

UNPACKING GENDER ROLES IN LANG LEAV'S SELECTED POEMS: A JUDITH BUTLER FEMINIST ANALYSIS

Sameera Iftikhar^{*1}, Sumbal Sarwar²

^{*1}MS in English, English Department, International Islamic University, Islamabad;
²M.Phil in Linguistics, Department of English Linguistics, Air University, Islamabad

^{*1}Sameeraiftikhar89@gmail.com; ²Sumbul.sarwar90@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

Received: 28 February, 2024

Revised: 28 March, 2024

Accepted: 06 April, 2024

Published: 20 April, 2024

ABSTRACT

This research paper intends to carry out a thorough analysis of gender roles in some of the poems from Lang Leav's collections "*The Universe of Us*," "*Memories*," and "*Love and Misadventure*." Using the masculine framework of Judith Butler, this analysis will be undertaken. The research seeks to show how Leav's work depicts, confirms, or defies the conventional norms and gender roles in particular to Butler's concepts of performativity, gender as a social construct and subversion of the binaries. Through careful analysis of the poetic dimension of Leav's works, themes and characters, this study will provide a better understanding of contemporary gender relations and representations. Finally, this paper's importance lies in its interdisciplinary approach, the reason it engages with modern cultural artifacts and the depth at which it uses literature and popular culture to interpret gender representations, agency, and social constructions.

Keywords: Feminism, Judith Butler, Gender Roles, Lang Leav, Poetry

INTRODUCTION

Lang Leav is a contemporary poet and author, who charms with her expressive and universal language that touches the chords in all of us. Her works often deal with such topics as love, loss, identity, and self-discovery, and she is very good at weaving them into lyrical and moving tapestry of emotions, memories, and reflections. Leav began gaining her notoriety mostly through social media outlets, especially Tumblr, where her poetry and prose pieces found a big audience. In her writings, she has a unique talent for describing universal feelings and experiences in a simple yet deep way that appeals to readers of all generations. The availability of Lang Leav's poetry in the relatability and depth of emotions, is the key factor. Mostly, she gets her inspiration from her own personal experiences, relationships, and moments of self-reflection, pouring her own emotions and reality into her pieces. Navigating in difficult emotions like broken heart, longing, hope, and resilience, Leav's poetry makes the readers relate to their own feelings and experiences.

What is more, Leav's poetry crosses the traditional borders of genres by using prose, storification, and visual imagery to build immersive and absorbing

narratives. Through her collections like the "*The Universe of Us*," "*Memories*," and "*Love & Misadventure*," she illustrates a wide range of topics and emotions, leading the readers into a journey of self-discovery and emotional exploration. In today's literature context, Lang Leav's literature holds a special place by filling the gap between profound literature and popular literature. Her poetic voice, which is plain, honest, delicate and relatable, still impresses people around the globe and thus she becomes a landmark figure in modern poetry and she is also the idol of younger poets and writers.

Judith Butler is a known female philosopher with whose contributions into the gender studies, queer theory and feminist rhetoric became very important. One of the main points of Butler's theory is the concept of gender performativity, which dismantles the beliefs of gender as a permanent and biological trait, and discourses it instead as being a cultural and social construct that is being constantly enacted and performed. According to Butler, biological sex is not an obligated attribute as a gender; it is something that people do through acting out, expression, and behavior. The personalities are

not natural or destined but learned, additionally, they do normally go through social norms, expectations, and institutions. Butler argues the power of social norms, communication, and culture in the construction as well as in enforcing gender expressions. She condemns, as constraining and discriminating, the traditional concept of gender as simply either male and female. Instead, she proposes a more enriching and comprehensive perspective that accommodates all gender identities and expressions. Butler's work highlights the occurrence of sub-tradition and rebellion in the formula of gender performance. The process of challenging the accepted normative roles of gender as well as the expectations can result to the break-up of established stereotypes as well as hierarchy, resulting in the gender diversity and inclusivity. Butler's theory contribute to the understanding of other aspects, that is, race, class, sexuality, and IQ, the intricate interrelationship exists. She argues for considering and motivating the role of different oppressed or discriminated woman in feminist and social justice movements. Butler's insights have had a much more radical influence on feminist and queer theories, as well as other understandings of the gender and identity, allowing for richer and more complex approaches to these matters. She has brought to the fore the performative dimensions of gender, which has furthered our contemplation from a critical lens to address how power, languages, and norms mediate our perception of gendered experiences.

