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Digital Queer: Tracing the Digital Discourse around Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code

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Social Media and Digital Activism, in the context of the Global South, have continued to redefine identities and transform traditional notions of citizenship, nationhood, and belonging. With the power of digital technologies to bring public and private issues to light, digital cultures have enabled the shaping of contemporary faces of entire nations in the South. The most potent example of how digital activism and new age digital cultures have helped chisel a South Asian queer identity in India and beyond is Section 377, an archaic, colonial law, established in the country by the British Raj, and that until August 2018, criminalized homosexuality as "carnal intercourse" or an "unnatural sexual act." Although not applicable specifically to homosexuals, it is widely perceived as an anti-queer law in the country; cloaked in colonial textual ambiguity, it directs the colonial desire for sexual control towards colonial societies. This research focuses on an exploration of Indian queer dissident subaltern counterpublics, and how these communities (both members and non-members) congregate on Twitter to combat postcolonial and Victorian structures through new media as a decolonizing and transnational space. Therefore, the hashtags surrounding this event perform and decolonize Indian cyberspaces. The study equally investigates how the new wave of digital activism post reading down of the Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code has fortified identities of the marginalized and the non-marginalized alike and transformed the notion of the "self" and the "other." Given this premise, this paper employs Twitter Search API to collect and filter tweets that explore the private and public discourses of a digital movement that has proved instrumental in the creation of digital spaces for the marginalized "other." This body of work contributes to the pool of research that is focused on the understanding of South Asian digital identities and the creation of their digital spaces as a solution for social, legal, and political discrimination.

Avec l'existence et la création de réseaux et canaux de communication plus récents, les identités de populations continuent à être redéfinies. Les médias sociaux est devenu une force transformatrice dans la formation de nouvelles identités et dans le façonnement des apparences de nations entières. Les cultures numériques et leurs facilités, avec leur capacité à mettre en lumière des enjeux publiques, ont rendu possible le développement de nouvelles identités et de la transformation d'apparences de nations entières.

L'exemple le plus pertinent de la façon dont l'activisme numérique et les cultures numériques de cette nouvelle ère ont aidé à ciseler une identité « homosexuelle » sud-asiatique en Inde et ailleurs concerne la loi coloniale archaïque établie en Inde qui définit n'importe quelle « relation charnelle » ou « acte sexuelle contre nature » comme illégale pour les hommes, pour les femmes et pour les animaux. Bien que cette loi ne s'applique pas spécifiquement aux homosexuels, elle est largement perçue dans le pays comme une loi anti-homosexuelle.

Compte tenu de cette prémisse, cet article se sert d'interfaces de programmation d'application (*API*) de Twitter pour filtrer des tweets qui discutent de ce sujet afin d'explorer les discours privés et publics d'un mouvement numérique qui a été déclenché comme réponse à son établissement ce qui a contribué à la création d'espaces numériques pour « l'autre » marginalisé.

Cette recherche suit la transformation des médias sociaux en plateforme pour des espaces contre-publics subalternes et examine la manière dont cela facilite le développement d'un réseau neuronal de solidarité des jeunes parmi plusieurs contre-publics dans la catégorisation de la formation d'identités collectives. Cette recherche enquête sur la façon dont la nouvelle vague d'activisme numérique qui fait suite au code pénal 377 a renforcé les identités des marginalisés et celles des non-marginalisés de la même manière. Cette étude examine aussi la façon dont cette nouvelle vague d'activisme numérique a transformé les notions de « soi » et de « l'autre ». Cet article contribue à la recherche qui se focalise sur la compréhension des identités numériques sud-asiatiques et sur la création d'espaces numériques comme solution contre la discrimination sociale et légale.

Mots-clés: Humanités numériques; Activisme numérique; Queer numérique; Section 377 IPC; Subalterne; Communautés virtuelles

1. Introduction

The existence and establishment of contemporary and advanced networks of communication continue to redefine identities of people. Digital spaces have become a "powerful place for the circulation of ideas, and the construction of

access to different communities" (Bailey and Gossett 2018, 34). Digital cultures have enabled a transformative shift in the construction of both personal and collective identities, building of communities of empathy, and the circulation of non-traditional ideas of nationhood. Particularly pertinent here is the use of digital media for protest in the 'Global South,' a term that has largely replaced 'Third World' or 'Developing countries' (Arun 2019, 3), and presently translates to technologically challenged nation states in capitalist economies. Padmini Ray Murray (2018) notes that the advent of digital media in the particular context of India has inevitably given risen to the use of the platform for activism and regrouping. Social media facilitates "embodied interactions in urban geographies" (Losh 2014, 13), and empowers "communities of disenfranchised who thrive in spaces of alterity" it creates (Ray 2018). The last decade in India has witnessed the formation of "multiple registers of modernity, identity, and community" (Shah, Chattapadhyay, and Sneha 2015, 9) on virtual platforms.

