



LGBTQ Digital Cultures—A Global Perspective

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Accepted: 29 May 2022 / Published online: 20 August 2022

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Paromita Pain (Ed.): *LGBTQ Digital Cultures - A Global Perspective* Routledge, 2022, 294pp, \$45, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003196457>, ISBN: 978-1-032-05183-3

Paromita Pain, the book's editor, is an Assistant Professor of Global Media and an Affiliate Faculty member of the Cybersecurity Center at the University of Nevada, Reno. Her research examines feminist and LGBTQ perspectives on alternative media and global journalism practices. India, Taiwan, the U.S., and Latin America have all been the subjects of her research. LGBTQA communities have taken advantage of the fast-expanding global cyberspace to assert equal rights. This book provides a repository of ideas, insights, and experiences by incorporating international LGBTQ studies into undergraduate and graduate courses. It includes Iran, Turkey, the Philippines, Canada, and Turkish perspectives. However, it does not fully explore the intersectional influences of generational, relational, and socioeconomic origins. A voice for the LGBTQ people who have been systematically excluded from dominant discourses and media, the Iranian LGBTQ community uses social media to create networks, share experiences, and influence the Iranian mainstream public sphere.

The study of transgender issues in Chinese social media helps understand the possible negotiation between trans voices. Digital technology and social media have impacted LGBTQ activism, advocacy, education, empowerment, identity, protest, and self-expression in this collection of essays. This edited collection explores queer cyberculture and presence through a critical and cultural studies lens. The book examines issues such as race, disability, colonialism, sexuality, and gender through the lens of representation and identity politics. The collection considers how digital technologies have expanded the scope of queer cultural production. It also believes that such technological affordances and platforms have enhanced the transformative potential of queer artistic practices. Contributors and case studies from various

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countries examine the tensions that occur when accessibility, concealment, renditions of the self, and collective contractions of identity must be negotiated in multiple global contexts and the implications for contemporary political identities. This book is an invaluable introduction to LGBTQ digital cultures for students, scholars, and researchers of media, communication, and cultural studies. Furthermore, it will be of interest to activists interested in learning more about the transformative potential of digital media and technology in global LGBTQ advocacy and empowerment. An overview of each of the eighteen chapters of the book is provided in the following paragraphs.

Ruthie Meadows mentions *Queer Cuarentena* and *Mandinga Times* in the first chapter. Rita Indiana released *Mandinga Times* in September 2020, which features experimental performances, montages, short videos, and virtual concerts. Nonbinary and queer artists of color provide decolonial criticism and consciousness-raising of Caribbean music. The band blends Dominican merengue, African-inspired ritual music, Cuban rumba, and Jamaican reggae. The chapter traces the dynamics of Dominican return migration to the US and the aftermath of the Trujillo dictatorship (p.10). “La montre” refers to Rita Indiana’s androgynous gender presentation, open queer sexuality, and height. An apocalyptic newscast featured in the film is also evoked through first-person narratives that depict the heightened global dynamics of authoritarianism, migration, xenophobia, and violence in late capitalism. A combination of doom metal, horror, and the disidentification, transformation, and world-building potentialities of drag king transformism. At *Mandinga Times*, the fast pace of the rhythm *Alibaba* and the sensation of held presence are used to engage the fear of death and impotence created by mortality (p.18).

The authors of the second chapter, Jonalou S. Labor and Ma., Sal S. San Pascual, explore digital channels by UP Babaylan, a university-based LGBTQIA+ group in promoting recognition, belonging, and support. The coronavirus epidemic changed Philippine society’s functional, productive, and affective elements. In March 2020, they decided to take their advocacy online, redesigning events for the web, leveraging social media, and monitoring their online presence. Understanding Kapha, or how Filipinos treat others, may help determine whether someone is a Hindi or an outsider.

The Filipino LGBTQIA+ community’s advocacy is based on the inherent universality of human rights. The strong presence of the LGBTQIA+ rights group UP Babaylan on social media appeals to the majority culture’s tolerance of minority concerns. The group is “pakikipagkapwa (with) every trans person and victim of the corrupt and unfair justice system.” Filipino is a more gender-inclusive term. Demonstrations are a digital manifestation of solidarity between and among the LGBTQIA+ community (p.25).

In chapter three, “Take A Look Inside,” author Pooja Krishnakumar discusses the experience of exposing one’s non-normative identity to a society that has become violent against any form of “deviance.” The *Almaarii* is a private venue where queer people enact their confusions and ambiguities for the public and express their internalized dreams. The project’s “research” subject is the South Asian Diaspora, regardless of whether it is present in North America or the West. It is popular both inside

the community and abroad. Radiant inclusivity means making spaces fundamentally inclusive. People who come out must be prepared for physical and mental assault.