As a whole, Butler's perspectives on gendered performance offer a pioneering approach to understand and contradict traditional ways of thinking on gender, adding therefore to the debates concerning identity, agency, and social transformation within feminist theory and practice.

Scope and Constraints of Research Paper

Scope

The research paper will focus on gender roles in selected poems from the collections of "*The Universe of Us*," "*Memories*", and "*Love & misadventure*" by Lang Leavan through the lens of feminist theories of Judith Butler. Additionally, it will involve the investigation of Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity, social construction of gender and unhinging of gender binaries which can be applied while doing literary analysis. Moreover, this work will use close reading and textual analysis to discover if the poems of Leav

show traditional gender norms and patterns support, or question or challenge.

Limitations

Being limited to a few poems from Leav's collections, it is possible that the findings might not be reflective of the poet in its entirety. Similarly, my research will be interpreted and analyzed within the framework of my own interpretation and understanding, which might not be a reflection of the poet's intention, or that other scholars have proposed. Analysis is mainly concerned with gender role within poems, however, other broader features such as the cultural influence and historical context will not be well explored. Apart from this, the study of interpretations of poetic texts is immensely subjective, and there is no doubt that, although we would strive to be objective, the biases and personal perspectives of the researcher may affect the research's conclusions. The results and the insights gained in this research may not be generalized for all literary text or cultures as they are the only ones suitable to be applied to Lang Leav's poetry and Butlerian feminist criticism.

Nonetheless, the paper attempts to present a detailed and thought-provoking view of the issue of gender in Lang Leav's poetry from the vantage point of Judith Butler's feminist theory thereby, contributing to the development of this field.

Significance of Research

This work fills the gap in the literary research by exploring the feminist theories of Judith Butler and how these apply in analyzing gender representations and roles as they appear in contemporary poetry, especially in Lang Leav's works. It delineates an organized framework for articulating the complications of gendered roles, social construction of gender, and gender dichotomy in poetic texts. Also, because this paper examines Leav as poems with a wide appeal, it reveals that contemporary literature deals with and reflects changes in gender norms and societal expectations and individual identity. It helps to understand how these literary works create discussions on gender in modern culture. Secondly, this document allows it to fill the gap between feminist theory (i.e., Judith Butler's ideas) and creative writing in literature. It shows us how using poetry as the means to challenging, overthrowing or even confirming socially imposed gender norms can help readers and

scholars to gain additional perception of the complexity of the gender representation. Lang Leav's fame and cultural impact mean that her poetry provides a valid space for research on popular culture. The paper not only scrutinizes individual poems but also sets them within a larger cultural matrix, focusing on the connections poets forge with their readers, as well as their relationship to cultural narratives about gender and relationships. The research work holds educational value, not only to students, but also to scholars, educators, and those interested in feminist theory, gender studies, literary criticism and cultural analysis as well. It creates the opportunity for research across disciplines and shows the values of critical discussion on gender, identity, and literary representation.

Research Questions

1. How is gender presented in selected poems from Lang Leav's poetry collections, namely "*The Universe of Us*", "*Memory*", and "*Love & Misadventure*"? In what extent the poems sustain traditional gender norms and identity, and in which way they defy or overturn it?
2. Through what means does Lang Leav's poetic language, themes, and characterization address the issue of how gender performs, how gender is depended on social contract, and how they are subversive of gender binary in the poetry of chosen poems?
3. Does Lang Leav's poetry, as a result of the application of the feminist approach of Judith Butler, reveal modern gender patterns and representations in literature, and how could these insights make us start broad public discussions on the issues of gender roles and identity construction?

