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Queer in Europe: Contemporary Case Studies

**Lisa Downing and Robert Gillett (Eds.), London,
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The term *queer* is much contested and forms certain ripples around it when thrown in any sphere of any society. The book 'Queer in Europe' thus, tries to explain with what connotation did the term settle in the periphery of Europe. 'Queer in Europe' clears a lot of misconceptions that one has about the concept of queer. It is not a set of instructions or directions; rather it's an in-depth analysis about the concept of Queer in Europe. The book deals with the progress of sexuality and culture in Europe. The main purpose of its text is to highlight and observe the divisions between one clear line of consistent antiquity, regulation, lived experience and the cultural change of European queer culture.

The book further raises questions for academics to consider the varied conceptions of the 'west' and how new political alliances have come into existence through disintegration and reformulation and indeed how this changes the way socio-sexual existences interact, mature and recognize themselves. By providing case studies all across Europe the book tries to bring out the hidden plurality of the term queer. Lisa Downing and Robert Gillett – the editors who have done a commendable job by bringing along different case studies which show different stories of how Europe is reacting to the LGBT renaissance that has been coming up in the recent times. Also, what is remarkable is how the volume creatively adapts the Anglo-American conception of Queer and templates it within different national backgrounds all over Europe. The book also makes an effort to address the relationship

of queer with activism, religion, capitalism, feminism and whether queer can be an effective and solid strategy to deal with the expressions of hatred.

'Queer in Europe' focuses on separate country by country analysis regarding the term and is less apprehensive in reflecting as a standardized state of Queer activism in the European continent. Although each chapter talks about different gender issues that are region-specific, the chapters on Russia and France are significantly more important for the geo-politics that have been depicted in them. The book fittingly notes that relatable European post-communist platforms such as Russia have an antiquity of heterosexual cultural power and the persecution of anything that didn't assist in a sternly nationalistic command. It also makes an effort to describe how some European country's evolution to capitalism and the liberties and restrictions that this placed on Queer citizens could simply have an entire bulk to itself. 'Queer in Europe' explores and inspects the consequences of some European nation's domineering powers and how this is clarified through to the rest of the Europe. The book further deals with the issue of gender inequalities and discusses how sexual coercion has to deal with unequal rights for women as well as series of gender issues and most importantly the 'labelling' of the citizens on the basis of their sexual orientations for instance 'feminizing' the male homosexual citizen, the collapse of communism guaranteed for a patriarchal revolution after an preliminary period of festivities of observed in dependences. The book addresses how homosexual identity is still a taboo in Europe. To provide a better understanding of this stand, the book depicts how homosexuality was a repeatedly obligatory felonious violation up until 1993 in Russia, and while judicial self-determinations now exist, a prolonged culture of quietness has recognized an existing, inherent, saturating sense of homophobia.

The book is an impressive reflection of the consequences of being a homosexual - as despite having a legal status homophobia is still prevalent across Europe. It also efficiently raises crucial questions regarding the argument of whether relocating reputable expressions would not be interpreted well in many post-communist countries since it embraces a prospect of the activist expressions having a more secured approach of identification than demarcated from the real life experiences of some of its Queer citizens. Queer in Europe reflects the varied concerns of identity within Queer and the discussion of sexually inflicted diseases. It inquires

the likelihood of assimilationist undercurrents within 'gay studies', which can tame the subjects for more effortless lypalatable socio-sexual agitation for the West. It questions the mandate to ascertain conventional Western terminologies that may have (un)intentionally pushed an essentialist line on Eastern as well as Central European country's mushrooming Queer movements.

'Queer in Europe' comes out with a much clearer and flawless depiction of modern European Queer citizenship, activist movements, and concerns as they have been impacted by the by gone stimuli of communism and capitalism. The key prospect of the book is the specificity it brings in while explaining the concept of queer in Europe. What the book has however failed to address is a critical understanding of the term 'queer' in Europe and the historical strings attached to it. The volume shows the issues on queer identities in a heterogeneous light rather than giving a homogeneous view which often have been the case (see Kulpa and Mizielińska, 2011). It could have addressed the issue a little more predominantly by addressing how the term has different sets of enigmas in different areas of Europe because of integral cultural issues.

But it is duly suitable for readers for whom the concept of queer is a very unsettled phenomenon. While the book will be welcomed by scholars of gender studies, it can act as a guidebook to readers who are new to the concept of queer but with a background of sociology and/or psychology since the book deals with gender-specific debates as well as issues like branding of gender based on sexual orientations.

The book has made conscious effort to answer most of the questions that have emerged in the contemporary era with respect to queer studies. The real life experiences provided in the different chapters have made the book 'reader-friendly'. The detailed discussions on queer identities and movement are effective and timely in this post modern era of confused sexual identities. *Queer in Europe* is undeniably a gush of cold breeze in the stroking heat of the several contestations attached to the term.

REFERENCE:

Kulpa, R. and Mizielińska, J., (Eds.) (2011) *De-Centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives*, London: Ashgate