to her privileged social status, can find ways of expressing her homosexuality without fear of incurring into public censure" ("Journeying" n. pag.). Therefore, since Diana is of upper-class and has no financial need for a man, she is more independent and confident. With Diana's financial means and privileges, Nancy "comes out" with her gentleman's clothes in public. Besides, in Diana's Cavendish Club, which is an overt lesbian community, there are many females disguised as men like her. Nancy examines them and states "[t]he effect of their appearance all combined was rather queer. They were dressed not strangely but somehow distinctly. They wore skirts but the kind of skirts … for a gent" (267). Their clothes and appearance seem a little "queer," challenging the "appropriate" outfits for genders. These "queer" people are out in their community attending various events. It is implied that the Cavendish ladies' attendance to the opera does not seem to bother other people at all, which can be taken as a token of "coming out."

Observing all these, Nancy becomes more aware, she develops into one of these sexualities. It can be deduced that Diana's mansion and her lesbian community gave Nancy a freer space for coming out. Nevertheless, Diana and her club prove to be limited for being publicly out. It is also important to note that Diana is of upper-class, and her money and economic privileges might provide them to be openly out in public. In addition, they are known exclusively, so their being out still has boundaries. Therefore, Nancy becomes only partially out with Diana's lesbian community since Diana's house and club is still a restricted and more private space. Similarly, Lin Elinor Pettersson argues that "Diana's seemingly extrovert Sapphic

circle is in fact repressive as it limits lesbian outlet to the private sphere" (301). Hence, Diana's circle is merely a secluded space and it provides a closeted lesbianism to Nancy, resembling Nancy's relationship with Kitty. However, Nancy's coming-out process is completed only when she meets Florence.

When Nancy's journey changes direction with her life with Florence, it is evident that the "queer," especially "lesbian" personalities burst out with a significant difference. Florence, Annie, Miss Raymond, and many others are confidently "out" in public with their lesbian identities. They accept their own sexual desire for the same-sex, and they present themselves in society as they are, with no attempt to conceal their sexual identities from anyone. In this sense, Florence is the opposite of Kitty as she does not hide her sexuality. She accepts her lesbian identity and does not consider that she should conceal it from anyone. She states that "[i]f Frank doesn't like my habits, he can stop visiting. Him, and anyone else with a similar idea. Would you have people think we were ashamed?" (*Tipping* 427). Therefore, Florence is proud of who she is and confidently "out" unlike all the people Nancy has known before. Moreover, when Nancy learns about the lesbian pub that Florence and her friends frequent, she feels herself more comfortable since she realizes that there are many other lesbian couples. Florence and her friends are represented as successful in society both in their jobs and in their relationships with friends, lovers, and family. Their self-confidence in their sexuality and engagement in social work affect Nancy and convinces her to be like one of them. Thus, with Florence, Nancy accepts her sexuality and feels a sense of belonging in Florence's club of friends and family with no need to hide her "lesbian" identity. Even though it seems that Nancy's performances finish now that she has come out as a lesbian, her enactments certainly do not. Now her performances as a free lesbian start in the Butlerian sense, and those performances have to continue to create the sexuality or gender itself. Nancy feels herself most comfortable in this sexuality and chooses to stay in it at the end of the novel, yet her sexuality is only maintained by the continuation of her gender performances.

1.4 HETEROSEXIST PEOPLE AS FOIL CHARACTERS IN *TIPPING*

In order to highlight "queer" characters, heterosexist characters are presented in *Tipping* to function as foils. The existence of those characters renders the "queer" identities a visibility. Many incidents and characters with regard to the heterosexist

attitude of society can be observed throughout the novel. In this respect, a disclosure of heterosexual tendency of society is provided to challenge it eventually. Firstly, the heterosexual idea is represented by Nancy's sister, Alice, who reacts fiercely when she hears about the relationship between Nancy and Kitty. She displays her implied "heterosexual" feelings in her letter to Nancy: "I can never be happy while your friendship with that woman is so wrong and queer" (135). She urges Nancy to come back to the people who love her "properly." As it is suggested, Nancy's family is a traditional "heterosexual" family who has homophobic inclinations. When Nancy tries to come out to her sister, she finds that they are conservative and cannot understand her lesbian feelings. In addition to this, the marriage between Kitty and Walter refers to the traditional belief in "heterosexual" marriage to preserve fame and money. Kitty gets married to Walter merely for the security of her future and continuation of money. Besides, although Walter is informed about their "lesbian" relationship, it does not appear to disturb him. Instead, there is a kind of pleasure in his knowledge of their lesbian sexualities. In the interview, Abigail Dennis mentions "the pornography in which lesbian desire was staged apparently for male pleasure" (44). Accordingly, it can be claimed that Kitty and Nancy's lesbian relationship serves to Walter's pleasure. Dennis suggests lesbian desire is like a prelude after which a man comes and takes over. Walter, who stands for heterosexuality, takes pleasure in their lesbian desire. However, for Walter, a sexual relationship requires a male, and he overpowers and demolishes Kitty and Nancy's queer relationship. Heterosexism can also be observed in the later chapters of the novel when Nancy talks to the housemaid Zena. They converse about Zena's previous lover, Agnes, who had to get married to a man to get rid of their scandalous lesbian friendship. Therefore, it is clearly asserted that women with queer desires had to marry men to make sure they would not attempt to reunite with their female lovers. The regulatory practices of heterosexist society ensure that lesbianism is forbidden and unacceptable. However, with the aim of creating a lesbian canon and displaying variety in sexualities, Waters might have put forward all these heterosexist characters and attitudes to thwart and challenge the heterosexual hegemony.

Of all of those heterosexist characters, it is Kitty's characterization that functions as the central foil character to Nancy in the novel. Even though she is the one who introduces Nancy to the transferability of genders and the power of

performance, she is portrayed as the one who fails as a queer character and conforms to the heteronormative ideology because she cannot be visible as a “come out” lesbian like Nancy in the end. The cross-dressing and the theatrical enactments that open Nancy’s mind to the possibility of fluidity do not have an effect on Kitty. She does not intend to tell anyone about her lesbian identity since she thinks that would be the end of her career and future life. She is aware of the social segration that coming out might cause her and does not admit her lesbian identity. As a result, she yields to the heteropatriarchy and marries Walter to have a future that is guaranteed with the existence of a husband. Pettersson suggests that “while Nan journeys towards lesbian communality, Kitty struggles to fit into heteronormative society” (286). Kitty’s lesbian identity only exists on stage performances where the audience is entertained and remains closeted off the stage. When Kitty gets married to Walter, she fits into heteronormativity and chooses to appear as a “heterosexual” in society. However, Kitty’s choice of marrying Walter leads Nancy to proceed in her search of identity. In this respect, Kitty acts as the main foil character that opposes Nancy’s characterization and also helps Nancy become more self-aware of her “queer” identity.

1.5 THE CONCEPT OF “THE NEW WOMAN”

The term “New Woman” was coined by “the writer and public speaker Sarah Grand in 1871” according to Andrzej Diniejko (“The New” n. pag.). It referred to the educated and liberated women who defy the patriarchal norms and do not choose to marry. A new woman is confident, knowledgeable, self-dependent, and free from the Victorian stereotypes. Diniejko also suggests that “[a]t the end of the nineteenth century, New Woman ideology began to play a significant part in complex social changes that led to the redefining gender roles, consolidating women’s rights, and overcoming masculine supremacy” (*The* “The New” n. pag.). Thus, this new type of women manage to challenge the limitations they face as a woman and lead to some important changes in terms of gender equality in labour, education, and divorce. Such an important development has found its place in literature, and in novels and many genres, new woman characters have become visible in the late nineteenth century. Diniejko also adds that “[t]he New Woman novels represented female heroines who fought against the traditional Victorian male perception of woman as ‘angel in the house’ and challenged the old codes of conduct and morality” (“The

New" n. pag.). Therefore, in the late Victorian period, independent and confident female heroines were in struggle with the patriarchal society to liberate themselves.

The representation of this new woman character in *Tipping* is a woman called Florence Banner who is the ultimate lover of Nancy in the novel. Florence is a dedicated socialist and a charity worker. Her idol is Eleanor Marx who can also be taken as a typical new woman character. Like Eleanor Marx, Florence is a philanthropist who helps people in-need by finding them a house or a job and a socialist living by her political beliefs. She lives with her brother who is also not a "conventional" man as he is completely at ease with her sister's lesbian identity. Moreover, Florence does not confine herself to the domestic space or duties that are expected from women at that time. She does not know about housework or childcare and works most of the day for other people. In this respect, she subverts gender roles and challenges the heteropatriarchal norms. She does not conform to the public and private segregation of spaces. Her job as a charity worker provides her the access to streets and attend to socialist rallies. Therefore, she is regarded as a radical figure for the Victorian period. She is highly confident of her sexual orientation and publicly out. After their encounter, observing the independent life Florence lives, Nancy is informed more about her "queer" identity and the prospect of coming out freely in public. In addition, Nancy discovers the world of politics and her own voice and role in it. As a result, Florence has definitely a noteworthy impact on Nancy's life and identity.

These new woman characters were seen as threats to society as they subvert the heteropatriarchal norms by having "masculine" traits. Considering from this perspective, having met Florence, Nancy also becomes a new woman since she has found her voice and identity in this socialist community where she does not have to conceal her "queer" identity. Her search of a belonging and identity comes to a halt, yet her performances do not end. At the end of the novel, she finds herself a new role that she can display her theatrical skills and becomes a socialist public speaker. Therefore, it can be argued that Nancy fulfills her desire to become an independent woman with all the enactments she has put on. Likewise, Pettersson suggests that "conscious subjectivity comes into play as Nan transfers music-hall theatricality into off-stage performances and subsequently, the heroine manages to create her own space of self-fulfillment, self-reliance and self-representation in the public sphere"

(307). Becoming an independent new woman character, Nancy finds herself the place to live her “queer” identity freely in the public space and to make her own life as an independent woman.