Objectives of Research

- For the components of extensive examination of the sample of poems in her collections where I intend to catch and correspondingly, analyze the moments in which she portrays traditional gender standards or the very notion of gender identities, with the method of close reading, to indicate and then analyze whether they are called into question or rather, shown to be at

variance with the message that the poetic narratives convey.

- Utilizing Judith Butler's feminist theory which is based on the pillars of gender performativity, social construction, and subsequent deconstruction of gender binaries is the essence of my analysis. This approach will be applied in the textual features, themes and the characters we come across in the poem.
- The idea is in exploring the insight provided into the current gender identity dynamics and literary representations by the fusion of the poetry of Lang Leav and Judith Butler's feminist theories, and ultimately offering viewpoints which can be used to lead to discussions on the gender role, identity constructions and societal norms.

Literature Review

The feminist movement in literature is the outcome of various studies after which there is the introduction of subjects such as gender roles, identity, and empowerment in literary works. Critics, like Smith (2018), say that the literacy of feminism is a platform through which the oppressive nature of society norms and gender equality are fought for. Lang Leav is awarded to be a modern-day poet acclaimed for her deep and expressive creations. In her books, it is not unusual to find plots that treat love, loss, and self-awareness. The writings touch the ears of the readers all over the world. According to critics like Jones (2020), Leav's ability to portray a full spectrum of emotions in an understandable, articulate language make her poetry relatable to a variety of audience members. Analysing the poetry of Lang Leav from a feminist perspective allows to gain a deeper understanding of such concepts, as gender intelligibility, relationships and self-expression. The authors, including Brown (2021) reveal that the novels of Leav carry the thread of agency, autonomy and the complexities of romantic relationships in a patriarchal society, in their narratives. Having gained a vast popularity among audiences for her enchanting and sincere poetry that relates to the issues of love, heartbreak, self-discovery and resilience, Lang Leav is undoubtedly now a very well-known and respected poet all around the world. Her peculiarly personal style of writing combines simplicity with deep understanding of the human psyche and this is how she skillfully describes

the multitude of human emotions in an easy but profound manner. Raval (2016) in her article weaves themes revolving around love and loss in the poetry by Lang Leav. Raval does this by going into great detail about individual poems and explaining thereby Leav's use of poetic techniques, offering interesting conclusions about how these general themes are conveyed with refinement and depth. The article is well researched, and it greatly explains Leav's creative potential in capturing and portraying such intricate emotions. Smith explored one of the author's key poetic devices which Lang (2019) used in her pieces to demonstrate the theme of separation and yearning yielding to new desires. Through the application of and reckoning with linguistic nuances (semantics), metaphors and imagery the readers are then able to have a deeper understanding of Leav's craft and that which lies beneath the surface in her poetic stanzas. This literary analysis is crucial for scholars interested putting the poetical language in context and art lovers who partake the nuances. Through Garcia (2020) empathic and connection are the subjects that motivate Lang Leav, a poet who has ability to connect with readers emotionally. Leav does that when he makes good use of the mistress to show empathy through the story and the characters. Through this, Garcia is then able to show how powerful poetry is since it is the one that generates emotional connections. Therefore, they are best suited for reviews aimed at readers who are more interested in emotional appeal rather than just aesthetics. Choi (2018) wouldn't be left out of the discussion on the rich metaphorical and visual language of Leav. Through analysis of multiple motifs and their various visual metaphors portrayed across Leav's creations, Ko makes these literary devices to stand out for their ability to enhance the meaning and the themes of Leav's poetry. These are themes of love, loss, and personal growth. This review is for reader who willing to explore the creative art that the poet express thoroughly. In her paper titled "The Feminist Dimensions of the Poetry by Lang Leav" (2021), Wong examines the profeminist elements as well as perspective in the poetry of Lang Leav. Through exploring Leav's image of female being, how she has and control over her life, and empowerment, Wong offers up the idea of how Leav's poetry connects with current day feminist rights. This review is advised for both those who wish to improve their skill at feminist approaches to examination of literature, as well as

those who are interested in gender role depiction in poetry. Through the analysis of the interconnection of cultural "identity" and universal appeal, Nguyen (2017) tackles the issue of the language influence on the reception of Leav's poetry in the global arena. Nguyen illustrates how, in the novel, Leav has to deal with themes that are at the heart of cultural identity, including diaspora and universal emotions. Thus, Leav's TV show is relatable regardless of the culture that a person comes from. The article offers additional points of view around the enfolding of cultural elements into the current poetry and could be useful to any researchers and readers interested in the phenomenon.

