

A Study on Queer Shown in Korean Contemporary Dance

- Focused on 「Inside Out」 -

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I. Introduction

Within Korean society, the term 'queer' is foreign and even uncomfortable. In 2000, when a celebrity named Seok Cheon Hong publicly came out as gay, Korean society was shocked. He was branded as unethical and was banned from all public televised programs.¹⁾ This was quite in contrast with the United States' artistic community in which already since the 1980s Mark Morris and Bill t. Jones openly pursued their sexual preferences on stage or the States' reaction when Ellen Degeneres came out in 1997.

David Halperin²⁾ started naming the lesbians and gays' sexual preferences as

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1) In 2003 *LA TIMES* published an article (from Seoul) 'Korean star popularity nose dives after coming out' where Hong went through terrible ordeals as he was banned from a Korea's Sesame Street: MBC TV 'BBoBBBoBBo', avoided by fellow actors, cursed at by teenagers on the street and was even told to commit suicide by his own family. ([http://news.kukinews.com/article/view\(2011.10.17\)](http://news.kukinews.com/article/view(2011.10.17)))

2) M. Calinescu(1987), *Five Faces of Modernity*, Ji Sook Baek(translation)(Seoul: SiGak & Annao, 1993). p. 178.

‘queer’ since the 1980s, and in 1991 Teresa De Lauretis mentioned ‘queer’ as the new discourse for homosexuality.³⁾ However, except for Korea academia, queer, this term itself is not used actively. To those who are familiar with the term, it is a source of repulsion. Queer signifies a central theme in sexuality and by trying to understand social, political, and artistic phenomena with it, we transcend all regular norms, standards, values and identities. It is an extended discourse, one that goes beyond any basic boundaries and is political activism against an oppressive sexual norm. In other words, it professes a fluid identity and rather than focusing on theories of sex, it possesses a post-modernistic thinking that focuses on sexuality. On the other hand, in Korea, the term “E-bann,” which implies distinction from norm, cynical self-deprecation, covertness, is used instead of the term “queer”. “E-bann(二般)/Second” was a self identifying word used by the Korean homosexual community during the 1960s and 70s, and its meaning was extended when it was changed to “E-bann(異般)/Different,” which means sexual minorities such as homosexuals, bisexuals, and transgenders. Thus, “E-bann(異般)” is the equivalent of “queer” in Korea.

After Seok Cheon Hong’s coming out, queer festivals or movie festivals were visible in Korea. There were more attempts to newly introduce queers either directly or indirectly in TV dramas or movies or queer festivals. There were more cultural opportunities to express sexual diversity. In festivals dance is an important medium in expressing one’s identity and takes up an essential position during the events. Dance is an important communication method, an expression of encounters, and a process of understanding. They are not formalized, but with their movements, become one with the audience. All the while, the movements double their cohesiveness, and imply a neutral charm that reflects one’s sexual preferences and a transcendental personality.

However, it is very difficult to find any queer content or movements on stage in ‘Korea Contemporary Dance’. There have been homosexual duets or gender non-specific costumes, which were seen as an expression of the choreographer’s individuality, and it could hardly be seen as any projection of a sexual connotation. Conservatism in Korean society that is based strongly on Confucius beliefs is

3) It was widely used as a kind of political symbol that suggests challenge, rejection, mockery against all normal things upon works from Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedwick. Queer theory not only dissolves sexual preferences, directivity, or identity, but tends to shake up boundaries of diverse cultures, race, class, women cutting across sexual directivity.

dominant, so a direct expression of queer by a choreographer is rarely seen.⁴⁾ Moreover, in a male-dominated culture where it is natural to avoid questioning the sexual interaction between a man and a woman, it is unthinkable to publicize a sexual preference that is different from others.