I examine the Indian digital queer revolution surrounding the reading down of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, that has paved the way forward for the construction of safe spaces online for the queer subaltern; in the form of dissident queer counter-publics (Fraser 1990). Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was an archaic colonial law, that until a recent momentous verdict by the Supreme Court in August 2018, criminalized homosexuality. The digital wave that called for the reading down of the law created pockets of 'postcolonial unrest,' in favour of acknowledging queer desire and identity in traditional India. Similarly, the movement has successfully forged a virtual community of transnational empathy and support. The Indian queer movement has grown into a political mobilization for marginalized communities online and has engendered greater political participation among the nation's youth.

Through the most potent example of contemporary fortification of queer desire in urban India and the Indian diaspora, I investigate online collectivities of the queer subaltern and/or queer empathy within cyberspaces in India and among the Indo-Canadian diaspora. I am interested in how communities organize themselves online in a veritable act of decolonization and progressive transnationalism. I illustrate, through my argument, the manner in which Twitter discourses on #Section377 are

categorized into postcolonial and transnational; indicative of hashtag performance that decolonizes Indian cyberspaces.

Websites and new media technologies, such as WhatsApp, public discussion forums, gay discussion forums and Bollywood films have been analyzed previously by queer scholars like Rohit Dasgupta, Rahul K. Gairola, and Radhika Gajjala who bring the problematics of intersectionality that necessitates a discussion with respect to the Indian Digital Queer (Dasgupta 2017; Dasgupta 2018; Gajjala 2012; Gairola 2018). I provide a rhizomatic examination of Twitter discourses around cultural ideas of nationhood for the global queer Indian network, and representations of a movement to combat certain rigid perspectives on ways of living, and sexual desires. The hashtags here, speak to the online struggle against hegemonic, heteronormative, patriarchal, masculine, postcolonial and nationalistic representations of traditional cultural values.

2. Section 377

Section 377 was introduced by the British Raj in 1861 as a reflection of state-sanctioned homophobia of the Victorian British empire. It was modelled after *The Buggery Act of 1533*, which was England's first civil sodomy law that prohibited anal sex, bestiality and homosexuality. It read:

> Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine (Section 377 IPC Unnatural Offenses). (Dasgupta 2018, 183)

The 1861 Offenses Against the Person Act relating to the offences against a person, was unified under a single Act, without variation in its text, and for purposes of maintaining simplicity in colonial laws across it colonies. As a display of blatant colonial imperialism and Victorian values, the British Raj reduced and relabeled queer sexual desires as criminal acts and classified same-sex along with child sexual abuse and bestiality. Thus, British colonialism targeted queer rights in its colonial societies (Han

and O'Mahoney 2014). Eventually, Section 377 became a free colonial experiment that was shaped by homophobic attitudes and imported to colonized societies (Gupta 2006). Its colonial hegemony, primarily serving imperialist interests was adopted by the Indian Constitution as an instrument of sexual, moral and religious policing of the masses, and remains a vestigial reminder of colonial oppression. Although Indian society traces its origins in a much more liberated sexuality, colonial laws in tandem with Indian culture have sought to repress 'non-traditional' sexualities in recent times. The law, in its textual subtlety does not specifically call into question the queer right to be queer. According to Gupta, the law carried vestigial traces of ambiguity and vagueness surrounding the nature of unnatural touch, and remained until its reading down, "shrouded in euphemisms" (2006, 4816). Thus, it catered directly to Victorian homophobia and notions of masculinity, that was designed to protect the colonizer and manipulate the colonized. Since its penetration and eventual adoption into Indian society, the postcolonial had incorporated the colonial aspect of suppression of sexual identities in the public sphere. Section 377 remained interpretive of regressive national politics and suppression, dismissal even, of queer desire, identity and violence against queer communities.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA) movement in India emerged, partly, as a response to the criminalization of subaltern identities and a public health crisis at a time when the law became a subject of reform for HIV/AIDS outreach to vulnerable groups (Haldar and Kant 2018). In 2001, the NGO Naz launched the fight for legalization of same sex public relationships, through a direct impact of transnationalism and globalization in India. In 2003, the High Court dismissed the Foundation's appeal, and the Supreme Court instructed the Delhi High Court to reconsider the case, leading to a remarkable judgement in 2009 that decriminalized homosexuality. However, the Supreme Court overruled the decision in 2013 with the view that the law merely criminalizes certain 'unnatural acts' and it did not remain in function with the intention to target specific identities or groups for discrimination. In January 2018, the Supreme Court pledged to revisit its decision, and in August 2018, eventually declared the law prohibiting same-sex love as 'unconstitutional.' The Naz Foundation engaged in an almost decade long