Considering all the roles and performances Nancy Astley enacts, *Tipping* as a novel renders a context that enables a Queer reading. Performativity of sexuality is revealed clearly with Nancy’s changing roles and shifting sexual orientation throughout her journey in the novel. She explores and experiments with different sexual identities such as a rent boy having intercourse with men for money. In this enactment, she discovers gendered spaces and the transferability of sexuality and gender. She continues her fluid sexual performances in other places throughout the novel, which helps her to understand that there is no “true” gender. As she performs, her main motivation is to find her own in that rigid Victorian setting. After all her temporal sexualities, she ultimately becomes an independent and queer person. She comes to the self realization that she is a fluid person and that gender is actually indeterminate. With the use of performativity, she matures at the end of the novel that she declares herself as a queer woman. In this respect, Nancy’s performances either onstage or offstage teach her how she could subvert the heteropatriarchal norms that bind one’s sexual identity to a certain kind of desire, act or place. Therefore, Nancy becomes a very important representation of Judith Butler’s theory of performativity, which provides a good context to argue for a positive reading of performances as a tool for revealing and dislodging the heteronormativity. Nancy’s performances allow her to be the sexual identity she chooses to be. However, most importantly, these performances allow her the self fulfilment and the visibility as a “queer” person.

CHAPTER II

PERFORMATIVITY OF GENDER IN MICHEL FABER'S *THE CRIMSON PETAL AND THE WHITE*

2.1 MICHEL FABER'S BIOGRAPHY

Born in Holland in 1960, raised in Australia and now living in Scotland, Michel Faber is one of the leading contemporary authors in Britain. He has published eleven books including novels, short stories, and poems. [6] Faber studied Old, Medieval and Modern English Literature at Melbourne University. His first book was a collection of short stories called *Some Rain Must Fall and Other Stories* in 1998. His debut novel was named *Under the Skin* (2000), which was followed by *The Hundred and Ninety-Nine Steps* in 2001 and *The Courage Consort* in 2002. Faber's mainstream recognition came with the publication of *The Crimson Petal and the White* (2002), a world-wide best-seller, after which he wrote *The Apple*, short stories about the characters' past or future lives in *Crimson*. Faber published another collection of short stories, *The Fahrenheit Twins*, in 2005, and *Vanilla Bright Like Eminem* in 2007. After *The Fire Gospel* (2008), Faber wrote his latest novel *The Book of Strange New Things* in 2014. He states with his latest novel that he "says goodbye to a lot of things: to Eva [Faber's wife of 26 years, who died this year of cancer], and that Prospero/Tempest thing of goodbye to novel-writing" ("Is Michel?"). Thereby, upon the death of his wife, Faber announced that he would not write novels anymore. This does not mean the end of his literary career as he published a collection of poems entitled *Undying: A Love Story* in 2016.

Besides their literary popularity, some of Faber's works were adapted for the media which increased the writer's recognition on a wider scale. His popular *The Crimson Petal and the White* was adapted into a TV mini-series by BBC in 2011. Likewise, *Under the Skin* was adapted into a movie in 2013. *The Courage Consort* and *The Book of Strange New Things* were both adapted for radio. Faber's wide recognition came with the publication of his popular Neo-Victorian novel *The Crimson Petal and the White* (2002). The length of the novel suggests it mimics authentic Victorian novel not only in content but also in length. Its title was inspired

by Tennyson's poem "Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal." The novel is about a self-educated witty prostitute Sugar and her struggle to get herself out of her destitute life in the slums.

Faber won the Ian St James Award (1996) with "Some Rain Must Fall," the Macallan/Scotland on Sunday Short Story Award (1996) with "Fish," one of the stories in *Some Rain Must Fall*, and the Neil Gun Prize (1997) with "Half a Million Pounds and a Miracle." Besides, *Some Rain Must Fall* won the Saltire Society Scottish First Book of the Year Award in 1999. His first novel *Under the Skin* was shortlisted for the Whitbread First Novel Award in 2000. In 2001, he was awarded the Art Foundation Award for Short Story Writing.

Michel Faber, a prolific writer who publishes novels, novellas, short stories, and poetry, is interested in diverse themes such as aliens, mysterious murders, and romance. Therefore, his works are generally difficult to classify. They can be regarded as thrillers, ghost stories, science fiction or all at the same time. In an interview, Faber acknowledges that he deliberately has done it: "I wanted each of my books to be very different from the others, each to be special and uncategorizable, and I knew I could only do that a few times before I was in danger of repeating myself"("Closing"). Therefore, each work Faber creates has a distinct theme and style, which could be an important characteristic of his authorship. Jules Smith notes that "Faber is an undeniably clever and manipulative writer, continually seeking to direct and unsettle the reader with a hint here and an odd phrase there" ("Critical" n.pag.). He is regarded as a skilled and imaginative writer who presents strange characters in strange places. The reader encounters with flying fish in one story and a missionary on a remote planet in another one. In her newspaper article, Justine Jordan contends that "Faber has been a writer of singular vision who combines a dark, offbeat sensibility with an unnerving directness of tone" ("Michel Faber" n. pag.). Thus, Faber is recognized as a radical writer having a unique and eclectic style of his own combining different themes and perspectives with a sharp and unexpected tone.

Moreover, as in *Crimson Petal and the White*, Faber finishes the story abruptly with no clues to what happen to the characters in the end. Although he created *The Apple* stories, which is about the characters in *Crimson*, after much

demand from his readers, he did not mention the ending of *Crimson* or the fates of its characters, which suggests that he favors discontinuity. In an interview Faber says that “I do want readers to trust me. And yet I don’t want to offer them a safe, predictable ride” (“3am”). Thus, his stories could end in an unpredictable or unusual way. Faber has reached a wider audience with the TV, radio, and newspaper productions of his works. However, despite the recognition his novels rented him, he claims not to write any other novels after the death of his wife, who assisted him with her comments and ideas in producing those novels, and continues to write poetry instead. He states “I felt that I had one more book in me that could be special and sincere and extraordinary, and that that would be enough” (“Closing”). Thus, besides the effect of his wife’s death, it could be said that Faber considers his continuation of writing novels would be repeating himself as he has consumed all of his “extraordinary” ideas. Therefore, although his peers consider him as giving up a promising career, he has written his last novel, *The Book of Strange New Things*, as a eulogy to his wife and has been working on poetry lately.

2.2 *THE CRIMSON PETAL AND THE WHITE* SUMMARY

Set in the 1870s*, The Crimson Petal and the White* tells the story of Sugar a nineteen-year-old prostitute who has a witty mind and a masculine look. Sugar is an unconventional woman for the era she lives in. She keeps herself busy reading books and writing a horror book of revenge in which she depicts in detail how brutally she would kill her clients. Her most prominent feature is her wit, which has traditionally been a masculine trait. As a prostitute, she is very popular partly because of her sexual capabilities and partly because she is very clever and different from other prostitutes. Once she meets William Rackham, a wealthy perfume manufacturer, as one of her clients, her life undergoes a tremendous change. She sees her chance to escape from her poor life in the brothel and plans to use William and his money for her self-realization as an independent woman. Sugar enacts different roles and becomes a lover, a mistress, and a governess to ascend through the social ladder. Firstly, William rents a house for Sugar to keep her as a mistress, and later Sugar convinces William to take her into his family house as a governess to his daughter, Sophie. When Sugar settles in the Rackham mansion, she learns about William’s wife Agnes who is considered to be psychologically imbalanced due to a brain tumor that is explained by the narrator but unknown to the characters in the story. Sugar

puts on an act in front of everybody in the house to ensure her position in the house. She acts like a conventional woman and performs her duties in the house as a governess which is regarded as the one of the few options of "proper" jobs for a woman in Victorian period. She acts submissively besides William, but her real mind speaks through the narrator and continues to plan for her escape out of poverty. As a governess, Sugar is the teacher of Sophie, who has not received any love from her real mother, and later turns into a mother-like figure for her. Feeling sorry for both Agnes and Sophie, Sugar secretly plans to help them to escape from their miserable life in the house. In the end, she not only rescues Agnes and helps her leave the house but also takes Sophie and runs away from the house to live independently, free from the male dominancy and in better conditions.

Although Faber is a writer of various genres with a different focus nearly in each of his works, he might be regarded to have a stance that empowers "marginalized" women in *Crimson Petal and the White.* [7] Mary Allen Snodgrass emphasizes that "Faber excels at reflecting female survivalism in a man's world. He subverts the nineteenth-century tradition that women require chivalric shielding from startling sights, physical toil, and emotional shock" (113). His female characters are generally strong, assertive, and unconventional. In *Crimson*, the protagonist Sugar manages to survive on her own and decides to leave male dominancy to live independently as a woman. Thus, Faber displays women with "unconventional" looks and wit that can be analyzed through a Queer reading as he subverts the conventions and norms while doing that. Another woman character in *Crimson*, Emmeline Fox is a philanthropist who is a devoted community worker helping other women find a job to survive on their own. In this respect, Faber recreates the Victorian women who are excluded or absent in the Victorian literature by giving voice and importance to such characters. Snodgrass also states that "Faber empowers Sugar to rescue herself and Agnes, as well as Agnes's daughter Sophie" from the consuming atmosphere of the Rackhams' house which is the portrayal of the patriarchal world. (117). Therefore, Faber creates female characters who are well-read, powerful, free and unconventional compared to the stereotypical women displayed in Victorian literature which contributes to the idea of defying gender roles and empowering female characters as a male writer. He generally depicts unconventional or marginalized women who resist and refuse gender roles and

discrimination against women. Those women change and develop in Faber's stories whose ends reflect female victory over patriarchy. As a consequence, it can be argued that Faber's depiction of genders and subversion of norms fall in line with Queer theory's overthrowing of categories and heteropatriarchy.

2.3 *CRIMSON* AND NEO-VICTORIANISM

The Crimson Petal and the White can be classified as a Neo-Victorian novel that depicts the nineteenth century features and themes from a contemporary perspective. As already discussed in the Introduction, Neo-Victorian novels revisit and reproduce Victorian culture including a perspective of "the silenced" or "marginalized" characters in Victorian novels such as women and lower classes. In his article "*The Crimson Petal and the White*: A Neo-Victorian Classic" George Letissier states that "Faber's fiction contributes to establishing a new literary canon: the neo-Victorian novel, precisely. Indeed, it encapsulates many of the ploys and devices to be found in many other rewritings of so-called Victorian classic texts" (1). Such themes as prostitution, social mobility, and gender are revisited and reworked in *Crimson* from a Neo-Victorian perspective. Likewise, sex, gender, and the woman question are reproduced explicitly in Neo-Victorian novels. Although those themes were present in Victorian texts, they were not explicitly spoken. Thus, in *Crimson*, it is evident that those characteristics become visible when analyzed with the idea of Butlerian performativity.

