



Queer Hair Semiotics: Analysis of the Select LGBTIQ Documentaries

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Abstract

The present paper is an attempt to investigate the gender and sexual semiotics of the hair practices popular among the members of queer subcultures. The hair behaviour of gay, lesbian, transgender and other queer people constitute a semiotic field where different hairstyles are assigned diverse range of subcultural meanings. The use of different hairstyles allows queer people (i) to express their gender and sexual preferences, (ii) to assert their identity, and (iii) to resist the dominant ideologies which prohibit their expression. The primary sources selected for the study are three documentaries: *Paris is Burning* (1990), *Venus Boyz* (2002), and *Dream Boat* (2017). The paper is divided into three sections, each of which is devoted to one of the three prominent queer subcultures, i.e., transgender, gay and lesbians. There are multiple hairstyles which have been chosen and popularised by the members of these communities. *Paris is Burning* (1990) primarily documents the transgender (drag) subculture of Harlem (New York City). Drag queens are known for their enormous wigs and startling hair colours. On the other hand, gay subculture is documented in *Dream Boat* (2017) in which almost all the popular gay hairstyles are represented such as Duck's Ass (DA), skinhead and different types of buzz. The hair behaviour of lesbians, especially the drag-kings, is explored in the context of *Venus Boyz* (2002). Butch-lesbians are known for their selection of masculine hairstyles. Apart from that, there are many ethnic hairstyles which the lesbians in this documentary have chosen.

Keywords: Androgynous, Hairstyles, Masculine, Semiotics

Introduction

Hair, hairstyles, and body hair are important personality traits among human beings. However, they hold a greater significance for people with alternate gender and sexual preferences. The

hair practices of gay, lesbian, transgender and other queer people constitute a semiotic field where different hairstyles are assigned diverse range of subcultural meanings. What attracts the attention of the spectators as well as the researchers is the functional value of deviant hairstyles such as DA, Mohawk, Punk, Spike, Skinhead, Dreadlock, the use of long and short wigs by transgender people, lesbians' choice of short haircuts (often known as boy-cuts) and many other hairstyles which help them to express their gender and sexual differences. Since the documentaries and YouTube videos capture the real and lived experiences of people, they are more reliable resources than the mainstream cinema to understand the queer hair practices. Only a few of the mainstream films have been able to capture the subversive hairstyles of queer people. The documentaries *Paris is Burning*, *Dream Boat*, *Venus Boyz*, the YouTube video 'The Last of NYC Leathermen' are the primary sources selected for this paper in order to investigate the hair behaviour of different queer subcultures.

While arguing how hairstyles can perform different functions, Pun and Lau state that alteration in the hairstyles can "alter our images and perceptions to liberate ourselves" as well as "to adapt to our own circumstances, for empowerment and to resist stereotypes" (2). The choice of different hairstyles, by queer people, is regulated by this motive for self-empowerment and resistance to the dominant discourses which regulate gender and sexual behaviour. There are three prominent hairstyles adopted by queer people: feminine/effeminate hairstyles, masculine hairstyles, and androgynous hairstyles. Most of the feminine and effeminate queer people choose long hairstyles and masculine queer people select shorter haircuts which are adopted by women and men respectively in the mainstream society. However, there are several exceptional hair practices among queer subcultures in which these divergent styles converge and subsequently give rise to androgynous and deviant hairstyles. These hairstyles serve as "powerful ideological and social signifiers of inclusion and exclusion, group identity and othering" as well as "typically meaning-defying vagaries of

fashion, adding a dimension of “symbolic noise” that further complicates interpretation” (Sijpesteijn 4). In order to organise the chaotic area of queer hair stylisation, the paper is divided into following sections for a systematic discussion of the hair practices of different queer subcultures.

