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## **QUEERING THE GENDER BINARY: A DEPICTION OF BISEXUALITY IN R. J. SAWYER'S *HUMANS* (2003)**

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**Abstract:**

Gender is an umbrella term in which two broad concepts male and female include with LGBTQAI (lesbian, gay male, bisexual, transgender, queer, asexual and intersex). Though LGBTQAI is marginalized term in society and literature, it has its own voice. Present paper concretes on the concept of 'B' means bisexuality. It is one of the types of sexual orientation. In 21<sup>st</sup> century, there started the movements for bisexual peoples regulating the rights to marriage, civil unions, adoption, parenting, employment, military services, equal access to health care and the introduction to anti-bullying legislation to protect gay and lesbian minority. But still bisexuality is dichotomous concept and the issue of hatred. People simply hate these people and tease them. The present paper is a modest attempt to explore the concept of Bisexuality with special reference to Canadian Science Fiction writer R. J. Sawyer's *Humans*, which deals with the two parallel worlds; one of which is the human and the other is of the Neanderthals. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part introduces the concept LGBTQAI and its existence in the world. The second part discusses the problem and treatment given by R. J. Sawyer in his Science Fiction. The third part concludes the bisexuality by the writer's idealistic solution to this special issue in his imaginary new world.

**Key Words:** Gender, LGBTQAI, bisexuality, Science Fiction, imaginary new world

**Introduction:** Gender is the umbrella term in which two broad concepts male and female includes with LGBTQAI (lesbian, gay male, bisexual, transgender, queer, asexual and intersex). Though LGBTQAI is marginalized term in society and literature, it has its own voice. Present paper concretes on the concept of 'B' means bisexuality. It is one of the types of sexual orientation. In general, the term sex is basically related to biology for the purpose of reproduction. Nature has created two sexes as male and female and the attraction between these two sexes within the same class is very natural. Bisexuality, at the surface level looks unnatural and hateful but it is the fact. They attract the attention of the society, administration, religion and

law. As they are the part of the society, they cannot be neglected. Some people think it as a curse to the humanity and others accept it as the creation of nature.

According to scientific research, the cause of Bisexuality is not traced properly. Ulrich Goob, explains in his book “Concept of Bisexuality” that bisexuality is the outcome of a particular differentiation of sexual fantasies that includes attraction to both women and men. It means that an attraction on the part of bisexual people to other who are also attracted to both women and men rather than only to one or the other. However, it is believed that Bisexuality is natural and normal variation in human sexuality which may cause by a complex genetic structure, hormonal changes and influences of environment. Further, it is also seen that psychological intervention to change sexual orientation is not useful.

Some scientist compares Bisexuality with culture and language influence. The scientists, Tarik Bereket and Jennifer Brayton, in “‘Bi’ No Means: Bisexuality and the Influence of Binarism on Identity” consider culture and language influence concepts of sexuality with special reference to Turkey. They illustrate that western terms about homosexuality and bisexuality have been less adopted in Turkey, traditional language and meanings related to sexuality continue in how sexual identity is experience on a daily basis. It is consider that bisexuality is outsider polarized conceptualization of sexuality.

A few societies and cultures respond bisexuality with compassion, but in most of the societies, it is dichotomous concept and the issue of hatred. People simply hate these people and tease them. However, from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century the global awareness about the recognition and legal rights has been increased. There started the movements for bisexual peoples regulating the rights to marriage, civil unions, adoption, parenting, employment, military services, equal access to health care and the introduction to anti-bullying legislation to protect gay and lesbian minority. The bisexuality is protected by the law in European countries in the modern times, while in Asian countries it is not. European countries like Australia and France gave legal protection to gay and lesbian community like dichotomous thinking about sexuality and sexual orientation is prevalent and that has a significant impact on bisexuality. In general, most of the religions like Christian, Islam, and Hebrew never supported homosexuality and declared it as the sin. Thus, bisexuality is a serious social issue.

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**R. J. Sawyer as Science Fiction Writer:**

Science Fiction writers create a new world using their creative genius. In creating such a new world, there is a vision of the writer other than mere entertainment of the reader. They provide an alternative world in which some of the social issues which they observe in the present world can be solved, diluted or highlighted. The modern Science Fiction writer, R. J. Sawyer, also creates a new world. Unlike the utopia or dystopia, it is a practical world with some pros and cons.

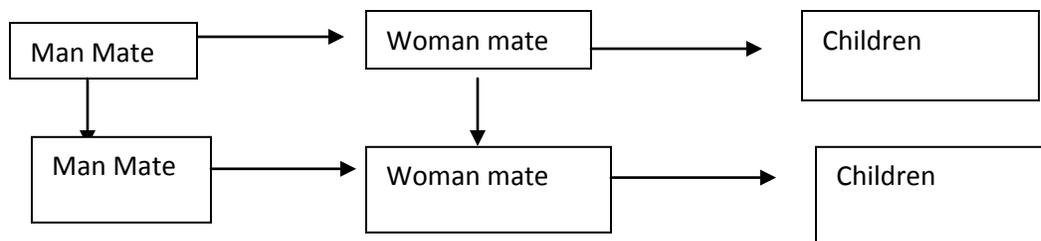
R. J. Sawyer, one of the successful New Wave Canadian Hard Science Fiction writers, is born in Ottawa, on April 29, 1960. He is felicitated by all three of the top international awards for Science Fiction such as 1995 ‘Nebula Award’ for *Hominids*, 2003 ‘Hugo Award’ for *Hominids*, 2006 ‘John W. Campbell Memorial Award’ for *Mindscan*. He has published 13 novels, 3 trilogies and 2 books of short stories.