With Sugar's performances and ascension on the social ladder, Faber questions the binaries and prejudices against gender and class. Therefore, Sugar, just as a Neo-Victorian protagonist would, makes use of class and gender performances to claim her place in society as an independent woman. As Pepita Eskelin states "the neo-Victorian [sic] genre finds its protagonist in the criminal netherworlds and subcultures among prostitutes, gay and lesbian people as well as suppressed women in general" (4). In this respect, Sugar as a prostitute is portrayed as "the marginalized" character in *Crimson* who struggles to find her way out of patriarchal dominancy to assert her independence as a woman in the Victorian period. As a result, the protagonist in Neo-Victorian novels transforms from a "suppressed" woman into an "ideal" woman as depicted in *Crimson*. Far from the idea of an "ideal" Victorian woman, the ideal woman as represented by Sugar is a woman who

defies stereotypes and subverts the binaries against gender and so becomes a powerful, independent ideal woman in the contemporary sense. Sugar's journey from being a prostitute, the lowest status for a woman in the nineteenth century, to a middle-class governess is through the idea of performance of gender roles that is Butlerian performativity. In this respect, *Crimson*, as a Neo-Victorian novel, situates Butlerian performativity in its centre to revisit the sex, gender, and class issues from the perspective of a "marginalized" protagonist.

2.4 PERFORMATIVITY IN *CRIMSON*

The theory of performativity is a central theme in *Crimson* since it uses frequent gender performances, especially in Sugar, to subvert the rigid gender norms of the Victorian society. Butlerian idea of performativity, which argues that repeated social acts result in the formation of genders, can be discerned in Sugar's several gender performances. Although they differ in many ways from Nancy's performances in *Tipping*, Sugar's performances openly draw attention to the fluidity and transferability of gender roles as suggested by Butler and discussed in Chapter I.

To begin with, the performativity in Sugar's gender is not in terms of her sexuality but through her gender identity. Sugar is unconventional, and her mind and behaviors are completely contrary to the typical Victorian woman. Thus, Sugar's performativity operates differently from Nancy. However, Sugar's performances also relate to the Butlerian concept of performativity as she acts roles like an actress using various people as her audience and the places she moves within as her stage. She turns the city into a metaphorical stage where she performs her roles like Nancy. Lin Elinor Pettersson points out that "[h]er enactments are performative in the Butlerian sense, her gender identity arises in performance and therefore, the roles she performs contribute to her identity" (341). It is claimed that her identity is formed via her performances throughout the novel. Thus, it can be argued that Sugar, like Nancy, achieves her self-realization through her acts and actions in relation to the idea of gender performativity.

Sugar creates and performs different gender identities with imitation and repetition of norm-based female acts, which is similar to Butlerian idea that gender is the result of the stylized repetition of social acts. Sugar's gender identity arises in its performance which is again an idea that Butler proposes. Butler suggests that

> That gender is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality. (*Gender Trouble*, 192-3)

Butler argues that there is no pre-existing identity but the acts result in the formation of gendered behaviours. According to Butler, there cannot be a true or false, original or derived gender; however, they can be rendered by the performances of those gendered behaviours. It is suggested that the behaviours are not the results of the gender, but the gender comes into existence as the outcome of those behaviours. This makes it possible for genders to be imitated and performed. In this respect, the heteronormative gender division between men and women is denied and undermined. Butler emphasizes that masculinity and femininity are constructs of society which hides the fluidity and performativity of gender. In this respect, Sugar's acts as gender performances reveal how the Victorian society regards men and women in terms of many aspects such as intellect and desire. With Sugar's performances, it is emphasized that the characteristics of masculinity and femininity are transferable and changeable. She challenges and breaks the idea that gender is a fixed identity with her performances of social behaviours attributed to men and women.

When Sugar's performance is analyzed, it is easy to see that she uses her performances to hide her identity as an unconventional woman. In addition, Pettersson suggests that "[g]ender performance can be intentional and used reversely as a strategy to hide one's true gender identity" (34). This idea does not suit the Butlerian idea as Butler claims that there is no true or false gender, but it is possible to consider that gender performativity functions as a disguise for Sugar. Therefore, it could be said that Sugar performs a gender identity both to conceal her "unconventional" or "queer" character and to succeed as a self-reliant woman who overthrows male domination. Moreover, Sugar realizes the possibilities that could provide her a better life, and her identity with a "fluid" gender arises.

Sugar's performativity of genders develops differently from Nancy who finds her "queer" identity and achieves self-realization by going through different sexualities and performing various enactments with the use of disguise or cross-dressing. However, Sugar puts on a performance that would be deemed acceptable in society, not because she subscribes to the norms but because she sees such a performance to be the only way she would be accepted. She performs as a prostitute, a mistress and a governess, all of which are among the few roles provided to women in the nineteenth century, but Sugar is a clever and "queer" woman. She is "queer" because she is unconventional. Firstly, Sugar's unconventionality is depicted with her physical appearance in the novel. Sugar is mentioned as an unattractive woman. She is depicted to be: "stick-thin, flat-chested and bony like a consumptive young man, with hands almost too big for women's gloves" (*Crimson*, 36). She possesses features associated with man both physically and intellectually. Even Sugar's physical appearance is odd and not typical to traditional women. It is stated that Sugar "has an Adam's apple, like a man" (139). When William and Sugar first meet, William is surprised to see the male features in her, which may have peaked his interest in her. That portrayal in the novel at first gives the idea of Sugar's "queer" appearance. She also has a very dry and flaking skin which again indicates her faults in beauty as a Victorian woman. However, those traits do not reduce the number of her clients; they become more interested in her, instead. Although she does not have a traditionally attractive look, Sugar's character and her intellect might be the reason why men are interested in her.

Sugar enactment of different roles is achieved through altering her behavior. She puts on an act in front of certain people especially William Rackham. In other words, Sugar performs the normative gender roles that are expected from women in Victorian Era even though she is more masculine in mind and actions, a fact which is made known to the reader previously in the novel by the narrator. The narrator asserts that "Sugar's brain was not born into a man's head and instead squirms, constricted and crammed in the dainty skull of a girl" (51) [8]. The reader is made aware of Sugar's intelligence which is expected from men in that age. Her masculine body and unfeminine behavior make William doubt over her gender when he first meets Sugar. In this respect, her ambiguous gender identity emphasizes the fluidity and transferable status of gender. Lettissier states that "[i]n *The Crimson Petal and*

the White, Sugar's androgyny accounts for her success among men. She is both socially mobile and something of a gender bender" (4). Sugar's success as a woman springs from her discovery of social mobility and also fluidity of genders. Thanks to her theatrical abilities, she becomes a "lady" and then a "governess" which makes her more "respectable" to stand on her own both in public and private spaces. Her gender and her enactments related to her roles are fluid and changeable which suggests she has a "queer" nature. Thus, it is possible to say that Sugar's "queer" features contribute to her self-realization as a woman in a man's world.

Moreover, Sugar has a reputation among other prostitutes as "the one who reads all the books" (*Crimson* 48). Therefore, her interest in reading and writing is unique and queer for a prostitute if not for other women. Moreover, Sugar's intelligence and memory make her even more popular as a prostitute since she can remember her clients' opinions about trade or family issues. These also add up to the clients' interest and desire for her. These hints are given in the novel for Sugar's ability to perform in front of her clients and use these skills for her own benefit. Her performance can be observed when she talks with William. She performs an act of modesty and submission when she says "it so flatters me that I should inspire such treatment" when William starts to flirt with her (*Crimson* 144). Sugar is neither like a typical prostitute nor like a typical "chaste" Victorian woman [9]. She treats William in such a way that he adores her all the more. Sugar continues to perform several roles once she understands that she can ascend herself in the social ladder of mobility. Sugar's roles as a Victorian woman present some of the roles that are available for women of that period which at the same time subvert these roles with the idea of performativity of genders. Thus, as Paulina Palmer posits, the enactment of gender identities "mobilizes and parodies the images of womanhood available in nineteenth-century culture" ("Gender as Performance" 31). With Sugar's roles, it can be deduced that Faber, as the writer, presents the restricted roles that are associated with nineteenth-century women and parodies those roles with Sugar's putting on different roles in different places.

Sugar's performances defy the gender roles that are defined by the rigid rules of society. Unlike what is expected of Victorian women, Sugar is quite clever, witty, and well-read. Although she has no formal education, she is self-educated and knowledgeable about many subjects like literature, business, and trade. She is

experienced about sex and takes pleasure from it unlike a Victorian woman that is depicted through William's wife, Agnes. Letissier asserts that "Faber's Sugar, or Shush as she is sometimes mistakenly nicknamed, is an articulate and versatile woman, affording an insider's view into the world of pimps, madams and strumpets" (2). Thus, Sugar's fluid identity and her self-education allow her to enter the lives of a variety of Victorian people by her enactments, which gives her more insight about their world and facilitates her performances. When Sugar acts to be an ignorant woman and later an-angel-in-the-house to William, actually she is planning her way out of poverty and aiming for a better life on her own. It is stated that "his interest in her is a valuable commodity, and she ought to keep it alive for as long as she can. If she can make his affection last- his love, as he called it - she has a chance- a once-in-a-lifetime chance- to cheat Fate" (*Crimson* 452). Thus, Sugar sees her chances to be a rich and self-reliant woman and continues to perform to secure her future life.

Sugar is not a proper theatrical actress like Nancy but as she performs several roles throughout the novel, she becomes an actress in the metaphorical sense using the different social spaces she lives in. Lin Elinor Petterson states that "Sugar becomes an actress as she performs her sexual desire by participating … male scripted roles" (323). At first, while working in the brothel, Sugar performs the men's dream about women and sexual desire, and so she becomes a popular and desired prostitute. However, Sugar's acts exceed the brothel when she discovers that if she acts certain roles she can move upwards in the social ladder and get independence as a woman. Therefore, as she moves from one place to another, she enacts various female roles. Pettersson asserts that "she performs different social roles that were available to Victorian women taking on the roles of prostitute, mistress and governess to finally turn into a single mother" (321). Throughout her roles, Sugar occupies different places which also present the gendered spaces within Victorian England [10].