Hair Practices of Transgenders in *Paris is Burning*

Transgender people often experiment with their looks in order to express their gender and sexual status more suitably or subversively. Most of the time, drag queens wear their hair long. Long hair permits them to impersonate a feminine gender role. However, at the same time, long hair also serves as a marker of sexuality, “There is, then, a chain of association connecting long hair and sexuality” (Mageo 142). Whereas long hair has always been a mark of femininity, their adoption by men (drag queens, female-impersonators, or cross-dressers) has been considered a sign of gender transgression and have also been interpreted as “a symbol of being in some way outside society, of having less to do with it, or of being less amenable to social control than the average citizen” (Hallpike 260).

Rather than imitating the feminine gender role, the drag performances are directed towards the distortion of femininity with the help of such performative techniques as exaggeration, parody, and humour. A parodic and exaggerated presentation differentiates drag queens from the mainstream feminine gender performance. Whether an imitation, parody or exaggeration, drag queens use their real and/or artificial hair for the enactment of their performances. *Paris is Burning* portrays the drag subculture of New York, especially their ball room culture. The drag queens, in the documentary, use different types of hairstyles which indicate their adopted gender roles, irrespective of their biological sex. This enactment can also be understood in Butlerian terms when she points out that “gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through a gendered stylization of the body” (Butler xv). Hair practices constitute a significant role in the gender stylisation.

In Figure 1, the drag queens have exaggerated, distorted and deflected their gender with the help of their hairstyles. Both the persons in the first row have short haircut and visible facial hair which indicate their male biological status. On the basis of their hair choice, they have adopted a male gender, but their dressing styles indicate otherwise. Such a distortion conveys an androgynous gender position where the markers of masculine and feminine gender are employed together. This gender-overlap and distortion is deliberately enacted in queer subcultures to reveal how gender is ‘a series of acts’ as Judith Butler argued. The drag queens in second and third row wear wigs in an attempt to acquire a feminine gender position. The wigs of different styles and colours have become the hallmark of transgender and drag subculture.



Fig. 1 (Left), Fig. 2 (Middle), and Fig. 3 (Right)Diverse Drag Hairstyles; *Paris is Burning*

The drag queens, in the second and third row of Fig. 1, have used extravagant wigs. It is a strategy of the drag queens to push the feminine role to its limits. With bold makeup, and startling wigs, these drag queens have exploited the shock value of exaggerated hairstyles rather than engaging in a simple imitation of the feminine hairstyles, “The most sought-after effects seemed to be shock value and humour, usually from mixing already recognizable elements of femininity and masculinity in novel and outrageous ways.” (Hennen 89). However, there are many drag queens who minutely imitate the feminine styles. This identification can be seen in Fig. 2 in which the drag queen tries to look like a woman. Her hairstyle (wig) – a bob cut – is an imitation of the popular hairstyles among women, without any attempt to exaggerate or distort it. Such female

identifications are often known as high drag style, “the use of “high drag”, that is, very formal female attire and all that goes with it – high heels, elaborate hair-do (usually a wig), feminine make-up, and formal accessories” (Newton 34).

On the other hand, in Fig. 3, the person has used her/his hairstyle in such a way as to defy any identification with feminine or masculine gender role. His/her sleek hairstyle does not indicate any easy gender categorisation compared to Fig. 2. This style is actually deflecting the gender of the wearer. By rejecting any association with the popular hairstyles of men and women, this person enacts the trouble with gender articulated by queer lifestyle. Apart from the hairstyles, drag queens are also known for their use of various types of headdresses (see Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 Extravagant Headdress; *Paris is Burning*

These headdresses are characterised with elaborate exaggeration, bright colours, shining objects, gleams, curls, knots, twists, and various types of other elements. Discussing the significance of enormous headdresses, Flugel states, “a large head-dress that easily follows the movements of the head may give a very stimulating sense of upward expansion” (37). Drag queens have been using heavy headdresses as a tool of defiance and resistance by being enormous in length and breadth and rising above the the normal, common, and simple styles advocated by the mainstream society.

