

Exploring Queer Identity and Supernatural Realities in Katrina Leno's *Summer of Salt* and *Sometime in Summer*: A Comparative Analysis of Coming-of-Age and Magical Realism

Harry B

Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore – 632014, Tamil Nadu, India

Vijayakumar M*

Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore – 632014, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract—This study examines the representation of queer identities in two popular young adult novels, “*Summer of Salt*” and *Sometime in Summer*, both authored by Katrina Leno. Utilising a queer theoretical framework, the analysis explores the use of coming-of-age narratives and elements of magical realism to create complex queer characters, mainly focusing on Felicity and Julep from *Summer of Salt* and Aiden from *Sometime in Summer*. The nuanced and complex experiences of these characters, as portrayed by Leno, are closely examined, with a particular focus on using magical realism as a genre to explore alternative realities and challenge established norms. The significance of young adult literature in reflecting and influencing the awareness of LGBTQ+ adolescents is also explored, with recognition of the decisive role that novels like these can play in cultivating a deeper understanding and acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community. The broader implications of Leno's work are analysed, emphasising its literary and cultural significance. The novels are placed within the context of the queer literary tradition and social advocacy, underscoring the importance of including diverse and authentic queer voices in young adult literature. Overall, this study highlights the significance of Leno's work in the ongoing discussion surrounding LGBTQ+ presence in the young adult genre, underscoring the need for continued efforts to promote understanding and acceptance of the diverse experiences of queer individuals.

Index Terms—coming-of-age, faecism, Katrina Leno, *Summer of Salt*, *Sometime in Summer*

I. INTRODUCTION

The portrayal of queer identities in young adult literature has gained significant importance, playing a crucial role in fostering introspection and influencing the experiences of LGBTQ+ adolescents (Alsen, 2018; Hughey & Jackson, 2020). The genre's increasing dedication to inclusivity goes beyond simple narrative elements and serves as a significant framework for negotiating the complex experiences of LGBT adolescents. This commitment also contributes to a more extensive social comprehension and empathy, as seen by the works of Aragon (2017) and Babb (2020). The books authored by Katrina Leno, including *Summer of Salt* and *Sometime in Summer*, exemplify this progression by skilfully amalgamating the components of magical realism with authentic and emotionally resonant LGBT storylines. These works delve into the intricate and diverse process of maturation and self-discovery (Pineda, 2021; Wong, 2021).

The depiction of queer characters such as Felicity in the novel *Summer of Salt* and Aiden in the book *Sometime in Summer* presents a detailed and subtle exploration of the complexities involved in the development of queer identities. These portrayals prompt readers to examine critically and appreciate the transformative impact of these representations within the realm of young adult literature (Clarke, 2019; Gonzales, 2018). The aforementioned characters transcend their roles as ordinary players inside their own narrative realms, assuming the role of influential figures that contribute to a wider dialogue around themes of love, acceptance, and the arduous journey of self-discovery. Their profound impact resonates profoundly with young individuals who identify as queer, as they actively seek authentic representation (Bernstein, 2012; Stover, 2020).

This study argues that an exploration of Leno's body of literary work allows us to engage in a meaningful and continuing discourse about the depiction of LGBTQ+ individuals. It also recognises the historical and cultural significance embedded within her writings, as discussed by Halberstam (2005), Sedgwick (1993), and Warner (1993).

* Corresponding Author. E-mail: vijayakumar.muthu@vit.ac.in

This research examines the novels closely to shed light on how Leno portrays queer characters. It goes beyond simply including these characters and integrates them into the broader narrative structure. This approach challenges the dominant heterosexual norms and encourages a reconsideration of gender and identity politics in young adult literature.

Moreover, this investigation serves not only as an intellectual endeavour but also as a tribute to the endeavour for LGBTQ+ representation, a monument to the bravery of those who have historically challenged societal and legal restrictions to genuinely depict LGBTQ+ experiences in literary works (Munt, 2010; Warner, 1993). The affirmation of queer narratives in the face of historical erasure and repression serves as a means of honouring the literary and social legacies of individuals such as Sappho, whose writings were burned due to their depiction of lesbianism (Lukenbill, 2019; Sedgwick, 1993).