2.5 PUBLIC SPACE Vs. PRIVATE SPACE

Space is considered to be gendered in Victorian society as it is divided into two parts, public and private, according to genders to prevail in it. Whereas public space is expected to be available to men, private space is regarded as the only place women can "virtuously" live. In this respect, the idea of gender-based space is especially emphasized in Victorian novel. In *Crimson*, as well, this duality of public

and private space has a significant role in Sugar's roles and performances. With Sugar's performances, public and private spaces in the nineteenth century London are revealed. She performs different roles according to different spaces she arrives at, public and private. She transfers from the public space as a prostitute into the private space due to her roles as a mistress and a governess. Pettersson states that "[h]er awareness of performativity of class identity will enable her to enact different roles at different levels of society" (319). Thereby, she can overthrow the limitations created by the public and private dichotomy in Victorian London. The idea of public and private dichotomy is gender-biased in the nineteenth century. It was thought that women should be confined to the privacy of a house whereas men could dominate the public spaces such as streets and pubs. However, due to Sugar's awareness of social space, she subverts this patriarchal boundary in order to claim her place in public spaces as a woman. Pettersson maintains that "her insight into social organization of space enables her to move freely both within the domestic sphere and the public realm" (320). In this respect, performativity and her theatrical skills help her to move independently in different spaces no matter what the norms expect of her, which indicates the constructedness of social norms related to both gender and space. With Sugar, it is emphasized that gender and space are both constructs of the social norms and thereby can be subverted and deconstructed.

Wherever Sugar moves to, she transforms the place into a metaphorical stage where she could perform her several feminine roles. This also suggests that the space Sugar lives in transforms her. Therefore, she is informed and shaped by the very space she occupies. At the same time, she transforms the same space through her enactments. Pettersson suggests that Sugar "…adapts her social performance of different female roles according to space she occupies…" (310). Sugar puts on different roles as she changes the places she lives in. Thus, Sugar sets out from the public space as a prostitute and moves to private space by her subsequent roles as a mistress and a governess. Firstly, Sugar performs her role as a prostitute. Prostitution during the Victorian period was seen as the "Great Social Evil" since the prostitutes were in direct contrast with the "ideal" women who are portrayed as selfless and compassionate mothers and wives. Fraser Joyce states that "…the prostitute did not conform to the role prescribed to her by patriarchal Victorian society. In an age with two extreme romanticized images of women, she posed a stark contrast to the

middle-class ideal of the woman as a mother, an obedient wife and above all financially and socially dependent on her husband." ("Prostitution and the Nineteenth Century"). Thus, prostitutes were seen as posing a threat to patriarchal society since they were regarded economically independent and indifferent to moral values. However, at the same time, prostitutes were not limited to the private space and could discover the public space as a result of their profession. Thus, Sugar's performances as a prostitute provide her to live in the public space. Sugar as a prostitute resides in Mrs. Castaway's brothel which can be regarded as a public house. Furthermore, as a prostitute, Sugar could wander the streets unlike the ideal Victorian women. Sugar as a prostitute in the brothel keeps her clients interest in her by participating in sexual desire, which is a part of her performances. Besides, she acts as if she cares about their opinions, business and family matters. The narrator states that "Of course I remember you!" she'll say to the loathsome ape who, two years before twisted her nipples so hard she almost fainted in pain. "You are the gentleman who believes that the Toolery street fire was started by Tsarist Jews!" (*Crimson* 51). Such acts cause her to be admired more by her clients. Moreover, she can talk and advise them in terms of their family or business matters contrary to what's expected of women. All of these contribute to her acts as a prostitute in the brothel.

On the other hand, in the streets, Sugar carries on her performances. Although as a woman, she is not supposed to wander in the streets, Sugar moves freely in the streets as her profession renders her that privilege. Pettersson describes this privilege as follows: "[t]he prostitute is a mobilized observer of the streets and her social marginality sets her aside from the rest of the crowd. Moving as a peripheral urban stroller she walks around the urban panorama in a *flaneur*-like manner at a pace that signals her out her profession" (135). Therefore, due to Sugar's awareness of her role as a prostitute, she can wander in the streets in London freely. She can observe a person, which again contributes to her theatrical skills as observation is a key point in imitation. In addition, observing the streets can help Sugar realize the gendered spaces of the city and adopt new roles according to these places. It is stated that "[d]isplayed at their sides are the ladies of mercantile nobility, lapdogs shivering in their laps. Wholesale merchants, holding their heads visibly higher than retail merchants, alight from cabs and clear a path with a sweep of their walking sticks. It

is from inside Trafalgar Square, however, that the scale of parade can best be appreciated" (*Crimson* 45-6). Sugar observes the crowd closely and makes comments out of it, which can also contribute to her sense of understanding her role in it. Moreover, Sugar knows the importance of clothing in defining class. Thus, she spends a lot of money on her dresses so as to look like a "respectable" lady. She puts on gloves and a hat to look like a lady in the streets. Her awareness of social classes also help her gain her status in it to survive as a woman. Pettersson also asserts that her clothing "allows her to cross the invisible borders that separate the slums from the better-off areas" (326). It can be concluded that Sugar's profession and ladylike dressing help her freely wander and observe the streets of London as a woman. Unlike Nancy who cross-dresses like a boy to wander the city, Sugar dresses like a lady, above her class, to achieve a freedom to observe the city. In this respect, it can be deduced that actually Sugar makes use of cross-dressing in a different way.

Secondly, Sugar's role as William's mistress leads to a journey through to a more private space. Once she becomes William's mistress, Sugar succeeds in escaping from the poor areas which has been her plan from the very beginning. Thus, as her first achievement, Sugar moves to a private apartment rented by William. In her first step up the ladder, Sugar starts to live among the middle-class. However, Sugar has to keep on performing to please William as a lover and to guarantee her place in William's mind and wealth. In this sense, Sugar's performance can be resembled to that of a "drawing-room" performer as Cheryl Wilson suggests [11]. Similar to Nancy's drawing room performances for Kitty, Sugar performs to attract William as a mistress. Wilson states that "[v]ictorian women writers certainly recognized that, for middle and upper-class Victorian women, feminine identity was directly connected to proficiency in a variety of domestic accomplishments…" (286). In this respect, Sugar adopts the middle-class women's performance of drawing-room to keep William's interest in her alive and secure her financial position. Thus, the narrator states "Oh, William, what a lovely surprise! she rehearses, trying for the lilt again, then laughs, a harsh sound against the tiles" (*Crimson* 454). Sugar is well aware that she needs William's love and money, so she practices her acts when she waits for William to come at her apartment. She wants to please William firstly as a lover and later as a business counselor. Therefore, the reader observes Sugar reading about perfume industry and giving him advice about his trade, which also adds to

Sugar's charm. The narrator states "[w]ithin minutes he and Sugar are discussion the Hopsom dilemma- in detail- quite as if she were a business ally" (*Crimson* 395). Thus, Sugar uses her skills in trade to solve William's problems and to attract him more. While at her apartment waiting for William to come, Sugar practices her acts and continues to read about business. Firstly, she enjoys the privacy of the house and its being just for herself, but later worried about his lessened visits, Sugar plans to follow William in the streets to learn more about his life in the disguise of a lady, a performance she is acquainted with previously. She decides to watch him everywhere he goes because she believes "[b]y sharing his life illicitly, she'll earn the privilege of sharing it legitimately" (*Crimson* 461). Thus, her performance in the streets starts again and Sugar disguises like a lady to blend into the society she resides in. Thus, she is still using both the public and private spaces. Although Sugar moves into a private house when she becomes William's mistress, she still can wander in the streets and continue her performances of gender and class in the public space. Sugar's insight into the social structure of society enables her to blend into the community she lives among by her observation and theatrical skills.

Thirdly, Sugar performs as William's neglected daughter Sophie's governess. In this role, Sugar transfers to the house of the Rackhams, the most private space that Sugar occupies up to now in the novel. After her performances as a mistress, Sugar convinces William to move her to his family home as her daughter's governess. As another achievement, Sugar moves up one more step on the social ladder and performs another role that is provided to Victorian women mostly from middle class. Kathryn Hughes explains that "the figure of governess was one of the most familiar figures in mid-Victorian life and literature. 1851 Census revealed that 25.000 women earned their living teaching and caring for other women's children" ("The figure of governess"). They came from middle class families who suffered from economic depression, or impoverished landed gentry. Governesses were present before the Victorian period, yet as Jeane Peterson states "[t]here was a sudden increase in the number of gentlewomen without financial support in the years following the Napoleonic wars." (6). Women whose families suffered a financial loss sought employment in other houses. However, they did not belong to the working class and had a respectable job according to Victorian values. Thus, Sugar's becoming a governess is also linked to her ascension in the social mobility and success as a lover.

Despite being obliged to work for money, governesses were seen as respectable, educated women as they work inside the house and carrying out a mother's responsibilities. In this respect, governesses were considered higher in position among the other staff working in the houses. Thus, although being a governess has more negative connotations in Victorian period for middle class women, for Sugar it is considered as a success since she transfers from a "notorious" prostitute to a "respectable" governess in her third role [12].

With the governess role, Sugar performs to be "an angel in the house" during her experience in private space. As a part of her role, she teaches Sophie and also becomes a substitute mother for the child, who has received no motherly care or love. Although she has no school education, Sugar becomes a teacher, teaching Sophie about the world and giving the love she herself actually has not received from Mrs. Castaway, her mother. Thus, she provides Sophie the motherly love and formal education that Sugar is deprived of. In this role, Sugar discovers her affectionate side and becomes a loving mother whereas in the beginning she was the ill-reputed prostitute. In the meantime, she is still the lover of William, so she has to go on being a mistress or a prostitute to him. Pettersson suggests that she "continues acting and uses the theatrical skills she has acquired as a prostitute to manipulate her master while pretending to be as submissive as any angel in the house" (332). She is still trying to keep William's love and desire for her to assure herself in the house. While with William, Sugar acts with deference and reminding herself not to make her performances obvious: " "I'm at your service …" she says, squeezing one sharp-nailed fist behind her back, using the pain to remind her that whatever she may be about to do with William … it won't be improved by shrieks of laughter" (*Crimson* 736). Thus, she behaves carefully not to reveal her real ideas and emotions as she struggles for her self-actualization.