In the Fig. 5 and 6, the drag queen Venus has styled her hair into a glossy, shinning, and curly style. Venus wears her hair curled in Fig. 5 and dishevelled in Fig. 6. On the one hand, she represents a dignified woman with glossy, blonde and curly hair. On the other, her chaotic hair represents her erotic and sexual abundance. Venus has utilized both the properties of different hairstyles. Her name as well as her appearance indicates the goddess Venus who symbolises love and sexuality, “Loose hair carries the possibility of an erotic charge. Long, abundant hair is

traditionally associated with sexuality. Venus is usually represented with a full head of hair lavishly dishevelled, especially in mid-nineteenth-century paintings. Eve has had blond, curly hair since the renaissance” (Rifelj 88). In their gender performances, drag queens utilise all the meanings associated to hair in social and mythological patterns of the mainstream society.



Fig. 5 Glossy and Curly Hair; *Paris is Burning*



Fig. 6 Dishevelled Hair; *Paris is Burning*



Fig. 7 Erect Hair; *Paris is Burning*



Fig. 8 Upfront Ponytail; *Paris is Burning*

Figure 7 and 8 represent the subversive potential of the hairstyles and their wearers. In Fig. 7, the person bears a hairstyle that involves a setting of hair upwards to an outstanding length; the hair are then hooked at the top. This style is somewhat similar to the hairstyle known as spike, with some alteration to it. According to Charles Berg, the standing position of hair connotes phallic erection, “*Erect hair* is obviously symbolical of the erect penis, and the observer’s reaction to it will bear a resemblance to his reaction to genital erection” (74). The drag queen, in the Fig. 8, is also subverting the popular female hairstyle of ponytail. She has styled her pony style, with a touch of experimentation, not to the backward but upfront.

These are some of the significant hairstyles displayed by different drag queens in the documentary. Whereas some of the drag queens have adopted feminine hairstyles, the subversion takes place at the level of wearing and using those hairstyles which do not conform to masculine or feminine gender role. Breaking the boundaries of masculine and feminine hairstyles, the drag performers invent new hairstyles which express their gender and sexual transgression. The dramatic effect of startling hairstyles is utilized by the wearer to make his/her performance more eye-catching and subversive. For some of the drag queens and transgender individuals this, transformation to feminine gender role is a play and parody, but for others it is a serious act of identity formation and political articulation of their gender and sexual choices. Both these practices illustrate the performative nature of gender role and the importance of hair and hairstyles in this gender metamorphosis. Hair practices, among drag queens and transgender people, acquire multiple meanings when they are formed into a semiotic chain. This semiotic chain is generated by altering the mainstream hair practices into alternative ones where hairstyles are given subcultural and identity-based meanings.

Hair Practices of Gay Men in *Dream Boat* and “Last of the NYC Leathermen”

The association of masculinity to heterosexuality is invalidated by gay men in their clone styles, cowboy looks, leathermen, military and workers’ style, bears and other subcultural variations in which they adopt a hyper-masculine gender position. All these styles emphasise a masculine image for the gay men. Masculine gay men’s looks and hairstyles are in direct contrast to the drag queens’ parodic, dramatic, and exaggerated feminine hairstyles and appearance. Gay styles have acquired an important significance not only in gay but straight/mainstream society as well. While discussing the significance of gay hairstylists in South Africa, Reid said that, “Not only is the gay lifestyle seen as ‘fashion’ but gay hairstylists are seen as the purveyors of fashion” (22). He also discusses the association of a particular hairstyle called ‘perm’ with gay identity in South

Africa. This concept of gay men as trend setters in fashion is also articulated by Shaun Cole (2000) in his work. The documentary *Dream Boat* deals with the lives of some gay men from different parts of the world. It documents their experiences of on a cruise trip. Although the documentary focuses only on five particular gay men (individuals and couples), it also features all the other sailors on the ship. These men represent not only their gender and sexuality but also their ethnic and national identities. Most of the gay men have short and normal hairstyles. Short hairstyles are easy to be changed to different forms and they can also be covered with different forms of headdresses and wigs. But more than that, short haircuts symbolise masculinity.

