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The Closet and its Problematics: A Reading of Sandip Roy's *Don't Let Him Know*

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Abstract:

The closet has come to occupy not merely the metaphorical space of concealment. It has transformed itself into a line of demarcation between sexuality as an identity and sexuality as affective. This mode of transformation, however, complicates our understanding of the closet and the way in which one navigates vis-à-vis queer space. By employing a close reading of the text *Don't Let Him Know*, this paper argues that the problematics of the closet derives from the very nature of the queer which seeks to destabilise the normativity and also with the existence of the “counterpublics” which complicates the concept of openness, public and private. These lead to the complication of the very meaning of the word closet and the knowledge system and discourse furthering by the closet itself.

Keywords: Queer, Closet, Counterpublics, Queer Space, Identity.

The idea of the closet is inherently tied post-Stonewall riot in 1969. Before that, “not many gays and lesbians used the phrase ‘coming out of the closet’...nowhere does it appear before the 1960s in the records of gay movement or in the novels, diaries, or letter of gay men and lesbian” (Chauncy 6). The Stonewall riot in the aftermath of the Stonewall Inn raid by the NYPD which selectively attacked queer people triggered the rejection of prior gay subculture (Duberman xv). Adam Nagourney opines that before the riot, the homosexuals were:

A secret legion of people, known of but discounted, ignored, laughed at or despised. And like the holders of a secret, they had an advantage which was a disadvantage too and which was true of no other minority group in the United States. They were invisible. Unlike African American, women, Native American, Jews, the Irish, the Italians, Asians, Hispanics and any other cultural group which struggled for respect and equal rights, homosexuals has no physical or cultural markings, no language or dialect which could identify them to each other, or to anyone else...But that night, for the first time, the usual acquiescence turned into

violent resistance...from that night the lives of millions of gay men and lesbians and the attitude toward them of the larger culture in which they lived, began to change rapidly. People began to appear in public as homosexuals, demanding respect (Clandinen 12).

What the Stonewall riot implicated for the first time is the idea of the closet. Because of the sudden visibility given to Greenwich and also to the queer people, they had been out and from there, there was no turning back. They must come in open to claim their equal rights granted to them by their virtue of being humans. It was from this instance of being out in the open that the idea of the closet developed. After Stonewall, the queer people came together in their own battle for civil rights and the queer became a sort of a socio-political identity. To be in the closet means to refuse to be in fraternity with that vision, and to deny a sense of being and the queer identity. The closet individuals are a silent being, unseen and erase from the discourse.

In queer studies, the closet has come to occupy a significant position toward understanding the complexity of queer life. It has come to define the metaphor and in itself a metaphor for that confinement of safety associative with a conceal private face of Queer-ness. The closet allows for the enjoyment of certain freedom and privileges to an individual which would be denied to someone out of the closet, assuming that the society with which one lives is inherently intolerant and homophobic. The closet allows enough room for navigation of desire and pleasures without negating the societal consequence as such. Coming out of the closet is a process of opening up one's sexuality to be known to the public if that sexuality is non-heteronormative. However, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick opines that this process of coming out is multilayer and involves various interlocutors. She states:

Every encounter with a new classful of students, to say nothing of a new boss, social worker, loan officer, landlord, doctor, erects new closets whose fraught and characteristic laws of optics and physics exact from at least gay people new survey, new calculations, new draughts and requisitions of secrecy or disclosure. Even an out gay person deals daily with interlocutors about whom she doesn't know whether they know or not. (68)

As such, it is understood that coming out of the closet has its own problematics as it is a process that continually postpone its climax. However, the Closet as a metaphor and as a signifier also has its own problematics. The first of such problematics revolve around the idea

of sexuality and who can be inside the closet. Such problematics, complicated as they are, are prevalent in Indian “culture” where homosociality is prevalent (Rao 23). Another problematic is self-referential, dealing with the very concept of the closet.

India has yet to develop an indigenous Queer theory and queer theorists such as Brinda Bose, Pramod Nayyar, Ranita Biswas, Akshay Khanna, Shohini Ghosh, Nivedita Menon, Niladri Chatterjee simply interpret Western Queer theory in context of India (Rao ix). Queer theory India centres around the deconstruction of Sexuality (Bakshi 2019; Rao 2017); on the historical reconstruction of Queer literary imagination (Vanita & Kidwai 2010; 2005; 2002); on the politics and praxis of Queer (Bose and Battacharyya, 2007; Ratti 2010); and also on the digital space of queer India (Dasgupta 2017; Gopinath 2018). This paper attempts to apply the idea of the Closet and coming out in context of Social Networking and to examine the problematics associated with the closets the moment it is moved out of its formulated political identity.