As Sophie's teacher, Sugar is responsible for Sophie's education and is supposed to teach her some lessons such as reading, writing, languages, dancing, and manners which are generally taught by governesses of the time. However, since Sugar received no education herself, she firstly tries to figure out what Sophie's been already taught by the previous governess and these turn out to be generally Bible stories and moral homilies. Then, Sugar chooses the topics to teach Sophie, and unlike other governesses, she selects history and geography as main lessons and does

not give importance to others. Thus, Sugar's lack of formal education becomes an advantage for Sophie as she receives unconventional education from Sugar. In this role, Sugar does not only transform herself for the role she fits in but also she adapts the role to shape it according to her own point of view. In this respect, her role as a governess also becomes an unconventional one.

While performing to be a governess, Sugar tries to alter her selection of words and adapts herself to the role. In *Crimson*, it is stated that "[s]he will have to purify her words and thoughts, though, if she's to be a fit governess" (721). Thus, Sugar takes action and suits herself to the role she is currently performing. She continuously uses skills that are reminiscent of theatrical skills, and fits in the role to prove herself useful and indispensable for William. Later, Sugar feels sorry for Sophie, who received no affection from her mother and no real care from her father, and gives her the love and care she needs. Pettersson states that as a governess Sugar "performs roles associated with femininity and maternal instinct, and Sugar develops a strong emotional bond to Sophie Rackham" (333-4). She carries out tasks that she has never done before such as washing Sophie's linens and raising a child. She is also restricted to the nursery room. However, she has an in-between position since she is not regarded as staff or a member of the family. Although she has a very limited living space and position in the household, she concludes her performances in Rackhams' house with the role of governess and liberates herself from the consuming atmosphere of the Rackhams' house and leaves it with Sophie to enact her final role as a single mother.

With all the roles she enacts, Sugar transforms from being an "evil" character to a loving motherly figure through the end of her journey between different roles and performances. Besides, it could be said that Sugar's third role as a governess prepares her for her final role in the novel, the surrogate mother. Although she does not become a wife to William, she certainly becomes Sophie's surrogate mother as she is the one to nurture Sophie like her own child. The life after Sugar and Sophie abandon the house is not given in the story; however, it may as well be regarded as a success as Sugar gets rid of the limited domestic life in William's house and she fulfills her goal to live on her own far from the patriarchal dominance that restricts females from the public space, business and education that are provided for men. To sum up, as Sugar changes spaces from public to private, she turns into a more

domestic figure as the roles require it. Moreover, even though her becoming a private figure means restrictions to her freedom, she manages to transform both herself and the role to her own needs and remains an unconventional woman throughout her performances.

2.6 AGNES AS THE FOIL CHARACTER

Victorian Era can be described as an era of binary oppositions. Thus, the representations of the good and the bad, or the angel and the evil characters can easily be traced in Victorian novels. Likewise, women are generally depicted in a binary of either "fallen" or "virtuous". They are either monstrous, mad women, or pure angels devoted to their family. Therefore, in *Crimson*, Sugar and Agnes primarily seem to be designed as Victorian binaries, which are later subverted in the novel as well as many other Victorian values. Firstly, Sugar is presented as evil since she is sexually well-informed and writes a horror novel explaining her murderous plans on her clients as well as her skin condition and masculine outlook. However, Agnes is the "high Victorian ideal," the perfect middle-class lady who is a devoted Christian and wife (*Crimson* 177). This duality is manifest in the characterizations of Sugar and Agnes throughout the novel. In this sense, Agnes is depicted as Sugar's foil since they are in direct contrast to each other. However, as the story unfolds it is evident that the stereotypical characters change and develop with several events which make William change his ideas towards these female characters.

Whereas Sugar is portrayed as the "evil" character in the story with her performance at the beginning, Agnes Rackham is depicted as the "angel in the house" in *Crimson*. Moreover, Agnes is the representation of the ideal Victorian woman since she is pious, sexually ignorant, and an obedient wife to William. However, as Sugar's affection is triggered with her role as a substitute mother to Sophie, and her "evil" image changes through the end of the novel, Agnes's "angel" image changes as her upbringing, her habits and behaviours as a lady and mother are revealed. Although Agnes is given as the foil character to Sugar since they are in total contrast, Agnes's character and enactments do not reflect an "ideal" Victorian woman in practice.

Agnes is primarily an "ideal" Victorian woman, who is a submissive wife respecting her husband, a lady managing her staff in the house, sexually pure and

ignorant. She fits into the norms that are acceptable in Victorian period which are explained by Barbara Braid, who states in her article that "[a] Victorian lady is supposed to be a submissive, gentle, selfless angel in the house" (Braid 2). Hence, Agnes appears to conform to these norms as a "valid" Victorian woman. She gives importance to her beauty, attends social events for preserving her image as a lady and has had the education that were provided for women in that time, which consists of manners, dancing and music. Therefore, it is obvious that Agnes is presented as the foil character having contrastive features with Sugar. On the other hand, Sugar is regarded as the monster or mad woman as well as her unconventional and "queer" characteristics that are discussed in the previous parts. Her manipulating other men for her own needs and her sexual knowledge and experience are attributed to insanity in that time. Braid also suggests that "[a]nything that was deviant from the norm of passionlessness in marriage – a norm not easy to follow, as it was more an ideal than reality – was monstrous and unnatural" (2). In this respect, Sugar's profession as a prostitute and her skills in it indicate her monstrosity. Her defiance against the boundaries suggests that she is an "evil" character. However, both characters turn out to be quite different from the binary they are believed to represent in the story. For this reason, it may be claimed that Faber subverts those Victorian binaries by presenting Sugar and Agnes different from those binaries.

Although Agnes seems to be the portrayal of a proper middle-class lady, chaste and obedient, she possesses some features that cannot be attributed to a committed angel in the house. Firstly, she fails as a wife, a mother and the manager of the house. Moreover, she has a mental disorder, a tumor that is explained by the narrator but unknown to others in the novel, which causes her to see delusions and act in an unstable way. She is so unaware of her body that she does not accept her own child, Sophie. She believes the baby is a punishment given by demons because of her sins. In this respect, a Victorian "ideal" is subverted by Faber by reconstructing of a stereotypical woman character. Diana Cordea states that "Agnes is the failed result of a rigid and puritan Victorian upbringing and mentality which completely exclude realities of life or the basic human needs" (27). Agnes's inability to carry out what's expected of her, a devoted wife, loving mother, successful household manager, clearly suggest the "inefficacy of an outdated system of values" (Cordea, 27). Because of her mental disorder and beliefs, she cannot carry out her

duties as a wife, a mother or the manager of the house. In this respect, Faber reconstructs the Victorian novel with the subversion of Victorian values. He not only does this through the main character Sugar, but also the foil character Agnes. While, at first, Agnes is portrayed as the perfect or ideal Victorian housewife and compassionate mother, she turns out to be the embodiment of lacks in this assumed ideal. She appears to be the victim of the strict Victorian values which lead to mental disorders resulted from the traumas she experienced because of the inefficient education she was provided with. As Cordea claims "Faber's novel actually reconstructs the minds of the Victorians from the general idea of their purity and virtue, to their wildest sexual cravings and tasters." This idea could suggest the reader that Agnes is illustrative of the Victorian hypocrisy hidden behind the social values and virtues. After her stepfather, who raised her unaware of her body, two other male characters, her husband William and doctor Curlew, have contributed a lot in her mental disorder and imbalance against the realities of life. Her husband is unable to understand her and forces upon her body while doctor Curlew harasses her on his regular visits, all of which displays that she is the victim of male violence and dominance.

However, Sugar, who is portrayed as the "fallen woman" in total conflict with what Agnes is designed to represent as a character, is also presented as revolutionary and "unconventional" since she successfully performs the roles she enters in. She is a prostitute with an intellect that is seen suitable for a man of that period. Since Sugar is well-read and self-educated, she is involved in William Rackham's perfume business, and so she moves forward in her plan to go upwards in the social ladder and slowly obtains economic independence. Although Sugar is the "evil" as opposed to "the angel in the house," she turns out to be the compassionate mother to Sophie and caring guardian for Agnes. Diana Cordea suggests that Sugar "steps outside the comfort of domestic concerns and becomes a revolutionary figure" (29). When she is asked to be Sophie's governess, she takes a big leap towards her goal. Moreover, her unconventionality is observed in the way she teaches Sophie. She expands her education with lessons of history and geography. In the way to achieve her biggest ambition, Sugar performs several acts and proves that "a woman with a strong will can make her decisions regarding her life and that she is the only person to choose for herself and that her mind and her passions are never to be determined or

questioned or banned by the outside world" (Cordea, 31). Sugar refuses to be shaped by other people's choices and resists doing so all her life and becomes successful in the end. Cordea also posits that Sugar "demonstrates that Victorian stereotypical society is blind to the human soul; she is neither an angel nor a monster, but a woman in search of herself, thrown to live and struggle in a society which is not yet ready for people like her and which still needs to learn to forgive, to accept and to adapt" (31). As a consequence, both Sugar and Agnes succeeds to escape from those Victorian stereotypes and values which constraint women from personal and professional development and try to keep them in a private space.

It can be concluded that Sugar and Agnes are "vivid illustrations of a social contrast which characterized Queen Victoria's entire reign" (Cordea, 31-2). However, it should also be posited that both Sugar and Agnes are presented with their differences or marginalities as they do not possess what is expected of them, which subverts the stereotypical representation of Victorian women. In this respect, Faber recreates the Victorian women far from the binaries and opposing to have discriminating qualities imposed by patriarchy.