The Almaariis are written in English, but the letter was translated into Tamizh, Malayalam, and Marathi before moving to Hindi. The exploratory potential of the project is expressed in a fearless declaration that it can end, bend, and change shape. Unlike Eurocentric understandings, queerness is not intrinsically individualistic, and our queer ancestors, elders, and community support have been present for a long time. (p.52).

Roy Celaire argues in chapter four that black gay men, when understood as gay and reified in DL (down low) cultural discourses, can only be envisaged within a predetermined epistemological framework. San Francisco found that black men were denied sexual desires despite being bottom or versatile. Black people are depicted as violent criminals, thugs, super-athletes, or entertainers—a ‘Cool Cat.’ Black bodies are oversexualized “things” that love to dominate, control, eat, and sully white bodies (p.67).

The fifth chapter of the book entitled ‘Alighting on the Digital World,’ provides a number of testimonials from transmigrant readers. Nakai Flotte, an organizer with *Diversidad Sin Fronteras* and a Harvard doctoral student in Anthropology, helped the first transgender caravan surrender for asylum. Arcoiris urges the US government to release the migrants on parole as the detention centers do not protect transgender and homosexual individuals from abuse. In a campaign, they call for the end of family separation and trans detention, cross-border migrant justice, and queer coalitions. This chapter explores trans-women migrants’ social media experiences from 2017 to 2020. It is given away in digital testimonies that trans women’s experiences, motivations for migration, and inability to protect their human rights as asylum seekers are revealed.

The digital testimony of transmigrate women suggests social media users write letters to US Representatives and contact immigration and ICE. LGBTQI migrants can engage in digital dissemination to make the genealogy of their experiences public and make contact with individuals who may have been unaware (p.77).

Niloofer Hooman talks about the Iranian LGBTQ community on Instagram in chapter six. Social media enables Iranians to engage in political discourse, challenge oppressive regulations, and build resistance networks. A study examining the rise of Instagram in Iran and the relationship between social media and Iranian LGBTQ advocacy is presented. Iranian LGBTQ activists have a large following on Instagram. The activists believe that they need to communicate about their gender identity and sexual orientation in a society like Iran. The Iranian government perpetuates falsehoods and stereotypes about the LGBTQ community.

Several LGBTQ people can break social media taboos by being themselves. While sex education is lacking in Iran, activists use Instagram to educate people about sexual and gender issues. To show families that their children can have same-sex relationships, same-sex couples portray themselves as ordinary people with everyday problems. (p.89).

On Chinese social media, Songyin Liu discusses transgender issues in chapter seven. Examining transgender issues on Chinese social media can help us understand the possibility of negotiating between trans voices. Weibo posts covering ten

years of relevant transgender employment difficulties in China are collected and analyzed using Python software. The most talked-about transgender topic of the decade is Transgender Day of Visibility on March 31, 2020, followed by three court cases. Despite the local and governmental positions of the Chinese transgender community, the #transgenderemployment hashtag has been a prominent topic of discussion. Transgender people differ in their opinions about whether this is an attempt to police their lives and beings. On Weibo, transgender issues are a hot topic, with restrictive and inclusive feminists expressing their perspectives on gender and the treatment of transgender people. There are fewer than five comments and few likes on most posts about #transgender employment alternatives (p.101). Transgender women's inability to control the agenda in public debates about bathrooms contributes to their silence and invisibility (p.101).

In chapter eight, Mildred F. Perreault and Becky Parsons discuss Authentic Approaches to LGBTQ+Branded Messages. The authenticity of LGBTQ+brand messages is becoming increasingly important as companies realize the value of corporate social responsibility. Those companies that support the LGBTQ+community run the risk of alienating their audiences and stakeholders. Inauthentic or disingenuous brands may be subject to negative consequences. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation uses employer protections for sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Ben & Jerry's, Starbucks, Domino's Pizza, and Panera Bread are the top four companies in terms of LGBTQ+CSR initiatives online. CSR's website frequently discusses LGBTQ+issues and advocates for equality. Positive CSR posts are more prevalent among brands with better CSR consistency. In the study, organizations with a high CEI score exhibited CSR authenticity linked to LGBTQ+concerns (p.115).

In chapter nine, Esra Ozban discusses new trans activism channels in Turkey. This is a series produced by Pembe Hayat, named after Alan Berliner's 1997 film "Ma Vie En Rose," to raise awareness about the Eryaman and Lubunya communities' case against abusers. The channel uses both gullüm and milk, two queer/trans traditional expressions essential to the movement's survival. Trans broadcast, Transvestite on Inspection, interactive series, and oral history documentaries are discussed. Ankara outlawed all LGBTI gatherings without providing evidence in 2017. During the emergency period, LGBTI people lost the right to in-person legal consultations.