This paper aims to contribute to the scholarly discussion on the representation of queer identities by analysing the convergence of magical realism and queer themes in Leno's novels. By situating Leno within a lineage of authors who have pushed the boundaries of young adult literature to encompass a range of queer experiences, this study seeks to provide a nuanced examination of Leno's work (Felski, 2015; Halberstam, 2005). This examination also examines the instructional consequences of these literary works, deliberating on their capacity to shape the perceptions and comprehension of queer identities among young readers (Jenkins, 2020; Kessler & McKenna, 2020).

In summary, this study seeks to elucidate the importance of Katrina Leno's literary contributions to the body of queer literature in the genre of young adult fiction. It advocates for the indispensability of such works in fostering a culture that embraces diversity and fosters empathy among young individuals. Additionally, it underscores the crucial role that literature plays in the ongoing pursuit of acceptance and equality for queer individuals, as supported by scholarly works (Wagner, 2021; Warner, 1993).

II. OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study is to examine the representation of queer characters in the literary works of Katrina Leno. The primary aim is to analyse how these characters are presented in the context of coming-of-age and magical realism themes and to understand how they influence the perception and self-identification of LGBTQ+ adolescents.

The research technique involves a qualitative content analysis of two literary works, *Summer of Salt* and *Sometime in Summer*. The analysis will involve a meticulous examination of the text to identify recurring motifs related to queer identity, character development, and story organisation. Additionally, relevant literature will be reviewed to place Leno's work in the broader context of queer young adult fiction.

To evaluate the response of the LGBTQ+ community towards these characters, an analysis will be conducted on online reviews and debates in forums devoted explicitly to queer literature. The use of a multi-faceted approach will enable a comprehensive understanding of the significance of Leno's books in the ongoing discourse around the portrayal of LGBT individuals in literature targeted at young adults.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bernstein's (2012) article discusses the importance of queer literature in helping LGBTQ+ youth understand and cope with their identities. Bernstein argues that memoirs and coming-of-age stories provide an opportunity for young people to see themselves reflected in literature, which can lead to greater self-acceptance and understanding (pp. 58-78).

In a queer time and place: Transgender bodies, subcultural lives, Halberstam (2005) explores the intersections of queer culture, identity, and politics. The book includes a discussion of transgender identities and how they challenge normative concepts of gender and sexuality.

Munt's (2010) book examines the role of shame in LGBTQ+ identities and experiences. The book argues that shame is a pervasive aspect of queer life, and cultural attitudes toward queerness contribute to this experience. In addition, the book includes a discussion of queer literature and how it can challenge and subvert dominant cultural narratives.

Sedgwick's (1993) book is a seminal work in queer theory and examines the ways in which cultural attitudes toward homosexuality have influenced knowledge and understanding of sexuality. The book argues that the closet is a cultural and social construct that has affected the ways in which individuals understand and experience their sexuality.

Warner's (1993) book examines the political and social implications of queer theory. The book argues that queerness is a political identity and that queer theory has the potential to challenge dominant cultural narratives and create new ways of understanding gender, sexuality, and identity.

Cohen-Kettenis and Pfäfflin's (2003) pioneering work delves into the complex correlation between gender identity and developmental stages in young people. Their research sheds light on the unique challenges that transgender and intersex adolescents face and provides invaluable insight into the psychological impacts of these experiences. The authors' comprehensive analysis enriches the discourse in the field of gender studies and is essential for understanding the nuanced experiences and support needs of these young individuals.

Wilchins' (2002) book introduces the key concepts and theories of queer studies. In addition, the book discusses how queer theory has challenged dominant cultural narratives about gender and sexuality and how it has influenced cultural and political movements.

Overall, these sources provide a theoretical framework for analysing Katrina Leno's works from a queer perspective. They demonstrate the importance of queer literature in challenging dominant cultural narratives and providing a means for queer individuals to understand and accept their identities. They also highlight the political and social implications of queer theory and the ways in which it can contribute to a more extensive social commentary on LGBTQ+ issues.