The characterization of Agnes does not only complement Sugar in terms of how they represent two binary women representations, but it also exemplifies another gender performativity. Thus, it is clear that the idea of gender performances do not only center on the main character Sugar, but it can also be observed in Agnes Rackham, another important female character in the novel. Although Agnes is regarded as the "ideal" Victorian woman in contrast with Sugar, she definitely surpasses the stereotypical limitations as a woman and succeeds to flee from the patriarchal reign with the help of Sugar. Therefore, as another unconventional character, Agnes's performance as a "respectable" middle-class lady deserves the attention. Agnes is raised and taught to be a lady, so she knows she needs to act like one. Though she is sometimes unreliable in her actions, she clearly enacts a role as a lady in the case of social gatherings. In her acts during social events, the reader is made aware that Agnes puts on an act as a lady, for which she rehearses at home. She is raised and trained to be a middle-class lady, so she knows how to seem and behave like one. She attends social events such as opera and plays with her husband knowing that is what is expected from "proper" ladies. She thinks she manages the house and the servants successfully although she is not taken seriously as a household manager.

She knows ladies are supposed to look elegant and fashionable, so she gives much importance to her appearance. All of these ideas are the result of her upbringing and leads to her performances as a "proper" lady as a foil character to Sugar. She acts according to what the Victorian society has taught her to do. In this respect, Agnes is the portrayal of how gendered behaviours and expectations shape women in Victorian period.

2.7 THE CONCEPT OF "THE NEW WOMAN" IN *CRIMSON*

Though not a foil like Agnes, Emmeline Fox is the representation of the New Woman in *Crimson*, complementing Sugar's characterization. Through the end of nineteenth century, "New Woman" characters began to appear in Victorian novels (already discussed in Chapter I). Similarly, these "New Woman" characters are present in the Neo-Victorian fiction as in *Crimson*. Emmeline Fox is presented as the representation of this new type of educated and liberated women. She is a philanthropist, a charity worker helping outcasts such as prostitutes and refugees, to find a job and a lodging place. She is a middle-class lady who is widowed and does not have a child. She is not dependent on a husband and does not want to marry again as she likes being independent. Moreover, being a philanthropist provides her the access to the public space. In this respect, she is not under control of the patriarchal norms and considered an "unconventional" woman for the Victorian age.

Although called Mrs Fox, Emmeline Fox is a liberated woman without the restrictions of a marriage. Because of her marital status as a widow and profession as a charity worker, she is able to move freely in the public space. Her free spirit and assertive character suggest that she enjoys challenging the public and private dichotomy limiting the women to be in private space only, and she does not wish to be restrained by a husband again. Pettersson states that "philanthropists not only destabilised the gendered ideology of separate spheres, but they also found a way to move outside the patriarchal framework" (339). In this respect, Emmeline Fox is another woman challenging gendered space like Sugar and gains her role as a new woman by her interest and work in philanthropy, which grants her the access to public space freely.

Although it is a much freer experience than that of an ideal Victorian woman, being a philanthropist is included in the Victorian gender-restricting ideology. The

reason for that is it is only available to middle-class women, and it is still related to feminine attributes such as being selfless and helpful. Hence, Emmeline Fox is actually is a Victorian character who is not completely "unconventional" like Sugar; however, her characterization is also significant for understanding how a woman destabilizes the gender norms and manifests herself as a liberated woman. Having no husband and children grants her the leisure time and the independence she needs to do charity work. Therefore, Emmeline Fox has the time and freedom to serve within the Rescue Society to help the outcasts. Due to her profession, she is free to wander the streets and does not want to remarry and give away her independence as a woman. Her independent character reveals itself as follows: "she doesn't ever wish to remarry, he says. Oh? What does she wish to do? She spends almost all her time with the Women's Rescue Society" (*Crimson*, 182). She is happy that she does not have a husband and she dedicates her leisure time to help other people. Thus, she defies the norm that a woman needs to have a husband to have a respectable life, and her characterization as a philanthropist complements Sugar's defying and subverting gendered spaces. In this respect, not only Sugar but also Emmeline Fox fulfills herself as an independent woman. Pettersson notes that "Emmeline Fox turns the city into a site of personal fulfilment not only through altruistic endeavour, but in relation to her experience of freedom of movement and power" (339). As a result, it is obvious that Victorian ideology of separate space for separate genders is challenged again by the character Emmeline Fox. By being a charity worker, Emmeline Fox has the access to public space. She disregards her domestic responbilities, yet she uses her feminine attributes to experience the public space freely. Emmeline Fox's experience of the city is provided with her profession like Sugar. In the context of performativity, Emmeline Fox is also performing a role in the streets, though her character is not explored deeply in the novel. With her role as a philanthropist, she becomes an "unconventional" and powerful woman challenging the patriarchal restrictions. In this respect, Emmeline Fox is regarded as an important character as her presence in the novel portrays another example of a liberated woman with a performed role, besides Sugar.

Crimson's protagonist Sugar portrays an unconventional woman character considering the nineteenth-century Britain. She is a witty prostitute who defies the gender norms of the Victorian Era both by her actions and by her physical appearance. She contradicts with the idea of an ideal chaste Victorian woman. She is

depicted as a flat-chested, skinny girl who physically displays masculine traits such as an Adam's apple. Besides her unattractive look, she is into business and trade and is keen on reading and writing. All these characteristics points at how she is actually a "queer" woman who has an indeterminate gender. Sugar is conscious of her queer character, and she challenges the norms with her metaphorical performances while she acts as a prostitute, a mistress, and a governess. Even though she enacts some of the roles that are enabled to Victorian women, she subverts the binaries of private and public spaces. She questions the heteropatriarchy which keeps women in the private space while men can dominate the public space. As a fluid character, Sugar performs to be "the angel-in-the-house" while actually in her mind she plans how to escape from that house. Thus, using performance as a powerful tool, Sugar is able to achieve a self-realization as she gains visibility and mobility with her performances. *Crimson* provides a different level of performativity since it develops through gendered behaviours in a Neo-Victorian context. As it is portrayed in the novel, conscious of the power of performances, the protagonist adopts normative roles and challenges the spaces she pervades in. Therefore, performativity in *Crimson* reflects and reproduces the gendered behaviours and spaces of Victorian London as well as becoming a means of power and mobility for Sugar in the novel.

CONCLUSION

Focusing particularly on sexual and gender practices that embrace not only homosexuality but also a variety of other sexualities, Queer theory emerged in the 1990s and attracted a great deal of critical attention within the Humanities. It has evolved mainly from the feminist and gay/ lesbian identity theories which argued that the identity and desire do not follow from a sex, gender, or sexuality. However, Queer theory differs from these theories in significant ways. Firstly, Queer theory mostly benefits from feminism, but it separates from it in the ways it distinguishes between sex, gender, and sexuality. Whereas feminism merges the terms of sex, gender and sexuality into one, i.e. "gender," Queer sees an obvious distinction between them. Both feminism and Queer theory accept that gender is a social construct, but different from feminism, Queer theorists claim that there is no sex which is not already gendered. Judith Butler, in particular, suggests that "sex itself is a gendered category" (*Gender* 7). Sex, according to her, is also a social contruct that is gendered within the norms. Sex is not treated as the basis of gender but exists as one of the results of gender. Therefore, Queer dismantles the idea that sex is the biological foundation of gender and suggests instead that it is the result of gender itself. In addition, Queer regards that sexuality is the result of social, political and economical practices, following Foucault's arguments. Foucault claims that sexuality is constructed within the discourses of power and knowledge in order to control it. For Foucault, there was a discursive explosion of sex which caused it to become the subject of knowledge and in this way, it was manipulated to conform to the heteronormative order. Therefore, sex and sexuality were constructed and defined by this heterosexual ideology. Combining all of these arguments, Queer theorists do not assume a necessary relationship between sex, gender and sexuality, and they propose that they are mobile, fluid, and changeable. In addition, one basic and important difference of Queer theory is that "queer" is a more inclusive term which can also be regarded as an umbrella term that consists of all possibilities of sexualities. To be precise, Queer theory separates from gay/ lesbian theories by arguing for not only category-limited sexualities like gays and lesbians but also all non-normative identities such as transvestites and hermaphrodites. It can be argued that "queer names or describes identities and practices that foreground the instability inherent in

the supposedly stable relationship between anatomical sex, gender, and sexual desire" (*Queer* 1). As a result, escaping from the minoritizing view of the gay/lesbian theories, queer as an identity stands for all the identities that resist heteronormative order.

Heteronormativity consists of norms which make heterosexuality seem natural, thus superior; therefore, in this ideology homosexuality remains as the inferior and is not regarded as a sexuality. In this respect, Queer theory stands against the heteronormative assumption that sex and gender have a causal relationship. This belief results from the heterosexual ideology that empowers heterosexual relationships with the aim of social, biological, and economic continuation of living; as a result, it disregards homosexuality's existence since it does not provide that continuation. In addition, unlike gay and lesbian theories that suggest coherence between homosexuality and heterosexuality, Queer theory dismantles the supposed superiority of the "compulsory" heterosexuality and argues that heterosexuality depends on homosexuality to exist [13]. Identities are unstable and socially constructed.

Judith Butler extends the idea of social construction of identities with her theory of performativity in *Gender Trouble*. For Butler, identities are merely the effects of certain cultural performances of genders. It is only through the performance of repeated acts is gender constructed as well as the illusion that there is a "true" gender. She claims that "[t]hat the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality" (*Gender* 136). Thus, there is no original or derived gender; yet one becomes "a subject" through a set of repeated actions. The idea of performativity lays bare that gender is a social construct that is fluid, mobile, and open to change. Butler also subverts the idea of a "true" gender by suggesting drag artists' performance as a parody of gender. She proposes that "in imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself" (*Gender* 137). In this respect, gender becomes nothing but a parody. Since drag performers perform a gender that is different from their gender, their performances reveal that gender is merely a copy of a copy. Nikki Sullivan likewise maintains that "drag queers the essentialised and naturalized notions of gender, sexuality, and the subject that are integral to hegemonic discourses and institutions" (*A Critical Introduction* 86). As a consequence, the idea of performativity and drag challenges the possibility of a "natural" and "essential"

gender or identity. However, the performativity of genders should not be understood as a voluntary act as many critics reacted after the publication of *Gender Trouble*. The misreading caused gender to be regarded as an act to be put on consciously by the subject. Butler puts emphasis on this misinterpretation and clarifies it in *Bodies That Matter*. She stresses that "repetition is not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject" (*Bodies* 95) (emphasis in the original). Therefore, the repetition of acts is not taken by a voluntary act because the subject does not exist prior to the acts. However, it is this repetition of acts that makes up the subject or identity. Hence, performativity is regarded as a process that repeatedly constitutes identity. Nevertheless, the correction about the misinterpretation of Butler's theory does not diminish the importance of gender performance for this thesis. In this thesis, Butlerian notion of performativity is analyzed and discussed by two female protagonists' performances in two Neo-Victorian novels in terms of theatricality and parody of genders that subverts the hegemonic norms and values argued by the ideology of heteronormativity.