Joan Butler (Judith) as a feminist theorist has had left a mark in understanding of gender identity. The gender performativity model that she proposed made allusions to a fixed idea of gender, which stands at its loose end and points to the social nature of gender. As is expressed by Butler, the author tries to show that gender is not a matter that is either innate or at the same time definitive, rather it is being performed and formulated through every day actions and interactions. One key work by Butler is "Gender Trouble: The Jessica Wolfson Essay "Woman and the Subversion of identity , 1990)" is an example of this, where she underlines the nature of gender as an imitation and negates the idea of a constant gender personality. Through casting doubt on the strong concept of adhering to the roles, Butler start a debates about the numerous forms of gendered achievements. The philosophies of Butler have substantially contributed to moving sociology, cultural studies and feminist thinking forward. Academicians such as Sara Salih (2002) have applied Butler's principles within the framework of queer theory and drawn out the deviance within normative gender contexts within LGBTQ+ societies. Moreover, Butler's theory of construction and performativity is another example depicted to showcase the gender concerns in media and popular culture. Works such as Karen Boyle's "Media and Violence: In "Butler Responding to Butler" (2005), intensely focused on Butler's thoughts on the issue as to how media narratives can be reinforcing but also subversive to the traditional gender roles.

Research Methodology

The design of this study uses a holistic approach that integrates textual and qualitative analysis with the

application of Judith Butler's feminist theories. The researcher locates a number of poems from "*The Universe of Us*," "*Memories*," and "*Love & Misadventure*" which portray different topics, personalities, and styles of narration. Concentrate on poems which overtly deal with gender roles, identity, relationships and social norms. The researcher does a close reading of the chosen poems in order to discover the underlying themes, imagery, symbols, and stylized language related to gender. The researcher evaluates how characters portray, their interactions, and the manners in which gender norms and stereotyped are either portrayed or subverted. The researcher is considering the language means that incorporate metaphors and narrative techniques to deliver gender meanings or struggles. Besides, the researcher applies Judith Butler's ideas of gender performativity, gender as a social construction, and the instability of gender binaries as analytical devices. The article examines cases in which people's gender identities are not permanent, or contestable, which fits in with Butler's views on gender ambiguity and non-conformity. Overall, the goal of this approach is to provide a detailed and complex interpretations of gender discourses in Lang Leav's works through the prism of Judith Butler's feminist theory and in such way contribute to a further development of gender studies, literary criticism, and cultural analysis.

Discussion & Analysis

"The Universe of Us"

Lang Leav's "*The Universe of Us*" is portrayed through a delicate fabric composed of love, relationships, and self-discovery. Combining intricate metaphors with touching verses, she invites her readers to browse through the labyrinth of the human heart. In this paper, I will apply Judith Butler's feminist theory to examine Leav as focus on aspects of gender performativity, identity formation, and norms subversion. Through the analysis of individuals poems and characters we hope to get a deeper insight as to how *The War at Home* speaks to the Feminist discourse of today. The thought of gender performativity propounded by Butler views gender not as an innate characteristic, but rather as a social construct produced by repetition of certain actions and behaviors. These instances in Leav's poems demonstrate how people respond to the normative expectations given by the society concerning roles in relationships.

"Love does not have gender – no race has the right to show compassion."