battle to amend Section 377; to liberate it from deeper colonial ambiguities of sexual categorization, and to decriminalize homosexuality by according a right to privacy, equality, dignity, and non-discrimination to consenting adults.

3. Digital activism

Traditionally, face-to-face interactions engender disguised engagement wherein identity claims cannot go further than the limits set by embodiment (Garcia-Gomez 2010). The advent of the internet as a tool has transformed identity production, consumption, and perception. Distant from physical offline presence, "online discussion forums give rise to opportunities for queer youth to engage in different kinds and means of virtual intimacies, friendships and sexual relations" (Dasgupta 2018, 933). The internet, in this sense, becomes what Steven G. Jones contends as a "community free of the constraints of space and time so as to engage with humans irrespective of geographic proximity and the clock (1998, 10)." Building on Anderson's (1991, 49) idea of an "imagined community," Rheingold cites Marc Smith, "virtual communities require an act of imagination to use…and what must be imagined is the idea of the community itself" (1993, 54). Anderson's communities are constructed purely on the style of imagination rather than in their falsity or genuineness; an imagination that gives particular political and cultural shape to the queer movement in India that has begun modes of inquiry on the self and the 'other.' Digital activism surrounding the 'queer problem,' in short, has enabled and encouraged the shattering of boundaries between the real and the virtual in the Global South. Nancy Fraser (1990) argues for the existence of various counterpublics that resist the hegemonic and dominant public sphere that categorically excludes women and queer communities. Her subaltern counterpublics explicate ways in which these marginalized communities can discursively create their own alternative public spheres. Cyberculture and the 21st century public sphere "denote a present homonormativity that defies the heteronormative construct of society" (Fraser 1993, 57).

The Indian queer congregate on the internet as subaltern counterpublics through their prevalence on social media websites such as Facebook, Myspace and Twitter that add more dimensions to discussions on queer identity instead of just existing on primarily queer websites (Dasgupta 2018, 6). These sites have become

more than mere mediums that encourage discourses on counter-publics in digital spaces. How do these queer subaltern counterpublics congregate around discourses surrounding their sexuality? How do these communities decolonize, and speak out against postcolonial heteronormative traditions online? How do tweets 'perform' empathy for issues concerning the gendered subaltern? In short, how does social media enable the formation of empathetic counterpublics that form a national and progressive movement of queer acceptance?

Online activism following the reading down of the law continues to serve as witness to the re-emergence of a marked defiance and blatant gesture of rejection of colonial legacy. India has witnessed the rise of a political assertion of the private realm of sexuality (Narrain 2004). The outburst following the decriminalization seemed to a "culminating moment of the 'performative coming-out' of queer sexuality in public spaces wherein celebratory spectacles like pride parades" and other flamboyant gestures contrasted the earlier "clandestine subcultures of queer life; superseded by a new wave of digital activism that inundated" (Ghosh 2014, 163) the public and political discourse in tandem with queer politics. Through constant dismissals and vacillations in the matrix of decision making, India eventually concluded that it belongs to a transnational network of a new wave of modernity in sexual acceptance; an acceptance that could occur through online congregation and activism. At this juncture, queerness has come to redefine presence and the politics of visibility in the public sphere. Since queer cultures are not simply created through normative publics, (Dasgupta and DasGupta 2018) they necessitate creation of new spaces that will subvert and question official spaces. I emphasize the pertinence of dissident queer publics in the Indian context. As queerness becomes a political struggle, it translates directly into an act of colonial resistance, and marks the digital as a space for decolonization through discourses.