Sarah Waters' *Tipping the Velvet* and Michel Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White* are selected for this analysis as they illustrate features of Neo-Victorianism in a way that highlights the power of social performance of gender and sexualities. In this respect, the features of Neo-Victorian novels play an important role in this analysis because they adopt themes of gender, class, and sexuality which are deployed differently in Victorian novels. In addition, Neo-Victorian novels rework, reappropriate those themes within a Victorian context from contemporary sensibilities. Thus, these novels often include the "marginalized" or "silenced" characters as the protagonists to subvert the normative discourses of Victorian time. Neo-Victorian writers selected this period since crucial changes such as the Industrial Revolution and the Women's rights occurred in Victorian era, and its literature reflected the relevant ideas and concerns. Regarding the social and economic changes in the period, Victorian writers emphasized the effects on society in their works. They underlined social mobility and the woman question in particular. Similar to the Victorian writers who questioned and stressed the social restraints of the era, Neo-Victorian writers reproduce those works and times with the aim of challenging and subverting Victorian values and norms. The subversion of Victorian

values in Neo-Victorian texts overlaps with Queer theory's challenging of norms in terms of sex, gender and sexuality. In this respect, Queer theory and its arguments about gender and sexuality are easily traced in Neo-Victorian novels. *Tipping the Velvet* and *The Crimson Petal and the White* rework the idea of gender and sexuality, which evokes Butlerian performativity in different ways.

Butlerian idea of queer performativity of sexuality and gender can be traced in various British novels such as John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*, Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* and *The Passion*, and Zadie Smith's *NW*, just to name a few. Performativity is argued and presented differently in these novels with an emphasis on the power of performance of sexuality and gender. In other words, the theory of performativity of genders and sexuality is not limited to a number of novels; it can be analyzed in several other novels as well. However, *Tipping* and *Crimson* are selected because performativity of gender is situated within a common setting in both, that is, a re-imagined Victorian background which enables a series of discussions on sex and gender. Moreover, this performance is a positively presented one. Both novels not only display Neo-Victorianism but they also present the performativity of sexuality and gender as a powerful means to challenge heteropatriarchy. Nancy and Sugar, the protagonists of *Tipping* and *Crimson*, are both empowered with the skill of theatrical performance both literally and metaphorically. They act either onstage or offstage to liberate themselves from the heteropatriarchal system of Victorian age, and struggle to fulfill their wish to become independent "ideal" women.

The idea of gender performativity presents itself differently in *Tipping* and *Crimson*. In *Tipping*, the emphasis of performance and performativity is firstly maintained through the literal theatrical performance of male impersonators, Kitty and Nancy. They are dressed as men and act as mashers on the theatre stage where they become very popular. However, the performance continues even without the presence of an actual stage, and the streets become the metaphorical stage for Nancy. In this part of her life, Nancy cross-dresses as a boy and works firstly in the streets, then for a special society of lesbians. Hence, the idea of Butlerian performativity is portrayed explicitly with different sexualities that Nancy puts on. She constantly changes her looks, behaviours and sexual orientation. She transforms from an oyster-girl to a male impersonator, then a rent boy and a babysitter, and finally a socialist

public speaker where she openly comes out as a lesbian. In this respect, performativity in *Tipping* is not only maintained through social roles but also through sexualities. Moreover, fluidity and diversity are emphasized in the text by presenting various identities such as transvestites and tomboys throughout the novel. The novel portrays the Victorian "gay" life in different places as Nancy searches for an identity within that world. Nancy's changing sexualities create a platform for arguing the performativity of sexualities and gender trouble. Indeed, gender trouble is presented from the very beginning of the novel by referring to Nancy's "queer" identity several times. With references to oyster as a "queer" fish, *Tipping* asserts that Nancy has a fluid and mobile gender that does not conform to the Victorian heteronormativity. As a consequence, the constructedness of gender and sexuality norms are challenged via several enactments of sexualities Nancy performs.

In *Crimson*, on the other hand, performativity functions differently with the character of Sugar, who defies gender roles with her different feminine roles throughout the novel. Butlerian performativity prevails in Sugar's enactments of the prostitute, the mistress, and the governess. Throughout all the roles she puts on, she is presented as a "queer" character as she possesses "unconventional" features. She is masculine in mind and looks, which grant her a "queer" or "not normal" Victorian woman characterization. She is a knowledgeable prostitute, a mistress keen-on business, and an affectionate governess. She transforms herself for all the roles she performs while she transforms and adapts the roles to her own mind and needs. It can be argued that by doing that Sugar defies the gender roles and claims her place as a woman away from binary stereotypes. All of Sugar's performances are acted metaphorically and with the aim of self-realization as a woman. However, the most important difference between Nancy and Sugar's gender performances is that Sugar does not internalize the roles she acts. She manipulates these roles for her aim of escaping from poverty. Nancy, in contrast, internalizes her gender performances. She experiments with the idea of getting into different sexualities and of all the performances she enacts; there is one that she feels most comfortable. That's why she remains in that lesbian performance at the end of the novel. Nancy's primary aim is not gaining power or visibility, but eventually her roles provide her the access of public space and therefore power and visibility in it. Even though Nancy differs from Sugar as she is not intentionally performing roles, different roles of both women help

them to become self-sufficient women away from the binary stereotypes and heteronormative Victorian beliefs. In this respect, for both Sugar and Nancy performativity becomes an important means which renders power, visibility and social mobility.

Moreover, the use of sexuality and gender performances is accompanied by cross-dressing in the characterization of Nancy and Sugar. With this, the subversive feature of drag and cross-dressing is presented to subvert the heteropatriarchal roles that are attributed to genders. Paulina Palmer posits that gender performance "has the effect of deconstructing hetero-patriarchal gender roles and identities, thus exposing their very constructedness" ("Gender as Performance" 26). In this respect, this thesis argues that the protagonists' performances are regarded as a parody of genders and subversion of heteronormative values. Nancy who is presented with several sexualities in *Tipping* discovers the power and mobility gender performances and cross-dressing provide her. Therefore, she changes her sexualities with the use of cross-dressing. After her experience in the actual theatre stage, she buys male costumes and performs as a male character in the streets. Her "queer" physical appearance assists her to look like a man, so she can earn money as a rent boy. In her subsequent roles, the use of cross-dressing grants Nancy the access to different spaces where she continues to search for an identity. Furthermore, in her struggle to escape from patriarchal limitations, Sugar uses cross-dressing as a way to look as a "proper" lady in the streets, by which she gains mobility in the public space. She spends money on fashionable clothes as she knows the importance of looking like a lady to wander the streets in a "respectable" way. Therefore, different from Nancy's cross-dressing as a boy, Sugar's cross-dressing as a lady becomes a means to move upward in the social hierarchy for her, with which she strengthens her performances. In this respect, cross-dressing is performatively used with the aim of challenging values regarding gender and class in both novels. Both Nancy and Sugar gains the access to public spaces which is considered to be available to only men in Victorian era.

The dichotomy of public and private space manifests itself as another significant theme while analyzing the protagonists' gender performances. Sugar's and Nancy's enactments reveal the gendered space of Victorian era. As Lil Elinor Pettersson states "[g]enerally performative spaces are used to debase

heteropatriarchal values about gender roles and to question gender in conjunction with other socially constructed categories as race and class" (229). It is clear that performativity of genders is discussed with the portrayal of gendered spaces in *Tipping* and *Crimson*, which problematizes class discrimination along with gender issues. Firstly, in *Tipping*, Nancy discovers that she could not exist in streets as a girl since the Victorian values do not allow women to wander freely in the public space. To overcome this problem, she performs as a boy and is able to move freely in the streets. Therefore, the norms that confine women to privacy of a home are revealed and challenged at the same time with Nancy's different enactments of sexualities. At the end of the novel, after she experiences the city in her various roles, Nancy finds her place in it as an independent and come-out lesbian. Similarly, *Crimson* illustrates the gendered nature of private and public spaces with Sugar's changing roles. She moves from public to private spaces with every role she acts, yet with her latest role in the novel, she challenges the biases and frees herself off the limits of private spaces. Thus, the public and private dichotomy is portrayed to subvert the Victorian norms about gender-based spaces. Social mobility is also observed with Sugar's roles. Sugar climbs up the social ladder with her performances, by which the stereotypical female roles and the Victorian class issues are criticized. From the "fallen" prostitute into an "angel" governess, Sugar fulfills her wish to escape from poverty and live independently as an "ideal" woman.

The idea of independent women is also present at the portrayal of "New Women" in both novels. Displayed as the complementary foil characters to two protagonists, Florence in *Tipping* and Emmeline Fox in *Crimson* are examples of the New Women, a term describing independent social women workers in Victorian period. These women are presented as knowledgeable philanthropists that can be regarded as "ideal" women in the contemporary sense. In this respect, new women characters play an important role in Sugar and Nancy's journey toward their independence. Their gender performances carry them not only to their self realization and independence but also toward being free and ideal women as depicted by and developed from Mrs Fox and Florence.

Considering all these features, the Neo-Victorian context of both *Tipping* and *Crimson* provides a medium for a Queer analysis. Both novels rework and reconstruct the Victorian narrative which can be analyzed in line with Butlerian

performativity of gender and sexualities. Whereas *Tipping* has an obvious lesbian inclination and works through fluidity of sexualities, *Crimson* builds its analysis of performances with an unconventional female character that suggests the fluidity of genders. Both protagonists represent non-conformist "queer" characters that resist and bend social norms concerning gender and sexuality with gender performativity. Nancy in *Tipping* enacts male roles or she performs different sexualities such as a rentboy and sex slave, but Sugar in *Crimson* gains power by acting "conventional" female roles although she possesses masculine traits, so they both gain visibility and power in Victorian society via their roles. Performances are observed both onstage and offstage by both protagonists. Public and private spaces are transformed into metaphorical stages in both novels to dismantle the Victorian space dichotomy. Moreover, the performances help the protagonists to explore their identities and transform them into their latest roles in the novels. They both use their performances as a strategy to avoid the social restraints and to accomplish their self-realizations as self-reliant women. In this respect, performativity of gender and sexualities both work as an advantage for these female characters to find and claim their places in society and as a means of questioning the validity of Victorian heteropatriarchal norms.