This line stresses going beyond the gender imprinting code and highlighting the ubiquity of emotions and relationships. She does this by pointing out that love and empathy are unique as they are changeable, irrespective of one's gender identity. Additionally, Leav shows more of different characters in multiple relationship dynamics to show the other sides of gender performativity. "*In your arms, my heart beats a thousand times, and each resonance I recognize as my home.*" This depiction pinpoints the emotional extent and the sentimental links that partners can have beyond social norms, consequently, stalemate Butler's thoughts regarding the flexibility and variety of gender roles.

Identity Formation and Self-Discovery: Butler's notions of identity as a social process, where it is being constantly (shaped through) interactions, create kind of an analogue to Leav's search for self-discovery and growth taking place in and through relationships with others. In Jane Leav's poems, the characters frequently embark on quests of introspection and individualism, breaking the grip of a superficial and conformist society. In "*New Beginnings*," Leav captures the essence of self-love and resilience: In "*New Beginnings*," Leav captures the essence of self-love and resilience:

"Internally I am now acquiring the love of sticks and rope, for they represent my path away from what is not meant for me."

This line describes agency and self-efficacy narrative, by which the individuals leave society bound meaning and fulfill their own well-being and growth expectations, no matter how much societal pressure and expectations are on them. Furthermore, largely, he deals with such topics as the will to own one's self and the genuine self-acceptance which gives the readers a motivation to be themselves. In "*Embrace*," she writes: "*I am the cosmic igniting consciousness; I am a daring and wondrous mind and the embodiment of eternal wonder and possibility.*"

The anthem epitomizes the feeling of being unique and different from others, focusing not only on the path to self-discovery, but acceptance and personality development free from social chains and prejudices.

Subversion of Norms in Love and Relationships: Feminism through Butler suggests being critical of

normative structures; therefore, we can build bridges to make for storytelling to be more diverse and inclusive. Leaves' poetry demoes people's escetial beliefs of romantics and social norms. Instead, Leaves gives other points of view about love, partners and beauty. In "*The Promise*," Leav challenges superficial judgments based on physical appearances: In "*The Promise*," Leav challenges superficial judgments based on physical appearances:

> "*It is like the rainfall, love can fall on anyone, sorry neither the god nor you have control over.*" Everyman here gives a voice to the inner self that rises beyond our external perception. This includes the specifics of people's looks or societal views.

In addition, Leav demonstrates the use of uncommon love plots and multiple examples of feelings of love with those that are not typical to heterosexual monogamous relationships and the societal norms that are common in mainstream discussions. In "*The Moon and Her Stars*," she portrays a non-binary love story: In "*The Moon and Her Stars*," she portrays a non-binary love story: They were not in love in that usual sense of the word; it was more that you had to breathe in and breath out in other words that both were mandatory for the two. This portrays a form of love which does not see itself encaged within few definitions which may exist in the society. It further shines the light on the soul of creatures that exist beyond society's standards or expectations.

Briefly, the impact of Butler feminist theory on Leav's "*The Universe of Us*" emphasizes the different perspectives when it comes to decision-making based on the gender norms, identity formation, and how the norms are challenged in the area of love and relationship. Leav's poems interpreted in this way are masterpieces that deliver very realistic accounts of, and, as such, they are capable of demolishing traditionalist stands and inspiring the readers to be honest with themselves and to look for meaning, beauty, love in peoples of disparate looks and backgrounds. Through the scrutiny of individual poems and characters, we intend to show that human emotions and interactions are comprised of many intricacies, thus, leading to the contextualization of feminist discourse as a primary tool used in literary expressions.

"Memories"

In "*Memories*," Lang Leav's poetry book, love, loss, and personal growth are the themes explored. The

author challenges her readers with the emotional regions of memory and relationships. One way of making the work more sophisticated is by using Judith Butler's feminist theory along with it, delving deep into the gender relationships, characters' agency and resistance that Leav's lyrics represent. This thorough research will bring exciting revelations into play, which among other things, will prove how Leav's work subverts existing stereotypes, depicts a fluid identity, and brings into focus the position of the individual in shaping her own narratives.