Pembe Hayat, a trans feminist movement in Turkey, emerges as a new venue for trans activism with its *madi* and *gullüm* content. Nalan responds to audience posts regarding YouTube videos, while Derin and Ayan respond to audience comments. The iconic opening sentence discusses Barbies, Kens, Chuckies, and their long line of Chuckie cousins. In another film, viewers are encouraged to "transvestite" while stirring a "warm" sauce (p.130).

Sueyoshi Dey focuses on Facebook Groups and India's Indian Queer Counter public in chapter ten. Transvestite is a series produced by Pembe Hayat, named after Alan Berliner's 1997 film *Ma Vie En Rose*, to raise awareness of the Eryaman lubunya communities' case against the perpetrators of abuse. The channel uses *gullüm* and *milk*, two queer/trans traditional expressions vital to the groups' survival. All LGBTI gatherings were outlawed in Ankara in 2017 without providing evidence. Because of the ban, in-person legal consultations for LGBTI persons lost their civil rights during

the emergency period. Trans broadcast, Transvestite on Inspection, interactive series, and oral history documentary series are discussed.

Pembe Hayat, a trans feminist movement in Turkey, emerges as a new venue for trans activism, with a creative mix of Madi and gullüm content. The iconic opening sentence addresses Barbies, Kens, Chuckies, and their long line of Chuckie cousins. Additionally, a film encourages viewers to “transvestite” while stirring a “warm” sauce (p.144). Nalan responds to audience posts regarding the YouTube videos, while Derin and Ayan respond to audience remarks.

Kailyn Slater, in chapter eleven, describes how oversharing personal and private information violates gender, sexuality, and race ideals in the chapter “Theorizing cultures of oversharing on TikTok.” It is a social and cultural platform where users can share knowledge personally. Users who find ways around the regulations are marginalized by the application’s algorithmic nature. In 2021, representation was equal to cis heterosexual stigma due to accountability and material change implications. Young social media platform users are encouraged to play the visibility game against the platform’s algorithms by sharing too much information. The line between influencers and celebrities is blurring as fraudsters target both. Blackout Days on TikTok represent a digital and material response to contemporary reality.

Content-control standards discriminate against keyed characteristics, especially those associated with physical appearance and gender. In the future of LGBTQ+ identities in digital settings, networks can provide a way to recognize community infrastructure (p.158). People’s emotional responses to what it means to live pornographically, defiantly, and openly queer are restructured by social media hypersexuality. Cyberqueers know it is more important to have a presence on the most popular social media platforms than to be downright obscene. It has become necessary for hypersexual users whose identities and others do not accept preferences to engage in pornographic cyberqueer movements.

In chapter twelve, Matthew Hester discusses hypersexual cyberqueer activism on social media, “Her Phallic Sword.” Hypersexuality on social media restructures people’s emotional responses to what it means to be pornographic, defiant, and overtly gay. Cyberqueers know it’s more important to be active on popular social media platforms than to be downright obscene. The creation of pornographic cyberqueer movements has become necessary for hypersexual users whose identities and preferences are not accepted by others (p.169).

In the Contested Digital Space, Yidong (Steven) Wang discusses Queer Counter Publics in chapter thirteen. Chinese LGBTQ persons still face repression and discrimination despite increasing public awareness. LGBTQ communities in China rely heavily on self-media production for digital information. LGBTQ news is mainly digital, and the number of print stories has halved since 2016. Digital platforms and LGBTQ counter-publics have evolved together, and sometimes they are mutually beneficial and suited to each other’s needs. According to anti-gay feminist content shared on social media, gay men are responsible for patriarchal oppression.

Lesbians must separate themselves from gay males to support feminist causes. Platform self-censorship undermines the ability of the queer counterpublic to defend itself. In Chinese society, anti-establishment feminism gained traction due to the

MeToo movement. But the government suppressed the activity with censorship and repression.

Jessica Sage Rauchberg examines queer, transgender, and disabled creators' responses to algorithmic operations on Tic-Tok issues in chapter fourteen. Despite increasing public awareness, Chinese LGBTQ individuals face repression and discrimination. China's LGBTQ communities produce self-media as their primary source of digital information. LGBTQ news items are mostly digital-only, and the number of print stories has halved since 2016. Various digital platforms and LGBTQ counter-publics have evolved and are sometimes mutually constitutive. Anti-gay feminist content shared on social media links gay men to patriarchal oppression.