The most popular hairstyle which has been traced among the gay men on the dream boat is buzz cut. There are different forms of buzz used by gay men such as burr, butch, crew cut, fade, and high and tight fade. One of the most acknowledged gay hairstyles, known with different names such as Duck's Ass, Duck's Tail or DA, is also used by one of the men in this documentary. Although the person has not styled his hair in the exact DA pattern, it is quite similar to that (see Fig. 9). It is a combination of buzz, DA, and Mohawk. Combining two or more hairstyles is a way to cross the established boundaries of hairstyles as well as the social norms associated with them. Along with Buzz and DA, there are some gay men who are skin-headed. Skinhead style has been very popular among the youth subcultures in the latter half of the twentieth century (see Fig. 10). Because of its subversive potential, many gay men have used this hairstyle, "the skinhead image is being adopted by a growing number of men in the gay community" (Forbes and Stampton 485). Skinhead represents the subversion of and opposition to the normal looks and styles of the mainstream society by using hairless heads as markers of resistance, "Skinheads, for their part, do not shave their heads to give up sexuality but do so out of a conscious desire to be provocative, to imitate convicts and prisoners, and to mark a difference from the unkempt hair of hippies" (Bromberger 381).

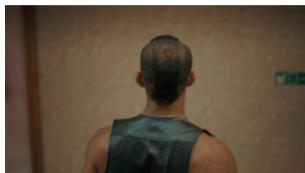


Fig. 9 Duck's Ass; *Dream Boat*



Fig. 10 Skinhead and Other Styles; *Dream Boat*

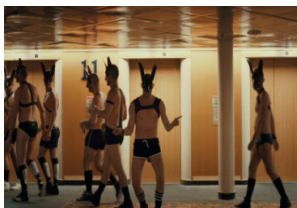
The Figure10 also represents the different types of gay men and their hairstyles which are documented in *Dream Boat*. Many of these men have short (buzz style) haircuts and others are skin-headed. The second person in the left row and the fifth one in the right have used a form of Fauxhawk hairstyle. Although these men are not following any common hairstyle, one factor can be deduced that most of them prefer short haircuts. In their attempt to exhibit their masculine gender roles, the gay men in *Dream Boat* have styled their hair in some of the most popular masculine haircuts which are often chosen by military men, policemen, army officers, workers, bikers, and other rough and tough masculine men in the mainstream society.

Along with the hairstyles, this image also displays the way the gay men keep / maintain their facial and body hair. Most of the gay men are clean shaved and a very few of them have kept their facial hair. Clean shaved faces have acquired the status of good looks in the western societies. Most of the times, the beard and moustache are kept only by those gay men who identify with the Bear, Leather or some ethnic groups where facial hair among men are considered a prominent sign of masculinity and cultural identity. Discussing the unconscious significance of facial hair Berg points out, "In our civilisation where the masculine conventions of shaving predominates, hair may be allowed to grow on the face either as a mark of masculine aggression unafraid to show itself (e.g. amongst military men) or as an attempt to compensate and make amends for unconscious feelings of femininity" (76).

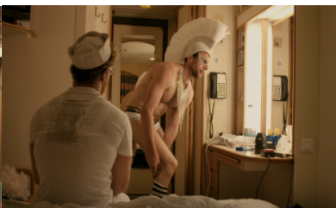
The hairless bodies, on the other hand, reveal and highlight the muscles and shape of the body. Bare bodies constitute an

important practice in the queer subcultural performances. Drag queens keep their bodies hairless to acquire feminine bodily features, whereas the masculine gay men keep themselves hairless to match the standard of masculinity advertised in mainstream society “Hairlessness is also a means of showing off sculpted and muscular bodies, a different emblem of virility” (Bromberger 392). In order to exploit that image and adopt it in their personal and subcultural contexts, gay men develop their muscles, by engaging in body-building, and then exhibit it by keeping their bodies hairless and unclad in a safe environment. Whereas hairless bodies connote femininity and masculinity for diverse queer subcultures, this trend has also acquired a stereotypical status of gay identity, “Since “hairless” is tagged with gay, it is easier for cinema and media industry to show and build these characters” (Jia 228). However, there are some gay men who prefer hairy bodies and facial hair. Keeping beard, moustache, and body hair signify that the person belongs to a particular gay community known as Bear Subculture.