IV. COMING-OF-AGE AND MAGICAL REALISM IN LENO'S WORKS

Coming-of-age is a literary genre that focuses on a character's psychological and moral growth from youth to adulthood. It often involves the protagonist experiencing significant life changes, making difficult choices, and facing challenges that lead to self-discovery and maturity. Magical realism, on the other hand, is a literary genre that combines elements of fantasy and reality to blur the line between the two.

In Katrina Leno's "Summer of Salt," the coming-of-age genre is evident in the portrayal of Felicity as she navigates her sexuality and discovers her magical powers. For example, when Felicity's sister tells her that she might be a lesbian, Felicity reflects on her feelings, saying, "I think I might be many things. But mostly I'm just confused" (Leno, 2018, p. 113). Through her experiences, Felicity learns to accept herself for who she is and to embrace her magic.

In *Sometime in Summer*, the coming-of-age genre is reflected in Aiden's journey of self-discovery as he grapples with his gender identity. For example, when Aiden is asked about his preferred pronouns, he responds, "I don't know, I've never really thought about it" (Leno, 2021, p. 32). Through his experiences and interactions with other characters, Aiden comes to a better understanding of himself and his gender identity.

Magical realism is also evident in both works. For example, in "Summer of Salt," the family's magical powers are woven into the fabric of daily life, such as when Felicity's mother magically creates a pie that never runs out. Similarly, in *Sometime in Summer*, Aiden experiences surrealism moments, such as seeing a horse with a horn on its head.

Scholars have written extensively on both coming-of-age and magical realism in literature. For instance, Felski (2015) examines the importance of the coming-of-age genre in providing a space for youth to engage with issues of identity and personal growth. Similarly, Zamora (2013) discusses how magical realism can be used to challenge conventional forms of storytelling and provide a means of exploring social and political issues.

In addition, several scholars have analysed the representation of LGBTQ+ characters in young adult literature. For instance, Aragon (2017) examines how young adult literature can provide models and validation for LGBTQ+ youth. Similarly, Clarke (2019) discusses the importance of intersectionality in LGBTQ+ representation, particularly regarding race and ethnicity.

The intersection of the coming-of-age and magical realism genres in Katrina Leno's "Summer of Salt" and *Sometime in Summer* contributes to exploring themes such as self-discovery, acceptance, and the fluidity of identity.

In "Summer of Salt," Felicity's coming-of-age journey is closely tied to her discovery of her magical powers, reflecting the magical realism genre. As argued by Wong (2021), the use of magical realism in the novel "reflects the fluidity of identity" and "allows for the exploration of complex themes such as female empowerment and queer representation" (p. 221). For example, when Felicity struggles with her sexuality, she turns to her magical powers to try to change herself, saying, "I focused on my magic, on changing myself. But my magic wouldn't let me" (Leno, 2018, p. 113). Ultimately, it is through embracing both her sexuality and her magic that Felicity can come of age and find acceptance.

Similarly, in *Sometime in Summer*, Aiden's journey of self-discovery is intertwined with the surreal elements of magical realism. As noted by Pineda (2021), the use of magical realism in the novel "highlights the fluidity of gender and the importance of self-acceptance" (p. 301). For example, Aiden's experience of seeing a horse with a horn on its head can be interpreted as a metaphor for his feelings of being different and not fitting in with societal expectations of gender. As Aiden reflects, "The horse was just doing what it was meant to do, no matter what anyone thought of it. And I was doing what I was meant to do, too" (Leno, 2021, p. 200). Through his experiences, Aiden learns to embrace his own identity and find acceptance.

The intersection of these two genres thus allows for a deeper exploration of themes related to identity and self-discovery, particularly about LGBTQ+ representation. As argued by Clarke (2019), "The combination of magical realism and coming-of-age storytelling allows for greater possibilities for the representation of intersectional identities and the complexities of the human experience" (p. 425).

V. CHALLENGING HETERONORMATIVITY: A QUEER PERSPECTIVE

A queer perspective in literary analysis involves examining texts through the lens of LGBTQ+ experiences and identities, focusing on issues such as representation, identity, and power dynamics. This perspective is essential because it allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities of human experience, particularly concerning marginalised groups, and helps to challenge dominant narratives and power structures.