Examining these problematics in the context of Queer writing in India, this paper focus on Sandip Roy’s *Don’t Let Him Know*, a novel set both in United State of America and India. *Don’t Let Him Know* is a novel about the predicament of the Mitra family: Romola (the mother), Avinash (the father) and Amit (the son). The novel centres around the forbidden secret of Avinash, the secret that exist only in the closet. The closet then becomes that confined metaphor put in place by the existence of social obstacles that forever regulates the queerness within the closet. Avinash in his conversation, upon being asked why he stopped “playing”, says, “because we grew up” (Roy, 59). The idea of growing, of out-growing sexuality is pervading in this novel. But can one out-grow sexuality? When Butler called gender a “performance gesture” (25), Raj Rao extends the idea to Sexuality when he pronounces:

I call sexuality a social construct because it is society that expect a male (a state of being) to grow into a man (a state of becoming). Furthermore, such obligations are more incumbent upon the self-identified heterosexual man, rather than of the self-identified homosexual man, who potentially at least is freed of the obligation to perform by virtue of his non-normative sexual orientation.(2-3)

From this argument, Rao seems to delink Sexual Orientation with Sexuality. The former being a state of Be while the latter is a state of Being. Avinash complicates the problematics of sexuality and the idea of the closet furthermore in the novel.

When asked if he is happy with his new life, Avinash replies, "I have a good job. My mother is happy. Romola takes good care of her. And I adored Amit...I don't think much about that anymore. I am contented. That's good enough" (Roy 60). Notices how his relationship with Romola is being left out of the equation that makes his life happy or content. Presumably, the presence of the other sex is just a convenient variable that get added up in his life as an attempt to be in the closet.

The question of the closet is very important in this novel. First, it posits that there exists an ambiguity with regards to certain modes of knowledge by which one's sexuality comes into fore play. Second it posits a long tradition of male sociality that defies a strict and interdependent sexual binary. One could infer, based upon the implication of the novel, that Avinash is a homosexual who is forced into a marriage with a woman under certain familial and societal circumstances. Avinash says:

After Baba died all of a sudden, there was never any choice for me. My grandmother was still alive and completely distraught. Ma said I had to come back and get married and settle down. And then after I took Romola to America, Ma started writing letters asking me to come home (Roy,59).

His lack of interest in another manly thing is being described by his mother as he being a good boy:

"My son", said Avinash's mother to Romola over a cup of tea, "has always been a top boy in his class. "A model student" his principal called him. Never one to wander the streets like these other Romeos. That was why I never had the slightest fear sending him to America. You know, Mrs Dutt, it's all about upbringing and family. If you bring him up right, then why should you be worried, na?" (Roy,26-27).

The ambiguity of sexuality is obvious here. What counts as good behaviour to his mother is prompt by another desire of which his mother has no idea of. In that sense, with his mother, Avinash is still in the closet. But the fact that Avinash could "act" out his heterosexuality indicates a larger implication of reading sexuality in the light of in/out of the closet. Avinash could fall into a group of people by the term MSM. But MSM defines themselves strictly within the parameters that constitute the heteronormativity. (Rao 27). For Avinash, the closet serves only the function of enabling him to appropriate and essentialise the family. It doesn't or rather it doesn't suggest that his being in the closet is strictly due to his deep-

rooted fear of his own sexuality which is characteristics of many MSM. Of homosociality, Raj Rao opines:

In India, heterosexism often leads to segregation of the sexes till marriage...resulting in same sex bonding among people. Homosocial segregation sometimes helps men and women to discover their homosexuality. It then becomes their alibi. (Rao 67)

One could posit that whatever the nature of Avinash's relationship with Sumit and romantic relationship is very indicative, these is also a strong sense of bonding that whatever Sumit feel about it, that feeling is not mutual and reciprocated by Avinash. When Sumit says:

Or did you feel, since whatever we had was a secret anyway, we could just carry on as before? Hadn't we promised to be together, the world be damned? Did you think it was just a phase we'd outgrow like children with their clothes?