In the documentary *Dream Boat*, the gay men dress in different styles in order to celebrate different queer subcultures. Gay and other queer subcultural groups are highly innovative in their innovative styles. The hairstyles and headdresses of gay men differ according to their different outfits. The first image (see Fig. 11) captures the day when all of the gay men are dressed in black-leather costumes. Their headdresses match their costumes. Black leather face-masks with long horns exaggerate the dramatic effect of their performance. On the other hand, Fig. 12 captures the day when all of them have worn white dresses with feathers. One of the primary connotations of white colour is light, brightness, and purity. However, Kouwer explored the underlying signification of white which symbolises, “everything above the level of everyday life, everything beyond concreteness” (97). The obscure and mysterious nature of black colour and the abstractness of white connote the incomprehensibility and abstraction of queer lifestyles and identities.

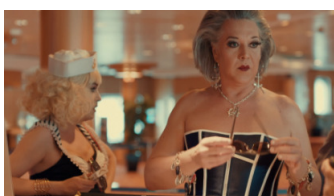


**Fig. 11 Leather
Headdress; *Dream Boat***



**Fig. 12 Furr Headdress;
*Dream Boat***

On one of the subsequent days, all of them dressed up in drag styles. The following figures are taken as representative of the ways the gay men transform themselves into female drag with the use of different types of hairstyles, hair colour and headdresses. In Fig. 13 both the persons put on wigs in such a refined way that their wigs give them a complete feminine look. The first person in Fig. 13 has styled his hair into a slicked back bob style and the other has used curly bob. In Fig. 14, the extravagant wigs are used to illustrate the trouble with gender because all of the men in Fig. 14 have kept their facial hair to deflect any feminine association. For them, drag is a parodic performance to mock the established gender norms.



**Fig. 13 Feminine Look;
*Dream Boat***



**Fig. 14 Enormous Wigs;
*Dream Boat***

Leather gay men constitute another important gay subcultural community. The members of this group are known and distinguished from other gay men on the basis of their appearance and styles. The YouTube video “Last of the NYC Leathermen” portrays their lifestyles, which include the hairstyles, dressing, sexual fantasies and fetishes. The fetishist value of leather products is employed by these leathermen to

fulfil their sexual desires. The hairstyle adopted by most of the leathermen in this video is skinhead (see Fig. 15).



Fig. 15 Leathermen's Skinhead Style; "The Last of NYC Leathermen"

It allows them to dissociate themselves from other gay subcultural groups especially drag queens, "being a skinhead was about expressing their masculinity" (Borgeson and Valeri 42).

There are some general and specific hair-practices in which the members of different gay subcultures participate. In their attempt to differentiate themselves from the stereotypical effeminate image, most of the gay men come up with masculine hairstyles. Buzz, burr, crew cut and skinheads are some of the prominent hairstyles which have been considered masculine, hence subsequently preferred by gay men. However, there have also been strong inclinations among them to invent new hairstyles which have the property to indicate their sexuality.

Hair Practices of Lesbians in *Venus Boys*

Lesbian identified women also put a lot of emphasis on their hair length, style, and hair-colour. Butch lesbians often choose shorter hairstyles which help them to acquire a masculine look. Dyke is one of the popular hairstyles among butch lesbians. Discussing the hairstyles used by African-American women like Afros and dreadlock and the ones worn by lesbians, Weitz states that these "styles can certainly help to spread a new and radical idea, help members of an incipient social movement identify each other, and spark social change" (683). In her article, she emphasises how body and bodily presentation, with a particular emphasis on hair and hairstyle, can display and articulate the political struggle over one's ethnic, gender and sexual identity. Looks and appearance make politically charged statements without directly engaging in political activism. The politics and

practices of daily life form a unified resistive mechanism which tries to challenge the hegemonic power-structures from micro levels. This indirect form of political activism and social reformation can be observed in the practices of all types of subcultural groups, especially the queer ones. The lesbians, just like the transgender and gays, utilise the expressive and resistive properties of hair and hairstyles while moving within and outside their subcultural spaces.