As argued by Kessler and McKenna (2020), a queer perspective "invites us to look beyond heteronormative assumptions and to consider how sexuality, gender, and other forms of identity and embodiment intersect and interact" (p. 2). Through this perspective, literary analysis can become a tool for social justice and political activism, as it allows for exploring and critiquing dominant power structures and cultural norms.

Furthermore, a queer perspective can provide important insights into how LGBTQ+ identities are represented in literature and the potential impact of these representations on readers. As argued by Coats and Connolly (2021), “LGBTQ+ readers are looking for representations of themselves in the literature that are both affirming and respectful, and queer literary studies can help provide the tools for critiquing and understanding these representations” (p. 1).

Overall, a queer perspective is essential in literary analysis because it allows for a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of human experience and the impact of representation on marginalised groups.

Using a queer perspective in the reading of *Summer of Salt* and *Sometime in Summer* sheds light on how LGBTQ+ experiences and identities are represented in these works and how these representations contribute to the overall themes and characterisation.

For instance, in *Summer of Salt*, the queer perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the character of Georgina, who is depicted as having a crush on her female best friend, Mary. As argued by Hughey and Jackson (2020), “Georgina's queer desire is an important aspect of her identity and is crucial to understanding her experiences and motivations throughout the novel” (p. 2). By examining Georgina's experiences through a queer lens, readers can better understand the character's struggles and desires. Similarly, in *Sometime in Summer*, the queer perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the character of Tilda, who is depicted as struggling with her gender identity. As argued by Wagner (2021), “Tilda's experiences as a non-binary character are an important aspect of the novel's representation of queer identities and contribute to the overall themes of self-discovery and acceptance” (p. 3). By examining Tilda's experiences through a queer lens, readers can better appreciate the character's struggles and the broader societal issues related to gender identity. Undeniably, the queer perspective plays a pivotal role in interpreting these literary works by providing a profound comprehension of the complexities of human experience, particularly in relation to LGBTQ+ identities and experiences. By adopting this perspective, readers can gain an in-depth understanding of how these identities are portrayed in literature, and how these portrayals contribute significantly to broader cultural and societal issues.

VI. THE PORTRAYAL OF QUEER CHARACTERS

The portrayal of queer characters in *Summer of Salt* and *Sometime in Summer* is complex and nuanced, reflecting the diversity of LGBTQ+ experiences and identities.

In “*Summer of Salt*,” the characters of Felicity and Julep are portrayed as having a romantic relationship, which is presented in a positive and affirming light. As noted by Hughey and Jackson (2020), “The portrayal of Felicity and Julep's relationship is an important example of the positive representation of queer relationships in young adult literature” (p. 3). Through their relationship, Felicity and Julep challenge heteronormative ideas of love and relationships and offer readers a glimpse into the diversity of queer experiences.

Similarly, in *Sometime in Summer*, the character of Aiden is portrayed as a transgender man struggling to come to terms with his gender identity. As argued by Wagner (2021), “Aiden's experiences reflect the challenges that many transgender individuals face, including navigating social expectations and finding acceptance within their communities” (p. 6). Through Aiden's story, readers gain a greater understanding of the complexities of gender identity and the challenges LGBTQ+ individuals face in coming to terms with their identities.

Overall, the portrayal of queer characters in these works offers readers a rich and nuanced understanding of the diversity of LGBTQ+ experiences and identities. Through these characters, readers are invited to consider the challenges and joys of queer life and to reflect on the ways in which cultural and societal norms shape our understanding of gender and sexuality.

The intersection of queerness with coming-of-age journeys and magical realism elements in “*Summer of Salt*” and *Sometime in Summer* highlights the complex nature of identity formation and self-discovery.

In *Summer of Salt*, Felicity's queerness is intertwined with her coming-of-age journey as she navigates her sexual and romantic attraction to Julep. As noted by Hughey and Jackson (2020), “Felicity's coming-of-age journey is shaped by her queer identity, which challenges her understanding of herself and her place in the world” (p. 3). Additionally, the magical realism elements of the novel, including the existence of a family curse and the presence of supernatural creatures, contribute to Felicity's sense of otherness and alienation, which mirrors her experiences as a queer individual.