4. Methodology

I analyze tweets that discuss public discourses around court proceedings, particularly following the Supreme Court's decision to reconsider the law in January 2018, in an attempt to locate the "Victorian prudishness" (Gairola 2018, 86) of Section 377 that is laid bare on social media. I engage textually with tweets on the reading down

of the law where the hashtag movement operates as a digital statement for queer desire in postcolonial India. I investigate hashtags pertaining to the event such as #377quitindia, #article377, #homosexuality, #ipc377, #lgbtqia, #respectforlgbtq, #strikedown377, #lgbtqazadi, #respectforlgbtq, #criminalize+homosexuality, #decriminalize+homosexuality, #equal+rights, #queer+identity and #queer+pride. Tweets that were publicly available were filtered and collected using Twitter Search API (Twitter 2020) in the month of January 2018 to study the discourses surrounding the movement online. I use geographical filters to restrict content from in and around New Delhi, India and Toronto, Canada. Some of the hashtags chosen for analysis remain specific to the queer movement in India, while the rest are in relation to the global digital queer movement that affects and influences the Indian movement. I employ a critical postcolonial DH framework and a close reading/interpretation methodology to understand the postcolonial, progressive, and transnational movement. I am interested in how "online communities form and assemble around particularly charged keywords, energized by access to a shared lexicon" (Losh 2014, 11).

I would like to clarify the limitations of my methodological venture. The internet is itself a minoritized and condensed view of reality—particularly in India—wherein problems of access and lack thereof must be strictly addressed. The "role of media cannot be reduced to the percentage of a nation's population that is online," to reiterate Anderson's idea of an imagined community, because it "alters the architecture of connectivity across an entire society even when much of it may not be connected" (Tufekci 2018, 6). Although the argument lies at the heart of an establishment of a larger queer community online, it does not, and cannot completely represent the larger population.

The tweets below contribute to fruitful dialogues on digital discourses on queer world making, and my research posits sufficiency in the location and geography of the twitter participants as indicators of how particularizations of similar ways of life affect the Indian queer. The following filtered tweets will be representative of the arguments I attempt to make in the categorization of queer world making in the Indian queer context surrounding the reading down of Section 377.

5. Tweets

The first argument I make is that digital affordances create a political statement in the attempt at rejection of colonial power structures and policies surrounding the law; a rejection that I argue emerges as a form of repudiation and an attempt at destabilization of postcolonial and colonial authority and aspect of nation building. This is to argue that participants are tweeting to defend a New Constitution towards a process of building new ideologies which subvert postcolonial hegemonic heteronormativity that both colonial and the postcolonial institutions have advocated for.

Victorian law as a dystopic vision for colonized societies was meant to preserve Christian values, and to police acceptable desire. For the British, normative and normalized conducts in love signified a heteronormative encounter, while the rest were labelled 'unnatural.' Queering the society was therefore an essential step towards questioning assumptions of a single and dominant system of knowledge. Rohit Dasgupta and Debanuj DasGupta (2018) assert in *Queering India* that queerness is "considered as a form of questioning dominant knowledge formations that work to (de)construct normative ideas of gender, reproduction and the family" (1). Public discourse "dictates the need for repudiation of a heteronormative homophobic idea of a nation" (2). Collective virtual identities re-assert queering with dominant power structures that digital discourses reject. This rejection is directed towards the colonial as much as towards the post-colonial aspect of nation building. Ironically, the Supreme Court as the supreme authority becomes the legitimate representation of the 'other'; a rendition of colonial supremacy mirroring vestigial patriarchal authority. Religious sections and justice re-emphasize a brand of nationalism that falls in imitation with colonial oppression against the subaltern. The authority is exercised as a means to subdue the powerlessness and strip them of a voice. A postcolonial nation provokes the question of an identity of a people where they must define themselves in the context of a changing society. The following twitter feeds work in conjunction with these observations with most writing in anticipation and desire of overthrowing both colonial, postcolonial, and patriarchal notions of control.

Jagrati Shukla (2018) and Siva Aham Shivoham (2018) wrote:

Shukla: "It's a shame we're still governed by Victorian Era Laws. Supreme Court has finally acknowledged the change in Society. All Consensual Sexual Acts among Adults must be Decriminalized, #Section377 Amended and #Section495 Struck Down. #Respect for #LGBTQ." January 10, 5:14 p.m.