The documentary *Venus Boyz* documents the subculture of drag kings. It is a practice of male impersonation performed mostly by lesbians who experiment with their looks and styles in order to dissociate themselves from the normative femininity which is assigned to them at the time of their birth and upbringing. In their drag performances, they transform themselves into masculine looks and appearance with the help of manly hairstyles, dresses and other markers of masculinity. Mostly, the butch lesbians and the drag kings prefer to have sort haircuts such as skinhead, burr, buzz, fade and other short styles. The following figures display the short haircuts which the lesbians prefer in the documentary. Such preferences, on the part of women, remain socially unacceptable, “there is nothing at all irrational about girls wanting to fight or run or wear short hair; what is irrational is to deny girls access to activity because they are girls” (Halberstam 268). The short hairstyles become subversive acts when worn by women. The woman in Fig. 16 has chosen a form of Mohawk style. In Fig. 17 the medium size length, side-parted and side-swept hairstyle can be observed which is indicative of office men.

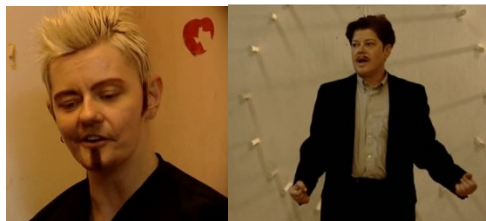


Fig. 16 (Left) and Fig. 17 (Right) Short Haircuts; *Venus Boyz*

In this documentary, most of the lesbians are skin-headed which poses strategic challenges to the feminine gender role (see Fig. 18). Skinhead itself has been a mark of defiance as has been discussed earlier. This practice especially dismantles the mainstream society's emphasis on hairstyle and hair maintenance. Although skinhead subculture had mostly been populated by men, there have also been women participants, "masculine women tend to find greater acceptance within the skinhead movement . . . Skinhead women reflect the range of masculinity-to-femininity found in the world" (Borgeson and Valeri 67). Following Borgeson and Valeri's views, the documentary *Venus Boyz* illustrates how lesbians represent a wide range of masculine and feminine hairstyles while performing their drag roles.



Fig. 18 Skinhead&Fig. 19 Buzz Cut; *Venus Boyz*

In the following figures, the lesbians documented have cropped their hair very short by following the burr, butch and buzz cuts (see Fig. 19). These cuts signify the masculine indifference to hair stylisation. That is why these haircuts are often opted by military personals. Extremely short haircuts help the person to show his/her side-lines, neckline and headline. In the case of women these features of one's hair and face are often covered under long hair locks. Making these hair-lines visible is a step on the part of these lesbian women to enter into the male-realm which alters their femininity, "The assertion of a new form of femininity can be expressed in a variety of ways, as either a shortening or a displaying of hair, depending on pre-established contexts and codes" (Bromberger 390).