I never asked you to tell the world. I just hope you might wait for me... (Roy,3)

Sumit wants to continue to be with Avinash, to cherish in their relationship. But Avinash has a different idea which Sumit vaguely implies in the above passage. Avinash says, "I got married. That's just the way it is. It's just something that happened." (59). Despite the romantic and probable sexual nature of their relationship, maybe the condition of which Avinash and Sumit grew up contributes to their homosocial bonding. This bonding only later translates itself into a homosexual bonding. As such, the closet simply fails to account for this situational homosexuality. Is Avinash is in the closet? Or simply is he simply mistaken to be in the closet? Does Avinash lives a double life, the one that shades his sexuality from the gaze and knowledge of the other or is he simply navigating the different spaces available to him and without feeling the need to give himself a defined space and label? The fact that what he experiences with Sumit is secretive is not suggestive of anything. This problem of mistake in identifying the situation and location of the closet contributes to mis-sexualised people and the resulting stigma that is associative to the closeted queers within the queer community.

Toward the later part of the novel, Avinash is being described as lurking the Internet in search for companionship. His venture into the dark web world is being carried under the pseudonym FunMan1234 . The condition and space of anonymity offers by the internet enables him to explore his sexuality more than before. There are many telling observations made by cultural critics about the Internet and how the culture of "Net Anonymity" allows

for the expression of one's identity. Identity is something which is done. It is linked with the idea of constructing a coherent narrative about one self and will guide one's behaviour. Cover argues that Social Networking sites are performatives act in themselves and "having an enormous capacity to further our understanding of how the multiple function of social media sites are utilised in the construction and playing out of Identity, subjectivity and Selfhood in both online and offline contexts" (Cover 178). Nancy Fraser opines that for marginalised groups, it is in their interest to form "subaltern counterpublics" which are "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses in order to form and assert their own interpretation of their identities and interest" (67). The internet in general and social networking in particular allows for the navigation of sexuality within the counter sphere of public discourse. Of this Tudor remarks:

In regard of media and space, it is further still being debated whether digital media should be seen as producing spaces in tier own right. Though there was a tendency among Internet studies during the nineties to speak of a "cyberspace", largely disconnected from "real life", such perspectives were soon increasingly critiqued as studies of everyday digital media use evolved...today as evermore aspects of our everyday life have become digitized, digital media are thus more rarely treated as sperate space entities and we may perhaps think ourselves as ling what Mark Deuze has termed "medialives", where it has been increasingly difficult to single out media as anything other than just life. Therefore, some medias scholars argue that the spatial distinction between online and offline has lost its bearing (22)

But since internet is a public platform and a legitimate public space of its own, this has an implication on the problematics of the closet. The FunMan1234 is an "out" individual, in a public platform and accessible by the members of the community. To what extend then Avinash still in the Closet? And how does Avinash's identity and persona differ from that of FunMan1234? When one considers the axiom that social networking sites are performative acts in themselves, then one can deconstruct the question of identity and Closet.

To be in the closet means that one would have to present a certain persona, a social mask with a range of acceptability within a heteronormative establishment. And it also relegates sexuality within a confine of private pleasure, strictly dissociative of one's

identity. The closet is associated with the mask. The mask in simple term is a disguise which make disguise possible. T.S. Eliot in *The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock*, says:

I shall prepare a face to meet the face (Eliot np)

So there is an inherent urge for conceal and disguise. But the mask is more than just a disguise. It is an image that subsumes the Self. A person puts on a mask so as to be able to do certain things he has an inner desire to do (Malchiody, n.p). That inner desire is characteristics of the Self but for that Self to be expressed, a person needs a disguise or a Mask. The Mask is an image that allows the self to act as a self. The mask both consumed and regurgitates the self. That is why during Gay Pride events, the Mask is a very important item. However it ceases to be a mere item and have a meaning of its own. The Carnival can happen because of the Mask. Everyone ‘pretends’ to play the role one is not. The question of the Self disappears when the Mask is present because the Mask comes to occupy a more central role in the entire process of individuation. That is why Eliot wants to prepare a ‘face’. Because the mask is such an important symbol, the mask as an idea is inherently prominent in Queer writing