Shivoham: "#article377 as it was formed based on #christian supremist agenda of #british which considered #indians behaviour as idolaters. Indian perspective is different than west." (January 9, 5:32 p.m.)

Avinash Shishoo (2018) wrote:

Shishoo (laidback1954): "There is nothing like a SC judgement. There is only judgments by SC judges. #NationalAnthem and #Article377 again prove it." (January 9, 9:59 p.m.)

Twitter participants including Shukla, Shivoham, and Shishoo acknowledge and resist the law as a supremely colonial experience. Shishoo goes as far as to accuse the participants of the institutions of postcolonial heteronormativity. The postcolonial and anti-colonial aspects become important in the advocacy and acceptance of queer desire and the queer way of life; of a slow interpretation and inculcation of newer perspectives. The active participation online against these institutions and the individuals that belong to these institutions ushers social, cultural, and political change to pave the way towards a modern India. The homophobic and queerphobic Court is condemned in Aashish Khetan's tweet when he writes (2018):

Khetan (@AashishKhetan): "It's heartening to see SC deciding to revisit its earlier verdict on Sec 377 – an archaic section which violates fundamental rights. Waiting for the day SC relooks at its verdict on criminal defamation, again an anachronistic provision that should have no place in modern India." (January 8, 4:13 p.m.)

Khetan and the rest reiterate the need for postcolonial laws that reject an imitation of British colonialism. The very position of being a citizen of a particular country (postcolonial nationalism and patriarchy), often runs counter to queer subjectivities and strategies which are not always invested in the concept of 'belonging' or ascribing to the normative ideals and delineations of a given space or cultural territory. To further contextualize the argument, the institution of the Indian queer is, often at odds and in opposition to a heteronormative, homophobic and masculine ideal of the Indian nation (Dasgupta 2018). The postcolonial nation has taken on the colonial responsibility for regulating the sexual desires of the public, with religion and cultural perspectives contributing to heteronormative values. However, the driving force for the digital activism campaign lies in its decolonizing nature and its focus on the construction of newer collectivities in the name of queerness.

Postcolonial Digital Humanities scholar Roopika Risam argues in Fanon's words, for the need to use digital technology to "dismantle the master's house" (2018, 79). How can digital media be harnessed to undo colonialism? What processes can the Global South cultivate online to subvert "epistemic colonial violence" (79). I argue that Indian cyberspaces through activism are beginning to undo colonial and postcolonial structures on digital platforms; speak out against hierarchies of knowledge. In essence, subaltern communities are employing digital tools to overthrow Victorian and post-Victorian institutions.

The second argument I make is that online gendered collectivities employ hashtags in the construction of transnational and globalized identity making; in the empathetic support and building of safe spaces that the online platform has provided for queerness to thrive. Even within a sexually conservative country like India, with sexually minoritized groups challenging the public and private boundaries and the authority of the state to make laws that discriminate their rights and desires, social media platforms have revealed a certain 'newfound collective sexual awakening.' Here, the community can perform queering as a gesture of dismissal that works against the discourse of power and truth around human sexuality (Foucault 1978). My argument posits in this depiction, a level of mutuality and collective empathetic understanding for and among South Asian communities whose attempt at asserting

power demonstrates itself through a queering togetherness. For example, participants of the common Indian Queer platform on Twitter wrote:

India Culture Lab (@queer_azaadi RT @IndiaCultureLab): "Sometimes we need to get out of our own comfort zone and invite people inside" (2018, 5 January, 12:54 p.m.).

India Culture Lab (@IndiaCultureLab): "We have to make sure that in guise of creating these safe spaces, we do not bring our own biases into play within these spaces. We need to form alliances with the straight community." (2018, January 5, 6:29 p.m.)

Indian Culture Lab (@IndiaCultureLab): "Apart from focusing on our identities, we need to also look at commonalities, other sections of society that have the same set of problems and create a network of solidarity – #SachinJain #GHAR #LGBTQNow #377QuitIndia @queer_azaadi." (2018, January 5, 6:40 p.m.)