There are some subversive and shocking hairstyles opted by the some of the lesbians in this documentary. The lesbian in Fig. 20 is a Native American who has kept her dreadlocks. Just like skinhead, dreadlock is one of the strangest and shocking hairstyles which attract immediate attention and contempt. Dreadlocks worn by women are considered even more subversive because much of their beauty is marked by their hair. When people style their hair in dreadlocks their choices signify their defiance of normative standards of beauty, “dreadlocks accompany various oppositional collective identities that manipulate cultural aesthetics and link individuals to counterhegemonic social movements” (Kuumba and Ajanaku 227). Afro and dreadlock hairstyles, on the other hand, contain resistive connotations about which people often are conscious while opting for them, “Afro and dreadlock styles also signified political empowerment, through the association with the black power movement on the one hand and the radical Rastafarian movement on the other” (White and White 53). In Fig. 21, there are two important hairstyles to note, the first person with curled hair (similar to Afro hairstyle) and the last one who has styled his long curly hairstyle in Latin American way. Curly hair encompasses genital and sexual meanings, “The essential association to curly hair is however a direct one to the curly hair of the public region. It is noteworthy that women generally have a greater preference for it, whether in males or females” (Berg 75).



Fig. 20 (Left) and Fig. 21 (Right) Dreadlocks and Other Ethnic Haircuts; *Venus Boyz*

These lesbians who chose these subversive and shocking hairstyles make political statements with their personal stylisation

in order to assert their gender and sexual identities. Their conscious awareness about the association of these different hairstyles with counterhegemonic ideologies gives their styles a more political and social value, “Hair seems to be such a little thing. Yet it is the little things, the small everyday realities of life, that reveal the deepest meanings and values of a culture, give legal theory its grounding, and test its legitimacy” (qtd in Simpson 288). Hair practices of queer people reveal their tactical ways to oppose the regulatory discourse of heterosexuality.

The use of wigs and various types of headdresses (caps or hats) can also be seen in the documentary. The following images (see Fig. 22 and 24) represent the lesbian women who have used different types of headdresses to perform their drag roles. The use of hats and caps has been considered a prerogative of masculine gender. In Fig. 22, the woman is playing the role of a drag king by wearing the hats used by men. In their day-to-day lives, these women try to cover their bald or shortly cropped hair with caps or hats. On the one hand, it allows them to perform their masculine gender role which confuses the viewers’ understanding of their biological status. The very concept of reality of the gender role is being questioned by these styles. On the other hand, hats or caps help them to express their masculine sexual appeal.



Fig. 22 (Left), Fig. 23 (Middle), and Fig. 24 (Right) Caps and Hats; *Venus Boyz*

The person in Figure 23 is wearing a cap which does not indicate any strong sign of masculinity. Rather, her use of that headwear actually deflects her gender position. It is one of the instances where the masculine and feminine gender roles are conflated to make the appearance of the person more androgynous or gender fluid. On the other hand, the persons in the Fig. 22 and 24 (who is wearing a cap) look quite masculine,

if their overall outlook is observed. The person in Fig. 22 has also worn a beard to confirm the acquired masculine gender. Considering that all these persons are female, their experimentation with their looks explains how gender is re-formed by the drag kings.

In this documentary the hair practices of lesbians, who are engaged in their gender transformation, either confirm or distort their gender positions. In their attempt to acquire a masculine gender appearance, butch lesbians often wear all the masculine paraphernalia, especially the short haircuts and facial hair. On the other hand, some of the lesbians keep androgynous hairstyles where they combine masculine and feminine styles. Apart from the hairstyles, the other supplementary elements of external appearance such as the role of cosmetics and dresses are also significant tools which these lesbians as well as other queer people utilise.

Conclusion

After analysing some of the LGBTIQ documentaries and videos with special reference to the semiotics of hair and hairstyles, it can be said that the complicated meanings which hair and hairstyles encompass enrich the lives of the people and help them make politically effective statements about their gender and sexual identities. In the case of LGBTIQ people, in the selected documentaries and videos, their hair choices indicate their characters, personalities, gender and sexual identities. What is more fascinating is the way the hair expresses the sexual repression, anxiety, and liberation of the transgender. Most of the times, the characters are portrayed with disordered and messy hair. Such hairstyles directly allude to their tangled and disturbed sexual lives. Along with these personal meanings, there is social, cultural and political relevance of hairstyles for queer people. The act of hair stylization, in hilarious and spectacular ways, is a strategy of the everyday life which serves to pose necessary resistance to the dominant political, social, and cultural norms.

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