Consequently, the idea of performativity of gender and sexuality is the focal point in both novels as the protagonists experience performativity in different manners; however, they both achieve a self-realization as a result of their performances. Although performativity seems to work differently for these protagonists, it is evident that sexuality and gender roles which are aimed to be overthrown by performativity are characterized and fixed by social regulations which are also portrayed in the novels within a Victorian setting. Both characters manage to release themselves from society's restraints with the help of performance of sexuality and gender, and are able to claim their own independence out of gendered spaces and eventually discover their "fluid" identity.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

[1] In this thesis, the word queer is used in various different ways in various different meanings. When it is used to refer to the concept, it is used with no punctuation or capitalization. When it is used to refer to the theory, it is capitalized. Finally, when it is used to refer to identity, it is used in quotation marks. The reason to do this final punctuation is that the term queer has a variety of meanings and the original meaning has a degrading connotation. Thus, to avoid the negative connotation of the word, I put it in quotation marks.

[2] The works with implications of homosexual love or desire also led to the condemnation of their writers which also suggests that queer was such a taboo subject in Victorian era.

[3] Penelope Deutscher explains the misinterpretation of Butler's idea of drag as a subversion of genders in her book *Yielding Genders.* For more information, see *Yielding Gender: Feminism, Deconstruction and History of Philosophy:* Routledge, 2002.

CHAPTER ONE

[4] Waters' first novel *Tipping the Velvet* (1998) is considered "a saucy, sensuous and multi-layered historical romance" ("*Tipping the Velvet*").*Tipping* is about an oyster-girl Nancy Astley who discovers her sexuality as she comes across a male impersonator Kitty Butler. *Tipping* is a "coming-out" novel, in which the main character comes out as she announces her "queer" sexuality in public. Moreover, it is also a *Bildungsroman*, which is defined as "a kind of novel that follows the development of the hero or heroine from childhood or adolescence into adulthood, through a troubled quest for identity." ("Bildungsroman"). Thus, the reader learns about the maturation process of Nancy in terms of sexuality and identity unlike conventional *Bildungsromans* such as *Great Expectations* and *Jane Eyre,* which depict their protagonists' maturation process in terms of their psychology.

Affinity (1999) is Waters' second novel which focuses on exploration of lesbian identity in a women's prison during 1870s. However, in this novel, a darker and

mysterious atmosphere awaits the reader. The relationship between women of different classes, the prison visitor Margaret and the inmate Selina Dawes, is depicted in *Affinity*, which is regarded as a ghost novel.

Fingersmith (2002), Waters' third novel, also has a Victorian setting. As an orphan grown up among London's petty thieves, also known as fingersmiths, Sue Trinder serves as a maid to Maud, another orphaned yet wealthy girl. Their intimate friendship turns into a relationship, which is described by the two narrators Sue and Maud in two different chapters. *Fingersmith* is regarded both as a lesbian historical fiction and a crime novel.

After three novels that are centered on Victorian lesbian women, in Waters shifts time-space to the 1940sin her next novel *The Night Watch* (2006). This novel consists of the stories of four Londoners Kay, Helen, Viv, and Duncan in the Second World War and the post war period. In addition, unlike first person narration in Waters' previous novels, the narrator in *The Night Watch* is third person. Their stories intersect as their secrets are revealed.

The Little Stranger (2009) is Waters' only novel that does not include lesbian women. It is accepted as a gothic novel featuring a ghost story narrated by a man called Dr. Faraday. Waters focuses on the class system in postwar Britain in this novel.

In her last novel, *The Paying Guests* (2014), Waters returns to writing lesbian historical fiction. This novel is set in London in 1922. It is about the lives of a mother and a daughter who have to rent some of their rooms to paying guests in their house due to financial difficulties. Frances, the daughter falls in love with Lily, who is a married guest.

[5] Jeanette Winterson states, "I am a writer who happens to love women. I am not a lesbian who happens to write" (*Art Objects* 104). Thus, she thinks her being labeled as a lesbian writer limits the reception of her work. She does not address solely to lesbians, queer or women readers "since she does not want her work to be used for sexual politics" (Farkas 133). For a more detailed discussion, see Winterson, Jeanette. *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. Print. Also see, Farkas, Zita. "The Role of Jeanette Winterson's Sexual

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CHAPTER TWO

[6] His first collection of short stories, *Some Rain Must Fall and Other Stories (*1998), is composed of fifteen stories each of which seems unique in terms of voice and style but "Faber's radically inventive style fastens all fifteen stories into a compelling collection" ("Some Rain Must Fall"). These stories include themes like violence, sex, and psychological trauma.

In his first novel, *Under the Skin* (2000), the protagonist is a cannibal female alien who is disguised as a human. She takes up hitchhikers as she drives in the Scottish Highlands. Like many of Faber's works, it is not easy to categorize *Under the Skin*. It bears features of science fiction, horror, and thriller genres.

The Hundred and Ninety-Nine Steps (2001) is a novella in which Sian, the protagonist, joins an archeological excavation and finds out about a mysterious murder in Whitby Abbey. The book is regarded as both as a historical thriller and a gothic romance. Faber provides some colorful photographs to connect the remains of the past to the twenty first century.

The Courage Consort (2002) portrays a vocal ensemble rehearsing a complicated piece in a Belgian chateau. The protagonist, Catherine, who is the soprano of the Courage Consort, is on the verge of suicide. All the members of the group go through a personal and professional outbreak as the novel comes to an end, a tragedy threatens them all.

Faber's second collection of short stories, *The Fahrenheit Twins* (2005), is made up of seventeen different stories whose main characters are dislocated, sad and abandoned.

The Apple (2006) is another collection of short stories; however, it is directly linked to one of Faber's most popular novels, *Crimson*. The abrupt ending of the *Crimson* caused reader reactions, and Faber produced this collection of stories giving glimpses of the lives of the characters in *Crimson*. Though not giving the exact wish the reader wanted, Faber created this collection of *Crimson* stories to give an insight about the characters' previous and later lives.

In 2007, Michel Faber published *Vanilla Bright Like Eminem*, which is another collection of short stories. These stories included features of science-fiction, surrealism and psychology.

The Fire Gospel (2008) is published as a part of the myths series in which writers rework the classical myths, and Faber's novel represents the myth of Prometheus, who stole fire from gods and punished in the end. Theo, a modest academic, steals a gospel from an Iraqi museum which can change all the Christian beliefs, is likened to Prometheus who stole fire from the gods. The novel is regarded as a satire of the publishing industry.

Faber's last novel to date, *The Book of Strange New Things*, was published in 2014. Its protagonist is Peter, an English missionary sent to a remote planet to teach the indigenous people Christianity. The book is a science-fiction novel which deploys themes of love, faith and religion.

Undying: A Love Story is a collection of 67 poems published by Faber in 2016. These poems are all about Faber's wife who died of cancer in 2014. Her illness and how it affected their lives are the main focus of this collection.

[7] Unlike Sarah Waters who writes mainly lesbian novels with the aim of creating a lesbian canon, Michel Faber does not have such a focus in his works. He produces a variety of genres with a variety of themes. However, in *Crimson*, Faber's depiction of a marginalized woman character becoming an independent, self-sufficient woman in a man's world like Victorian England will be the main focus of this thesis.

[8] The omniscient narrator is a biased one that supports the heteronormative discourse, which is evident in his/her depictions of Sugar's intellect, among other various examples. However, this is not the focus of this thesis. The only reason the narrator is mentioned in this thesis is to highlight Sugar's frame of mind and actual plans. Because Sugar always "performs," the only time one can really understand her motives is when the narrator depicts them.

[9] Sugar's prostitute friend Caroline can be described as a typical prostitute compared to Sugar. She is filthy, has a coarse language, and is illiterate unlike Sugar. In this respect Caroline is another foil to Sugar, helping her look unconventional and queer in comparison with other prostitutes.

[10] During Victorian period, public and private spaces were ostensibly gendered. While men of any class or age could wander in city or country, women's existence outside of their homes were highly regulated; indeed, it is usually frowned upon if women wander on the streets unaccompanied. Women were supposed to stay in their homes. However, that trend changed with the emergence of New Woman through the end of the nineteenth century. These new women would work for a charity and could freely exist in the city. Nevertheless, for a long period of time, women kept segregated in their homes, and New Women was still a limited category.

[11] Cheryl Wilson suggests that besides music hall performances, drawing room recital or performances helped shape the feminine sexuality in the nineteenth century. To find a husband, women would show how they fill their hours of leisure in drawing rooms. They would present their skills of dancing, music or knowledge of French to attract a husband. For more information see Wilson, Cheryl. "From the Drawing Room to the Stage: Performing Sexuality in Sarah Waters's *Tipping the Velvet*". *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary journal*, 35:3, 285-305. Routledge. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00497870600571919> (3.05. 2012). Print.

[12] Although her third role enables Sugar's ascension in the social ladder and is considered as an achievement for her, being a governess is not considered an ascension but a descension for Victorian women since governess as a profession results from a familial or personal economic need, and generally upper or middle class women who are in need of money become governess. Thus, from the situation of a "lady", those women descend into a governess who seeks employment. A governess is regarded as an outcast as she is not married, has no children and has to work for her living. Moreover, a governess has to endure some difficulties of treatment as she is neither a servant nor a family member in the house. Thus, the figure of governess suggests inferiority for middle class Victorian women.

CONCLUSION

[13] The interdependence of binary oppositions is argued from the point of Saussurean linguistics. The binary of homosexuality and heterosexuality is regarded not contradictory but complementary, and one does not exist without the presence of other. For more information, see Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* and Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, *Writing and Differance*.

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