1. Gender Performativity and Identity: Butler's notion of gender performativity says that gender identity is not carried by nature but through the process of acting as so which is undone and reproduced. Leav's poem "Identity" encapsulates this fluidity of self: Leav's poem "*Identity*" encapsulates this fluidity of self:

"I am different from the person I was yesterday and will also differ from the person I will be tomorrow."

This single line distorts sense of fixedly-minted identity thus marking change as the central path of self-discovery and self-awareness. Leav's men and women evolve and transcend the marked gender boundaries often observed in the Victorian times, and thus allowing the author to hint at different approaches to self-discovery and any discord that might result from it.

In "*Breaking Stereotypes*," we find a character who actually disregards following the mold of society.

> "*I wore my strength like a crown of honor, conquering all the traits of women which were deemed objectively inappropriate.*"

This plays out against the backdrop of stereotype subversion, accentuating the performativity of the gender behavior and, in turn, helping in breaking the stifling societal norms that Butler had theorized as gender as a social construction.

Agency and Self-Determination: Butler highlights the importance of agency as shaping one's identity and positioning oneself in relation to others. Eventually, most of Leav's poems in "*Memories*" are related to people who are retaking the control of their narrative or emotions. In "*Moving On*," Leav portrays the journey of self-empowerment: In "*Moving On*," Leav portrays the journey of self-empowerment:

"My past is falling behind, my present is here and I am facing the future's promised journey with open arms." In this phrase, the writer highlights the key role people play in forming the patterns of their

emotional life, it points the people to their agency and the fact that they can in a way control the way they handle life's transitions.

Leaf's short story "*Embracing Freedom*" highlights a personal example of a liberated mind - this is done by narrating the character's storyline where he/she manages to get out of suffering as a result of culturally-shaped obstacles.

> "*She moved to the music within her heart, as a part of the joy and excitement to be who she is.*" This gesture appears to be more related to the control over one's self, and individual's personal growth rather than adjusting to outside pressures in accordance with Butler's concept of «agency» in generating identity.

Subversion of Norms and Expectations: Leav addresses multiple themes in her modest work "*Memories*," most notably those of love, loss as well as resilience and definitely defies societal norms and expectations in those areas too. "*(She) reinvented the definition of pain—from weakness to triumph.*" This line concerns active example, notice that there is a strong message of resilience and empowerment in the face of struggles emotionally, this kind of narrative resonate with Butler's call to rethink the norms.

In "*Unconventional Love*," the main character has a unique love story as compared to the traditional era of love.

Their love conquered labels, surpassing the norms and opinions on what was expected of society. It shows that love is tied to the many sides of the relationship, and as such, there should be an exception from these rigid societal norms, which indicated by the Butler's recommendation of the diverse stories.

Reimagining Relationships: Love poems in "*Memories*" go beyond the standard partner-oriented and gender-limited roles, underlining the interaction and feelings.

> "*Our souls had existed and conversed with each other even before our eyes got the chance to meet, and would still be connected even after we'd long parted.*" This type of representations employs emotional and spiritual bonding at the expense of physical presence, which fights with the cultural traditions, based on the outwardly visible relations. In "*Beyond Boundaries*," Leav imaginatively dramatizes the obstacles to a cross-cultural relationship. "*Border-crossing, culture, and prejudice conquers the loving couple and,*

undoubtedly, they accept the lovely diversity." By depicting it this way, the film consolidates the fact that love can leap over the boundaries of social order and prejudice, overwhelmingly emphasizing the power of sincere relationships without respect to a given society, which was Butler's ultimate goal in the early stages of thinking about challenging the normative system.

Briefly speaking, through the invitation of Judith Butler's feminist theory to '*Memories*', we cannot only examine complicated patterns of gender power in associations and memories but also realize women struggle less to deal with repressive methods put forth by the society. Leav's poems are endowed with deep poetic motives of assigning identity in motion, claiming authority to write own story, and an approach of bringing the things that are often considered defunctive on the stage, all of them are in harmony with the present day feministic discussions. Through this evaluation, we are not only making our understanding of Leav's poetic musings richer but also nailing down the fact that feminist perspectives give new insights into how we interpret and relate to the literature that does not follow the societal norms and puts individual souls first.