An opinion is presented in chapter fifteen by Nur E Makbul and Md. Ashraf Goni, the community, is bullied in Bangladesh. Cyberspace in Bangladesh is fostering new sexual politics and activism. Homosexual and bisexual men mostly use it to meet other men for sex, "spend time," or meet new men to date. Bangladesh has only one official religion, and same-sex relationships and marriages are prohibited. The article examines how digital platforms enable LGBTQ+ people to engage beyond geographical and physical boundaries and develop new communities. In Bangladesh, where religion and the constitution openly condemn homosexuality, Grindr users constantly try to find places where they can satisfy their sexual impulses. They used the diameter of 200 Grindr profiles to learn about users' communication styles, self-image, and identity management. There was a dominant top versus a subservient bottom in the investigation, supporting a power dynamic and emphasizing the sex position (p. 217).

In chapter sixteen, Vázquez-Rodríguez et al. examine non-normative gender identities, forbidden fantasies, and sex education. LGBTQ+youth identity formation relies heavily on sexual education, which provides information and role models regarding sexuality, gender roles, and non-normative relationships. Queer teens can explore their identities, emotions, and sexuality in online fandom communities. Researchers examine how Sex Education's Instagram followers use the show's themes and discourses, connect with other Instagram users, and what reactions the posts attempted to elicit from their followers. Sex Education posts about non-normative gender identities, sexual orientations, and desires about 12%. That is surprising, considering the majority of the characters live queer lives. Among the most popular emojis are the heart (12 posts), banana (for the video in which Eric shows how to do fellatio correctly), and peach (for the twerking video). Eric usually appears in drag or dancing campily with Otis.

Matthew Heinz, in chapter seventeen, discusses LGBTQ2S across Canada. Canada's recent apology to the LGBT community and erasure of earlier convictions has improved its reputation as a safe place for LGBT people. LGBT individuals in Canada are at increased risk of physical and sexual violence, depression, self-harm, suicide thoughts and attempts, substance abuse disorders, STDs, early pregnancy, and homelessness. With 37.4 million monthly users and 16 CBC channels, YouTube is Canada's second most popular social network. LGBTQ2S content on CBC News and CBC News is analyzed using content analysis and discourse analysis. Faith Fundal is the only non-binary journalist on CBC radio, and the video "Why My Pronouns Matter" received more dislikes than likes.

The video refers to a Canadian gay high-profile killer, making up 11% of all LGBTQ2S content. Searching for “homosexual” and “bisexual” yields no results in CBC News: The National and only one video (p.236).

The book’s last chapter, eighteen, includes Samantha McEwan’s discourse on Resistive Audiovisual Aesthetics and Practices in Cyberqueer Spaces. Nicole Casey is a transmedia activist who blurs the lines between Ashton and bisexuality to fight bisexual erasure. Casey’s online alter ego is Ashnikko. Through her affectively charged social media posts, Casey challenges patriarchal institutions of significant label representation. Bisexuality, non-binary identities, and transgender identities are discussed in a way that leaves room for non-normative identities. In the video, Daisy wears a colorful latex bodysuit and pigtailed, emphasizing a feminist message.

The chapter argues that bisexual+women-identified artists can develop alternative narratives to heteronormative myths, tropes, and pressures ingrained in popular media portrayals. Ashnikko’s tweets promoting transgender, non-binary, and bisexual visibility are a kind of hashtag activism she uses to rally her supporters. Through a feminist intervention that widens queer spaces of resistance by making non-queer areas overtly queer, this book proves how fan intimacy can increase queer visibility (p. 251).

Queer digital cultures have emerged through the internet that combines identities, practices, and ideas to create new transformations in queer identity, politics, and digital communication.

Social networking sites have become a force “place” for LGBT individuals to share information but can also help queer people come out as queer. Technologies like TikTok and Instagram are becoming increasingly popular with LGBTQ populations for identity, representation, and empowerment. These chapters explore how LGBTQ problems are framed and supported on social media and how digital objects can be essential for understanding identity and power.

To assert equal sexual rights at international levels, the LGBTQA community has taken advantage of the fast-expanding global cyberspace. Social media and other digital platforms have influenced LGBTQ advocacy globally and how race affects how gay men are viewed on dating services. Experts and activists discuss how social media and digital culture support equality and self-expression for LGBTQ+people in Iran, Turkey, Bangladesh, India, China, the Dominican Republic, Canada, and the United States. Incorporating international LGBTQ studies into undergraduate and graduate courses, this book provides a reservoir of ideas, insights, and experiences.

Data Availability Not Applicable.

Conflicts of interest Not applicable.

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