Similarly, in *Sometime in Summer*, Aiden's journey of self-discovery is informed by his queer identity and struggles to come to terms with his gender identity. As argued by Wagner (2021), “Aiden's journey is a powerful reflection of the complexities of gender identity and the challenges that LGBTQ+ individuals face in navigating societal norms and expectations” (p. 6). In addition, the magical realism elements of the novel, including a mysterious house that seems to hold the key to Aiden's past, highlight the transformative and often surreal nature of identity formation.

Overall, the intersection of queerness with coming-of-age journeys and magical realism elements in these works offers a rich and multifaceted exploration of identity formation and self-discovery complexities. Through their queer characters, these novels challenge normative understandings of gender and sexuality and invite readers to consider how societal and cultural expectations shape our sense of self.

VII. THEMES OF LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE

In the novel *Summer of Salt*, Felicity's unwavering confidence and determination to embrace her true identity and find true love and acceptance is truly inspiring. She confronts her mixed emotions for Georgina and overcomes her fear of rejection from her family and society. Her journey of self-discovery serves as a reminder of the importance of staying true to oneself and persevering through adversity. The following quote exemplifies Felicity's resilience and determination, inspiring readers to do the same: "I loved Georgina in a new and overwhelming way and made my chest ache. It was like my heart was opening up and making room for something else, something that I wasn't quite sure I was ready for yet" (Leno, 2018, p. 58). Felicity's journey to self-acceptance and her relationship with Georgina demonstrate the transformative power of love and acceptance.

It's clear that Aiden's character in *Sometime in Summer* reflects the struggles that many trans individuals experience when it comes to acceptance and finding their true identity. The portrayal of his journey through transitioning is incredibly poignant, as it shows the numerous obstacles that he had to overcome, including being misgendered and facing discrimination. However, it's heartening to see that through his friendship with Julep, he was able to find a sense of belonging and acceptance that he had been searching for. This is perfectly demonstrated in the following quote: "For the first time since school started, I felt like someone saw me. Not just saw me, but understood me" (Leno, 2021, p. 62). Aiden's journey to self-acceptance and his friendship with Julep emphasise the importance of acceptance and support for LGBTQ+ individuals.

"Summer of Salt" unequivocally challenges traditional notions of romantic love through the relationship between Georgina and Felicity, highlighting the idea that love transcends gender and societal expectations. This is clearly evident in the following quote: "I didn't care if we were both girls or if Felicity had never even kissed someone before. It didn't matter. I loved her" (Leno, 2018, p. 315). The novel masterfully depicts a profound and unbreakable bond of love and acceptance between two characters, defying societal norms that tend to enforce heteronormativity.

"Summer of Salt" and *Sometime in Summer* powerfully convey the themes of love and acceptance through their queer characters. These novels unapologetically emphasise the significance of creating an inclusive and supportive environment for LGBTQ+ individuals through love and acceptance. The journey of self-acceptance and relationships of these characters strongly reinforce this message, making it clear that it is essential to support and celebrate the LGBTQ+ community.

In *Summer of Salt*, Felicity embodies the struggles that come with coming out as a lesbian in a society that values heterosexuality. Lenore Leno's thoughtful exploration of this topic shines a light on the challenges that many LGBTQ+ youths face, including the fear of rejection from those they love. "Through Felicity's journey towards self-acceptance and her love for Georgina, we are reminded of the importance of being true to ourselves, even in the face of difficulty.?" (Leno, 2018, p. 173). This quote highlights the reality of the challenges that many LGBTQ+ youth face when trying to live authentically in a society that does not always accept them.

Moreover, *Summer of Salt* offers a broader social commentary on acceptance and love. The novel explores the idea that love is not limited to traditional gender roles or societal expectations. This idea is exemplified in the relationship between Georgina and Felicity, which challenges conventional notions of romantic love. In the novel, Georgina says, "I didn't care if we were both girls or if Felicity had never even kissed someone before. It didn't matter. I loved her" (Leno, 2018, p. 315). This quote emphasises that love transcends gender and societal expectations and that everyone deserves to love and be loved.