It is the same predicament that Dorian Gray faces as his painting become defaced as he continues his hedonistic lifestyle. *Dorian Gray* is in fact more subtle. Dorian himself is a mask. But the painting is the self. But the painting is also an image, a mere reflection. The relationship of Dorian the mask to Dorian the Image can be represented as:

$$Mask = \frac{Image}{dorian}$$

Dorian as the authentic self simply ceased to exist. What exist are Dorian the Mask, the ‘homme fatale’ and Dorian the reflection or the Image. There is no sense of authenticity in that representation because the Queer seeks not the authentic but the exaggeration, the artifice and the Eye. Interestingly, while Dorian Gray is not a Queer per se, he contains the very essence of Queerness. Little does it matter about his sexual preference. There are enough indications that Dorian is in fact the object of love interest to Henry and Basil. Basil is more of a creator who is in love with his creation, a theme echoes both in the myth of Pygmalion and in Shaw’s play by the Same name. What is important is that Dorian Gray is emblematic of the very essence of Queer, not only as the persona but also the phenomenon. As stated earlier, the closet is associated with the mask. But this association borders in problematics. First, if one is in the closet, he presents a “double” life- one that is

public, adhering more or less to the heteronorms and the other, a private- simply enjoying the pleasure in shame, contempt, guilt or fear. This in turn allows for the subsume of the Self because one couldn't construct s coherent narratives around the Queer phenomenon. However, the closet by virtue of being a Mask, as argued earlier, allows for sexual freedom to be expressed without endangering the Self that is being constructed around a stable discursive norm. juxtaposing these problems with the rise of Social network dating, how can the problem of the closet be extended to an online profile? If FunMan1234 is "out" in the social network world and his account is accessible to all and sundry for communication and gestures, then to what extent can we said he is in the closet? One could argue that Avinash exist as a coherent independent Self within the public sphere whereas FunMan1234 exist as a private self within the private sphere. But online community, even a queer one, is not a private sphere. And this is what Fraser means when she talks about the idea of "counterpublics"- a public space manifesting within the counter-discourse on and of the "publics". If one is to explain the problem of the closet in context of Queer identity within the internet culture, one would encounter this problem of the Self and its very deconstruction. Internet allows for destabilising of identities because one cannot form a stabilise and coherent categories with which the parameters of identity can exist. The virtual proximation affected by social networking brings out the differences and the continual differentiation of such parameters. In the novel, such proximation allows FunMan1234 to meet Khush69. However, any semblance of fraternised category ends there. Khush69 would later blackmail and extort money from FunMan1234 (Roy 188-89). The Closet as a metaphor becomes an invisible sign. It can only be uttered. It can only be described. This invisibility of the sign allows for the continual movement of the Lacanian S' above the bar, allowing for the substitution of S with S'. Hence, the signified S' doesn't have a proper meaning (De Shutter,69). Once this problem of substitution arises, then the closet as a metaphor constantly gets negated, added up, substituted. In short, there is a continual differentiation and deconstruction of the sign or the metaphor. The Closet becomes a metaphor or a sign but its whole meaning collapses. For instance, to describe Avinash as being in the closet for Type I situation, the signifier, "Closet", acquires a certain meaning in context of a signified, the concept and ideas associated with the closet in queer discourse. But within another context Type II situation i.e in the social networking sites, the signified changes because to describe Avinash as secretive would be incorrect. The S' doesn't have any proper meaning and it is situational. So while in Type I, the sign of the closet holds true, in Type II situation, it is nonsensical to talk of the

closet. From here, one could deduce that the idea of the closet is situational and contextual. The closet exists only in a specific location, situation and culture.

Another problematic of the closet is the process of Coming Out. By Coming Out, it means the public disclosure of one's sexuality. One could choose to come out to one's friends, colleagues, family, netizens, etc. From these, one could observe that the process of coming out is multi-layered and involves various stages. Suppose it is assumed, or rather moving the context of the novel outside its contexts and assuming that Avinash never discloses his sexuality to anyone because he doesn't have to. No one make assumption about another's sexuality and that the whole heteronormativity collapses. Of course, in such a society, social stigma associated with Queerness is eliminated and hence Avinash doesn't have to keep anything secret. And of course, in such a society, the whole idea of the closet collapses because there is nowhere to come out of. But Queer studies posits one important Axiom and that is, the Queer seeks to destabilise any normativity (Bakshi 8). If, let's say, society tends toward homonormativity, then the Queer would seek to destroy that very normativity. In such a situation then, the closet would exist but with a different signified S'. as such, the closet and the Queer seems to co-inhabit and co-manifest themselves. Applying this thought process within the context of the novel after a brief thought experiment outside the context of the novel, it would assume that Avinash's fate is forever binds in the closet. And this is not the fate of Avinash only. When Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick mentions about this multidimensionality of coming out, one could argue that coming out is not only multidimensional but also perpetually postponed. One cannot come out of the closet; one can only come out to someone. Of course, Avinash's wife Romola also knows about his sexuality. That doesn't mean he has come out of the closet. The closet drags him into its confinement. And Of course, Romola only know about his sexuality by accidentally discovering Sumit's letter to him. There is also an element of voluntariness in the process of coming out. One cannot come out of the closet by being dragged out of it. One has to be willing not only to come out but to take the risk of being vulnerable once one came out. There is a lot of voluntariness attached to the idea of coming it. It is being seen as a courageous attempt to be true to one's self and to fearlessly face the consequence. Avinash doesn't voluntarily come out to his wife but he does voluntarily expose himself and his sexuality in the other public spheres.