**R. J. Sawyer’s *Humans* as Science Fiction:** The present paper is a modest attempt to explore the concept of Bisexuality with special reference to Canadian Science Fiction writer R. J. Sawyer’s *Humans*, which deals with the two parallel worlds; one of which is the human (*Homo Sapiens Sapiens*) and the other is of the Neanderthals (*Homo Neanderthalensis*). While experimenting with quantum computing by the Neanderthal physicists, accidentally, the two worlds are open to each other and Neanderthal is introduced to human world. As both the species developed separately on the two worlds; they differ in culture, technology, political systems and religion. It is amazing that the similarities and differences between these two races evolved from the same ancestor. Ponter Boddit, the representative of Neanderthal world and Mary Vaughan, the representative of human world compares and contrast each other’s worlds. They have developed unique marriage system in which man and woman are bonded with each other. They are also bonded to another man and woman in whom man is bonded with man and woman with woman. They control the population by strict artificial means and social set-up. Utility oriented eco-friendly life style, Marxist socio-economic set-up and rational attitude towards life are the main features of their society. They never burn the fossil fuel, wood or charcoal and use clean energy that is the solar energy. Instead of destroying the forest for roads, they use ‘hover bus’.

The story has undercurrents of love which are reflected through the love story of Ponter, a Neanderthal and Mary a human. Ponter is emotionally attached to Mary but the past bondages of his own country and his family are very strong. He came back to his world but the sweet memories of Mary are still lingering in his heart.

### **Bisexuality in *Humans***

In *Humans*, R. J. Sawyer has justified the social issue of bisexuality. The family structure of the Neanderthal is four-fold and very complex in which a man is bonded with woman and also with other man; so also a woman is bonded with a man and also other woman.



Ponter Boddit, a protagonist of Neanderthal world informs, “Women live in the Centers of our territories; males at the Rims. But once a month, we male come into the Center and spend four days with the females; we say that ‘Two become One’ during this time” (*Hominids* 305-306). It is made possible because men live at the periphery of the village or city for 25 days of a month with their man-mate and enjoy the company of their woman-mate only at the last four days. Women live at the center of the village and city for 25 days of a month with their woman-mate and enjoy the company of man-mate at the last four days. It provides the chance to both the man and woman to enjoy homosexual relationship for 25 days and heterosexual for four days because of that Neanderthals are called as bisexual. This model satisfies the issues of bisexuality fairly with social respect.

It looks odd to Mary, the representative of human world that in the Neanderthal world, she was shocked with the gay relationship between the males and lesbian relationship between women. Ponter hugs Adikor as a husband hugs his beloved. There was Ponter’s man mate Adikor Huld, Adikor’s woman mate Lurt, Lurt’s woman mate Fardlo and Ponter’s woman mate is Klast who was died. Klast’s woman mate is Dakler. Their behavior in the meeting creates shame in the mind of Mary. The women had also women-mate. This duality of structure of society is the counter part of the human society. The husband or man-mate visits only at the time

of 'two become one' the five days of a month. They enjoy each other's company along with children. Those are the holidays; month end picnic and enjoyment. It was totally different life style. It also provides solutions for so many problems which are present in human society.

The imaginary situation created by the writer gives a chance to take a review of historical incidents and the present beliefs of the human world from the Neanderthal point of view. It satirizes the superstitions and religious beliefs of Christianity like virginity of mother Mary, life after the death, rebirth and existence of soul. Still, they praise human beings for the scientific temperament, efforts to travel in the space and search of the meaning of the life. The Neanderthals are rational, they have goodness of mind, sympathy, and belief in co-existence and love for others means the male loves other male and woman loves other woman as a natural social behaviour.

### **Conclusions:**

It is the healthy social solution which accepts the reality of bisexuality as natural and also gives respect to bisexuality but rather difficult to practice in the human world. As a sub genre of popular fiction, Science Fiction fulfills the criteria like entertainment, excitement, thrill and are successful in the market. Moreover, it is also didactic, visionary, has deep social relevance and seriousness about the present and future situation of the human society. It attempts to provide idealistic and practical alternatives to the present human world. The solution provided by the writer is possible only in the literature. It is because actual human society is bound to the laws of religion, ethics, tradition and customs. Still, R. J. Sawyer as a social thinker, social worker and visionary sensitive global citizen thinks about this social problem positively. Accept it is the fact and successful in providing the solution to this special issue in his imaginary new world.

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