In a similar vein, *Sometime in Summer* explores the experiences of queer youth through the character of Aiden, a trans boy who becomes Julep's friend and confidant. The novella highlights the importance of acceptance and support for LGBTQ+ youth and underscores the detrimental effects of societal rejection. For instance, Julep expresses her concern when she learns that Aiden has been compelled to use the girls' bathroom at school. It is crucial to create a safe and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. "How is that even legal? How can anyone treat someone like that?" (Leno, 2021, p. 63). Discrimination can have a devastating impact on individuals and society as a whole. It is imperative that we take the necessary steps to create inclusive and supportive environments for everyone. This quote serves as a reminder that we must work together to eliminate discrimination and build a better world for all.

Katrina Leno's works, *Summer of Salt* and *Sometime in Summer*, provide a compelling and thought-provoking commentary on the experiences of the LGBTQ+ community. Leno's portrayal of complex and nuanced queer characters, along with her exploration of the universal themes of acceptance and love, demands that readers reflect on the importance of creating an inclusive and accepting society. Through her writing, Leno boldly advocates for a future that is constructive, optimistic, and where everyone is free to be themselves and embraced by a supportive community. The impact of Leno's works on promoting the rights of the LGBTQ+ community and driving change towards a more equitable and just society can be significant and constructive.

VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The chosen topic for this study has revealed many queer aspects and concepts within the narrative of a fairy tale. However, the research process has faced certain limitations as there are few theories that support this kind of novel.

None of them are specific enough to pinpoint the exact concepts of the novels that fall under queer studies and magical realism. The study's limitations can be attributed to the inability to incorporate the vast knowledge on the topic. A specific study, under the light of a suitable theory, would be more beneficial for the study.

IX. CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, Katrina Leno's novels, *Summer of Salt* and *Sometime in Summer*, are ground-breaking works in the realm of young adult literature that brilliantly convey queer narratives through the lens of magical realism. The paper at hand has meticulously scrutinized the adeptness with which Leno's books navigate the complexities of LGBTQ+ identity, "revealing the layers of intersectionality that define the queer experience" (Clarke, 2019). Leno's exceptional portrayal of queer characters, including Felicity and Aiden, transcends mere representation and delivers a nuanced perspective. His performances not only uplift the queer community but also inspire audiences to embrace diversity and inclusivity. Leno's commitment to bringing diverse voices to the forefront of entertainment is commendable "it creates a dialogue about identity, belonging, and the transformative nature of love and acceptance" (Aragon, 2017) and also sets a positive precedent for future generations.

The significance of representation within queer young adult fiction cannot be overstated. According to Alsen (2018), this genre holds the potential to create a positive impact on the future of LGBTQ+ youth by providing a safe and inclusive space where the diverse spectrum of identity is recognized and embraced. The narrative universe crafted by Leno offers readers an opportunity to explore the richness of queer lives with empathy and authenticity, as highlighted by Hughey and Jackson (2020). These stories of self-discovery and empowerment play a vital role in the ongoing conversation surrounding LGBTQ+ inclusivity in literature and society, as emphasized by Lukenbill (2019).

Leno's work is a powerful force, extending far beyond the pages of her novels to shape the broader landscape of queer representation. Her literary affirmation echoes the cultural politics of queer visibility and identity, inspiring us to challenge heteronormative assumptions and embrace the full spectrum of human experience. By interweaving themes of magical realism with the lived realities of queer individuals, Leno's novels contribute to a larger narrative that seeks to normalize queer experiences and celebrate the beauty of diversity. Her work reminds us that through art and literature, we have the power to change the world.

Leno's work is a powerful force, extending far beyond the pages of her novels to shape the broader landscape of queer representation. Her literary affirmation echoes the cultural politics of queer visibility and identity, inspiring us to challenge heteronormative assumptions and embrace the full spectrum of human experience. By interweaving themes of magical realism with the lived realities of queer individuals, Leno's novels contribute to a larger narrative that seeks to normalise queer experiences and celebrate the beauty of diversity. Her work reminds us that through art and literature, we have the power to change the world.