The closet and its problematics then expose the Queer into new challenges, namely how does one construct a sense of Identity and Selfhood that while being

situated in a somewhat paradoxical situation?. How can one cultivate a sense of identity which revolves around a semblance of normativity when the queer seeks to destabilise that? How can the Self be articulate when being in the closet subsumes the Self but at the same time trying to get out of the closet is a Sisyphean task? How can the closet which essentialises the mask gives an authentic sense of Being to the Queer? How can one proclaim his sexuality to the world when the world is constantly out of one's reach? The closet presents these problems of the Queer and navigating through these obstacles requires a certain mode of operation by which the nature of the closet and the queer can be interpreted. In Lee Edelman's *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory*, the idea that the signs of homosexuality can be read. Homographesis refers to the decoding of the homosexual as a body that demand to be read. (1-23). But the body can be only interpreted and deciphered in relations to the figural logics through which the discourse is culturally constructed. One's discovery of sexuality is being portrayed as followed by the profound realisation that the " body of the homosexual is differently marked"(Purvis 440). However this corporeal identity and its interlinkage with the construction and performance of the identity is textual. Sexuality is not self-evidently written in the body (4). This observation by Edelman establishes the relation between the body and the text and how the text decides upon how the body is to be interpreted. This is not a political or sociological interpretation of queer as a Societal and political fact and phenomenon. This is a queer aesthetic reading of a queer literary phenomenon and is applicable to *Don't Let him Know*. As such the body, as homosexual being, can only navigate the problematics of the closets through subversion. One of the reasons of the existence of the closet is for the perpetuation of the heteronormativity by subjugating and regulating the queer to the margin and the shadow. Another reason is in the nature of the queer itself that always seeks to destabilise any normativity. Both these reasons are true in the case of Avinash. However to cope with the closets, Avinash has to subvert himself, the sexual/textual relationship and also the closet. Avinash comes across as gay, as bisexual and even as an MSM. He never defines himself and the sign of homosexuality in Avinash's body could be read as either or all of these three traits of sexuality. Avinash refuses to define himself, denying the self-evidently written signs of homosexuality, depriving both the body and the text out of the sole monopoly of the sexual-textual relationship. If Avinash wants to navigate the spectrum of sexuality, due to any reason, he must constantly subvert himself because of the imposing claustrophobia of the closet. If he wants to be with a man, he must subvert that desire due to the closet. If he has to be with a woman, he needs to subvert the feelings because of the closet. The closet forever cast its

shadows over him. Subversion is not an overt but rather a covert act of rebellion. In Avinash's case, one could argue that there is nothing subverting about his role. He is simply a "closeted" man, trying to hide his sexuality and present a more presentable face to society by engage into the institution of heterosexist marriage. He is a hypocrite who hides behind the anonymity of internet in search of pleasure. While that is true, it is only true superficially. Avinash's action is predicated not by his own free will, but by the nature of the Closet. The closet exists not necessarily out of societal stigmatisation but its existence is predicated by the very nature of the Queer itself. After all, subversive literature exists and manifest itself in the same way the queer manifest itself- through signs, gestures and palimpsest. Jane Austen's novels as satirization not only of the society and the landed gentry but of masculinity itself. But despite that, there is an inherent view that Austen's novels are anything but subversive and that is true to the queer and the closet. The body in the closet are the ultimate tools for this kind of subversion. South Asian Queer theorists like Rao(2017) and Bakshi (2019) have expressed the same angst that with the visibilisation of LGBTQ+ movement, there is a movement toward homonormativity and that is just another way of propagating the very structure that is responsible for the necessitation of the closet. As such, to be out of the closet contributes little toward the destabilisation of the system and the normativity. Coming out of the closet is meditated by a private predicament and as such, the entire process is inherently private. But the problems of the Queer and the Closet is more collective and more group based. As such, coming out can only be seen in personal term and attributives. If Avinash comes out, it does nothing to the very end that the queer seeks. It can only make him courageous and vulnerable. The norm is neither inverted nor subverted. The process of coming out is only helpful in the short term, visibilisation of the Queer people. Bakshi argues that:

