

## **Do you see what I see? Gender performativity in Chandrasekaram's *Tigers Don't Confess***

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The binary opposites between “masculine” and “feminine” are socially constructed phenomena that are often politically empowered to draw on a hierarchical arrangement. However, recent gender related studies have foregrounded that cultural definitions of sexuality and what it means to be “male” and “female” are in flux. Especially, in “queer literature” there is a tendency to eradicate the binary opposites of the performativity of gender roles. Moreover, while covering a lacuna, it is interesting to examine how gender performativity is foregrounded in Sri Lankan “queer literature”.

This research paper analyses the "masculine" and "feminine" activities and behavior in Visakesa Chandrasekaram's novel *Tigers don't Confess*. It also maintains that performativity is that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains, (Bulter, 1993). Instances from the novel are drawn to foreground such constraints and to illustrate the constant change in gender performativity.

The results focus mainly on the gender performativity of Sharmila, the female suicide bomber, Naveen, a lawyer and his partner Kumaran who is falsely accused of being an LTTE agent. Sharmila's and Naveen and Kumaran's performativity of their gender roles keep changing. It specifically brings into discussion the performative of the closet homosexual/s and the pressure from a 'hetero-normative society' to conform. Moreover, a breakdown of binaries such as “male” and “female” can be observed through characterization, bordering on the “in-betweens.” It is apparent that the characters live in an oppressive status quo: especially prompted by hegemonic social conventions and ideologies.

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