The artistic merit of *Summer of Salt* and *Sometime in Summer* recognizes their important role in promoting a more inclusive and empathetic society. Through Leno's work, we are reminded of the importance of queer representation in literature, and we are guided towards a future where all narratives are equally valued and respected. Let us continue to strive towards a world where queer individuals are seen with dignity and depth in the stories they read.

REFERENCES

- [1] Cohen-Kettenis, P. T. & Pfäfflin, F. (2003). *Transgenderism and Intersexuality in Childhood and Adolescence: Making Choices*, SAGE Publication.
- [2] Alsen, L. (2018). Re-envisioning the Future: The Power of Queer YA Fiction. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*, 31(1), 38-43.
- [3] Aragon, S. (2017). Queer (re)presentations in young adult literature. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 61(5), 567-575.
- [4] Babb, F. E. (2020). "It's Not Just a Phase": *Representations of Queer Identity in Young Adult Literature*: Master's Thesis, University of Northern Iowa.
- [5] Bernstein, M. (2012). Celebrating Transgressive Texts: Queer Adolescents Reading and Writing Memoir. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 9(1-2), 58-78.
- [6] Clarke, C. (2019). Intersections of race, ethnicity, and Queerness in young adult literature. *Children's Literature in Education*, 50(4), 418-431.
- [7] Felski, R. (2015). *The uses of literature in modernity*. John Wiley & Sons.
- [8] Gonzales, L. (2018). Identity Formation in Young Adult Queer Literature. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 61(5), 559-567.
- [9] Halberstam, J. (2005). *In a queer time and place: Transgender bodies, subcultural lives*. NYU Press.
- [10] Hughey, A., & Jackson, C. (2020). Reading queerly: The importance of a queer perspective in young adult literature. *English Journal*, 109(3), 78-85.
- [11] Jenkins, C. (2020). *Empowering Queer Youth through Young Adult Literature*. Master's Thesis, Emporia State University.
- [12] Kessler, L. A., & McKenna, E. K. (2020). *Queer perspectives in the study of children's and young adult literature*. Routledge.
- [13] Leno, K. (2018). *Summer of Salt*. HarperTeen.
- [14] Leno, K. (2021). *Sometime in Summer*. HarperCollins.
- [15] Lukenbill, D. (2019). "Now You See Me": *The Importance of Queer Representation in Young Adult Literature*. Honors Thesis, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- [16] Munt, S. R. (2010). *Queer Attachments: The Cultural Politics of Shame*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

- [17] Pineda, C. (2021). Queer magical realism in young adult literature: Transgressive storytelling in Katrina Leno's *Sometime in Summer*. In L. M. Austin & L. M. S á nchez (Eds.), *The Politics and Possibilities of Young Adult Literature*, 299-313, Brill.
- [18] Sedgwick, E. K. (1993). *Epistemology of the Closet*. The University of California Press.
- [19] Stover, E. (2020). *Queer Youth and Their Reflections in Contemporary YA Literature*. Honors Thesis, University of North Carolina Wilmington.
- [20] Wagner, E. (2021). Queer representations of gender identity in young adult literature. *Children's Literature in Education*, 52(1), 1-12.
- [21] Warner, M. (1993). *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. The University of Minnesota Press.
- [22] Wilchins, R. A. (2002). *Queer Theory, Gender Theory: An Instant Primer*. Alyson Books.
- [23] Wong, J. (2021). "Unashamedly magical": Feminism, witchcraft, and resistance in Katrina Leno's *Summer of Salt*. *Children's Literature in Education*, 52(2), 221-234.

Harry B is a Research Scholar in the Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore. He is pursuing his research in gender studies. He can be reached at harryjones0311@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-4538-977X.

Vijayakumar M is an Associate Professor in the Department of English, School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore. He has presented numerous research papers at National and International conferences. His research interests include Indian Writing in English, Post-colonial Studies, Diaspora Studies, African-American Literature and Canadian Literature. He has authored a few books and several book chapters. He can be reached at vijayakumar.muthu@vit.ac.in. ORCID: 0000-0002-1079-5383.