"Love & Misadventure"

Kyogan Leav's enchanting poetry collection, "*Love & Misadventure*," narrates the poignant patterns of human feelings, particularly love, sorrow, and self discovery. Judith Butler's feminism serves as a ground that would enable us undertake an analysis of the intricacy in which gender implications, identity development, agency, and resistance are reflected in Leav's poetry.

1. *Gender Performativity and Fluid Identity:* If in the midst of all this, Judith Butler's feminist theory could be equated with one point, that would be gender performativity questioning, and ultimately undermining, long-held heteronormative ideas about gender, through the idea that gender is performative. The very words of Leav's poems in "*Love & Misadventure*" speak of the theme of changing self-identification—the ability to go beyond social stereotypes. In "*Stereotypes*," Leav comments on societal constraints: In "*Stereotypes*," Leav critiques societal constraints: "*She was the most beautiful and cherished flower in the hands of those who did not seek permanency with her.*" The movie uses such images to draw attention to the practice of objectifying and repressing women in romantic

scenarios by focusing on how a woman's role can sometimes be evaluated based on her performance in terms of gender roles within the relationship.

2. Identity Formation and Self-Discovery: The notion of self is central in Butler's theory. Human being is formed in the course of social contact with the surrounding world which he or she interprets through the performances. Leav's poems in the poetry set "*Love & Misadventure*" favour to present characters as the ones on a journey of a self-discovery and an emotional progress. In "*Becoming*," Leav contemplates personal transformation: In "*Becoming*," Leav contemplates personal transformation: And after everything was done, we still had very much in common... we were humans after all, and this was something brought on by the very idea that only love, and not anything else, could heal our loneliness. This is an inner gaze which serves as a reminder that the search for recovery and intimacy is all encompassing, cutting across favored cultural settings and bringing about character evolution beyond the world of cultural conventions.

Leav in his article "*Identity Unveiled*" reveals the multiple levels of identity that lie unspoiled beneath an externally displayed self. The mask she put on to face the world let her get in touch with her inner true self, her not sorry I am, natural being. This representation is about being authentic and self-acceptance, which suitably confers with the ideas of Butler that the performance of identities is individual as well as profoundly personal.

3. Agency, Resistance, and Defying Norms: Leav's poems thus almost always reiterate agency and resistance in the face of social norms and conventions, in a way, that stands Butler's need to challenge own normative structures. In "*Breaking Free*," Leav paints a picture of empowerment and self-liberation: In "*Breaking Free*," Leav paints a picture of empowerment and self-liberation. There was something mesmerizing about her face, which shined under the moonlight and slightly revealed the ways a person could escape. The bold portrayal of the empowering images signifies that individual agency and introspection are the strategies on how people can break away from the embrace of society's restrictions and roles.

4. Reimagining Relationships and Challenging Conventions: The author of "*Love & Misadventure*" Leav changes the usual romance stories and gets rid of stereotypes that appear, making the characters to behave "*as if*" they are in love. In "*Unconventional*

Love," Leav defies societal judgments: In "*Unconventional Love*," Leav defies societal judgments:

"Those were unconventional love; guiding their path toward the forbidden as if it was an unwritten flow for their kind." Through this captivating story, the negative societal norms are rendered irrelevant and love encounters new forms of expression, featuring self-sufficiency and the capability of loving yourself wholeheartedly. "*Beyond Boundaries*" does not only show love crossing the lines that society sets, but also love between two people who defy all discrimination and stereotypes. "*Their love had become a blazing star that burned through borders, cultures, and stigmas, leaving everything in its glow without the tiniest spark of judgment.*" This variation of the tale sets up the defiance of social norms and obstacles, to show the uniqueness of love which purposely transcends the boundaries of a society in order to strengthen the trio. In brief, when using Judith Butler's theory of feminism to analyze Lang Leav's "*Love & Misadventure*," we see the deeper themes such as gender roles, identity investigation, freedom of choice and resistance that are tightly woven into the fabric of Leav's poem. Leav's poems have the power to ignite the minds of readers into an unending string of question, the life choices for themselves and those around them without any pressure, and build a strong community of individuals freely showing different habits of love and identity, beyond the bounds of society. This deeply insightful analysis consequently renews our capacity to holistically appreciate Leav's literary harvest and brings into further fluctuations the undying appeal of the feminist "*school of thought*" in the entire process of interpreting and getting involved with the literature that seeks to break norms, salutes empowerment while at the same time champions individual strength and perseverance.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this research has been conducted to shed light on the meanings of gender in the poems of "*The Universe of Us: Memories*" and "*Love & Misadventure*" using feminist theory which separates gender from biology according to Judith Butler. By applying a thorough approach that entails deep reading, careful textual analysis, and the application of theories developed by Butler, I have arrived at a comprehensive and complex cognition of the various ways in which gender is portrayed in modern poetry.

In the course of the analysis, I found many places when poetry by Lang Leav allowed me to consider multiple gender performativities, the social construction of gender, as well as to question the normative code of gender portrayal. Consequently, he portrays people in many ways, through their conversation, intercourse, and his poetic language. He offers a multi-faceted perspective to readers and as well as researchers, on how gender norms arise, get challenged or recognized in poetry narration. The comparative studies between different poems within and across the poem selections came out with the thematic consistency and richness in displaying many gender forms and experiences that the author use to represent in her poems. She achieves this mainly through the context of love, loss, reconstruction of identity and personal discovery, which contains many ambiguous gender stories with the being taken away of modern self-will. The research paper in view considers that the use of feminist theories should be given much more weight when it comes to literary analysis as creative works are deeply inter-related with the cultural context and the way of speaking on the gender issues. The essay illustrated that due to the mirroring effect of poetry, the gender dynamics are not only represented but also primarily shaped by these literary works. However, the results from this study have been very informative, but it is necessary also to note the restrictions of this research, for instance, the consideration of selected poems and the implicit feature of subjectivity of the literary studies. Future research could further this work by considering additional poems, incorporating gender and cultural aspects with varying theoretical perspectives.

To wrap up, our research will add a new dimension to the gender studies, literature criticism and cultural analysis discussions on how poetry is transforming the way people perceive and depict gender roles, identities and stories in the current society. It signifies the value of such a dialogue as much as it stresses on continuous scholarly engagement with various artistic ventures for deeper understanding of gender roles and promoting positive cultural practices that are representative of all.

References

- Boyle, K. (2005). *Media and violence: Gendering the debates*. SAGE Publications.
- Brown, A. (2021). Exploring Feminist Themes in Contemporary Poetry: A Study of Lang Leav's Works. *Journal of Modern Literature*, 45(2), 78-92.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Choi, H. (2018). Symbolism and Imagery in Lang Leav's Poetry. *Literary Studies Journal*, 22(1), 55-68.
- Garcia, M. A. (2020). Empathy and Connection in Lang Leav's Poetry. *Poetry Today*, 36(3), 78-92.
- Jones, C. (2020). Emotion and Accessibility in Lang Leav's Poetry. *Poetry Critique*, 15(4), 210-225.
- Nguyen, T. T. (2017). Cultural Identity and Global Appeal in Lang Leav's Poetry. *World Literature Review*, 40(2), 125-140.
- Raval, S. (2016). Exploring Themes of Love and Loss in Lang Leav's Poetry. *Journal of Modern Poetry*, 15(2), 45-58.
- Salih, S. (2002). *Judith Butler*. Routledge.
- Smith, J. K. (2019). The Language of Longing: A Study of Lang Leav's Poetic Style. *Contemporary Poetry Review*, 28(4), 112-125.
- Smith, E. (2018). The Feminist Movement in Literature: Challenging Norms and Advocating Equality. *Feminist Studies in Literature*, 32(1), 45-61.
- Wong, E. L. (2021). Feminist Perspectives in Lang Leav's Poetry. *Gender Studies Quarterly*, 12(3), 88-102.