Despite a strong counter-discourse promoting queer politics as irreconcilable with any form of normativity, most First World countries, which apparently seem to provide an environment favourable for same-sex desires to thrive, champion an aggressive homonormativity as the only possible means by which sexual minorities might be meaningfully integrated into the mainstream...although legalisation of same sex marriage or civil partnership has been welcomed by several members of the LGBT community, the moment also marked a temporary failure of queer politics (9-10).

While trying to understand the ontology of the closet, one could infer that the closet exists as a hierarchy between those who have come out and those who are still in

the closet. The act of coming out is implicative of embracing the political implication that exist simultaneously with that performative utterance. Those who are in the closet are seen as mere homosexuals who are only interested in the personal rather than the political and the collective. As such there is so much pressure on those who are in the closet to come out of the closet. However, because of the very nature of the closet, there is a caution about the entire process of being out- that the political implication of such act would result in the state co-opting queer people and queer issues for its pseudo-moralistic stance. Establishing homonormativity is just another form of propagating the same structure that the Queer seeks to involve and coming out of the closet contributes to the establishing of such normativity as proven by the First World countries (Bakshi 8).

But as stated earlier, coming out is a perpetual process, whose climax is forever postponed. The knowledge that confer sociality to homosexuality is not known to all and as such even the 'out' person is always in the closet, a silent non-existing being. Post-Stonewall queer politics revolves around the attempt by Queer people to break lose the silence and to reclaim a space for themselves within the mainstream society. This riot brings to visibility of queer people into the mainstream. The attempt to create their own space lead to the queering of heterosexist space (Nayar,140). Queering involves not only the homosexual act of affection but the same-sex perversion. And this further what Dollimore (103) and Rao (110) call the perversion of the Homosexuality, to 'Queerified it'. It is this perversion, this penchant for the underground rules and 'anarchy' that contributes to the destabilised and reform of culture (Dollimore 103).

Avinash, in the novel, presents a problem of Queerifying the Homosexuality. He is a person who gives in to society expectation and take a wife for himself and start a family. Avinash is a typical closeted gay man who seek respectability in the semblance of society but seek solace and pleasure in the underground world of Queer internet and queer gay bars. But Avinash is not just a typical closeted gay man for his action is predicated by the very problematic nature of the closet and the queer themselves. The closet exists for Avinash due to familial expectation. He couldn't co-opt the sociality of his sexuality. He can only perform and make gestures through the counterpublic sphere. And this is another form of coming out itself. If the epistemology of the closet has changed, marked by pre 1969 and post 1969, the advent of the counterpublic sphere should also change the nature of the closet as manifested by Avinash. Under such a situation, Avinash's failure to come out can be read in the light of Judith Halberstam theory of failure. He states, " under certain

circumstances, failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, losing, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world” (2). Failure as a mode of “unbecoming” is important in Avinash’s life. His failure to come out actually is a part of his unbecoming and unbeing “proposing a different relation to knowledge” (Halberstam 23). Since the queer strives toward destabilising normativity, even the process of coming out could be seen as one step toward Homonormativity and as such the theory of failure would explain Avinash as being subversive to the idea of homonormativity by simply refusing to come out in the public sphere. And since Avinash juggles between the public and the counterpublic, the idea of the closet as understood post-stonewall, collapses in his case. And while Avinash present the problem of the closet when juxtapose with the advent of Networking and how, in the word of Baptise:

Gay men’s ability to see other gay men, and meet these men on the fly, in the public sphere, reconstitutes the entire social structure of heteronormative society, changing the ways in which gay men view society and their place within it (118).

Avinash doesn’t have to come out of the closet because his relationship with other gay men provides a knowledge system by which Social Networking allows for the dissemination of that particular knowledge. Social Networking allows for an alternate space and options that previously exist only to the out- queer. The Political-ity of Queer needs be removed. The silence, the breaks and the delays that the underground by virtue of being underground offers is emblematic of the queer attempt in existing alongside the periphery rather than being pigeonholing through politics.. That is why, the closet is a paradox for Queer people and seemingly the emergence of alternate and counter space can, in a way, allows the queer to be “out” while mitigating the disastrous effect of co-opting the LGBTQ+ community.

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