These tweets highlight the intention and inclination to 'create a network of solidarity'; a space for the queer community to flourish where participants do not necessarily identify as members of the group. The queer and the non-queer strive to 'come-together' to shape an environment of queer collectivity that understands the self through the other. I wish to clarify that my intention is not to drown in the binaries of the self and the other. Instead I intend to demonstrate the evolution and development of a collective sharing of queer spaces on social media platforms. These collective queer spaces act not merely as an exchange between counter publics and the non-queer, but also as zones of empathy, support and desire for togetherness within the community. For example, Parihar and Bhattacharya (2018) wrote:

Parihar (@rushva): "If we can't get an empathy infused society, then we have to accept strategic essentialism – as a coalition of different sections of society we have work together to achieve common goals – just like in coalition politics. #LGBTQNow." (2018, January 5, 6:19 p.m.)

> Bhattacharya (@KokilaB): "I am a heterosexual woman identifying as an LGBTQIA person. Problem?" (2018, January 11, 10:11 p.m.)

Both Rushva and Bhattacharya exist in what I call 'queer empathy zones' where the queer and the non-queer not merely function together, but where the non-queer work in tandem for queer support. I contend that hashtags, in this context, have successfully created a performative aspect on digital social spaces. What I mean here by performance can be perceived by the possible non-queer participants that accompany the political queer discourse. Their voices echo together on the digital platform as one queer voice. Simply put, to empathize with the queer struggle means to perform digital queerness; to be involved enthusiastically in a decolonizing gesture of subaltern counter public digital space. Performance, therefore, in this context engenders what Altman describes as "global queering" wherein "queerness is now global" (Altman 1996). Whether in "advertising, film, performance art, the Internet, or the political discourses of human rights in emerging democracies, images of queer sexualities and cultures circulating around the globe" (Cruz- Malavë and Manalansan 2002, 1), queerness associates with a globalism that differentiates itself from Western definitions of modernity and progress, that characterizes itself simply in solidarity. The final point of contention in the categorization of community building is the Indian diasporic engagement in identity construction. Diasporic engagement, however minimal, has enriched the Indian Queer movement; has given it a voice of support that the movement needs. It is a globalized voice; a carryover of human rights from within the homeland. However, the queer movement plays a dual role in diasporic engagement. Sengupta (2018) from Toronto wrote:

> Sengupta (@HindolSengupta): "Logically, sensibly, culturally, civilizationally, in every way #Article377 is a blot on Indian." (January 9, 17:24 p.m.)

The diaspora supports the movement, and in turn, is blessed with a similar cultural uplift that the urban Indian acquires. Their identity is fractured, hybrid and fluid, and therefore, easily incorporates the idea of nationhood and sexuality of the homeland.

However, the diaspora also plays an emergent role of movement sponsorship from the West that enables the blossoming and spreading of the 'Indian brand of queerness'.

6. Conclusion

Community building exists online in various formats. In this era of globalization and digitization, it is imperative to understand how virtual communities function and conduct themselves, not merely for the purpose of activism but also for new means of citizenship that are slowly beginning to emerge through digital affordances. Fraser's subaltern 'sphericules' dominate the online public sphere in fractions, and successfully lend voice to the subaltern with access to technology; to various movements that enable the construction of separate, safe and empathetic spaces for the presence of the marginalized.

I locate queerness here, as a massive force of resistance (Ruberg, Boyd, and Howe 2018) that has decisively rewritten imperialist heteronormative notions of sexuality and opposed traditional structures of postcolonial patriarchy and toxic masculinity through social media. The Indian movement demonstrates queer world building across national borders and showcases queerness as alternate way of life; a desire to understand life "otherwise" (Halberstam 2011, 2). The term, queer, therefore, functions as a particular way of thinking for the Indian youth that defies all traditional expectations; a term that in Halberstam's words, never ceases in self-construction and self-critique; that is in a spiral of constant motion and meaning making. Queerness becomes, in this context, an act of destabilization of unequal lines of power, and evokes an all-inclusiveness that characterizes the digital era. Discourses of queer identity forge digital spaces for interaction and dialogue as a means of support for a transnational movement of queering (Roy 2003).

The Indian Queer movement has undeniably been at the forefront of fight in the Global South in the quest for meaning, awareness, and an epistemological understanding of the term 'queer.' It continues to fight for basic acceptance in the foundational definition of queerness, for decolonization of Victorian institutions, even after the decriminalization of the law. Although the fight has taken different

forms in the shape of nationalism and globalization, I contend that queer empathy zones will create larger movements and safer spaces for the queer to exist as they are, and will bring the movement to everyone in the quest for the queerness within.

Competing Interest

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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