This paper, as a first to look into the queer perspective, discusses the queer movements on stage in Korea. The term “queer” is an attempt to make homosexuality non-abnormal and non-peripheral. Seeing it is an effort to de-homosexualize and break free from common knowledge or bias on sexual differences. So what is queer dance? Is it when two men caress each other or when movements show two women fall in love with each other? Or is it when a young man’s body is romanticized or a woman is seen wearing menswear or moving like a man? Or is pure artistic work by homosexual queer artists? Or is it rather so when the content or subject contains such messages than explicit movements? As can be seen above, diverse types can be called queer. The most important fact is that the interpretation of queer is decided by the audience. The queer of modern art such as the intensity, scope and significance of the works’ ultimate interpretation is possible through the interpretations by the audience. Because this is to communicate with the audience, the meaning of a queer theme can be created and changed by interpretation.

This research attempts to deal with a few questions. What works are there in Korea that deals with a queer perspective? Is there a gay or lesbian choreographer? Isn’t queer only representative of the gay sensibility? Are there works that specially express lesbian tendencies? All in all, this paper will assess the queer art stage in Korea and discuss its symbolic meaning and movement to express stories of those that could not be included in any previous research.

II. Korea’s Sexuality and Queer

In Korea, the virtue of not making oneself explicit and being humble is one key Confucius virtue. This can be seen in verbal speech. As one example, even when

4) Ji won lee(2012), “Korea’s Queer on Stage: a Hidden Sensibility Awakening Stereotypes”, Meaning and Makings of Queer Dance(CORD Presentation Abstract), pp. 23-24.

one is drowning, Some Koreans Might use the term “Help!” instead of “Help me!” In another example, when Koreans are asked if they have studied for an exam, 90% of them say no. It is a common sentiment among Koreans to form harmony with others rather than to reveal or express themselves.

Any simple behavior of intimacy between friends of the same sex is not a problem. Middle or high school friends can hold hands, take someone’s arm, call everyday or give each other letters. However, when these series of actions relate to any behavior that suggests a hint of sexuality or such tendencies, there are serious social biases and problems. Basically, the notion we have on sex causes disruption.

In Korea, where people are extremely reluctant to talk freely of sex, the term ‘homosexual’ is one word that people find hard to speak of and thus, wish to shun. In one hand, this seems to be related with a prevalent notion of preservation of the species based on Confucianism and the relevant concept of sex.

However, there has secretly been ‘homosexuality’ in Korea. In the past, people did not acknowledge the fact as it might not have been categorized or brought into the light. It is a well known fact that Nakwon-dong behind Tapgol Park and Itaewon in Seoul is a rallying point for homosexuals. There are roughly 120 gay and lesbian bars in Seoul, and since the start of it in Geumho-dong, Seoul in the 1960s, it has spread nationwide to Busan, Ulsan and etc.

A turning point to be able to discuss sexuality in Korea⁵⁾ was in the 1990s. Back then, there was a consciousness of crisis on AIDS brought in from the West which visualized homosexuals in Korea. Bias against homosexuals as a source of AIDS led to a need for a human rights movement. In 1993, ‘Chodong-Hae’, the first Korean homosexual human rights group, was established with four lesbians and three gays. The goal of the organization was to criticize any misleading articles on

5) It is written in the historic literature, Samkukyusa vol. 2. 『Gi ei ‘기이편’』 that King Haegong, the 36th in Silla(758780), was fated to be born as a woman but was not. So he acted like a woman, enjoyed woman games and taunted ascetics. (Marcus Eric, *Is it a Choice?* translated by Come Together, Seoul: Parkyoungloul Publishing Group, p. 47)

Pansori like 「juk Beok 적벽가」 and 「Baktareung 박타령」 talk about annal sex and even stories on homosexuals in Buddhist nunneries are orally passed down. The Hwarang order of chivalry is thought to have enjoyed homosexuality as well and 『Sunghosaseul 성호사설』 by Ilk professes that beauty in men was a qualification for the Hwarang order. This is interpreted to be a homosexual tendency towards men during that era. There are no legal punishments to date, however, Chosun dynasty Sillok writes that there was a bad on homosexuality between palace maids and that they were severely punished with 70 to 100 lashes.

AIDS and to set right the skewed images of homosexuals. Most of their activities set out to normalize homosexuality by advertising on AIDS prevention and safe sex, educating and giving information on the homosexual identity.

Unfortunately, lesbian activists dropped out of Chodong-Hae two months after their initiation.⁶⁾ They revealed that even if the organization professed public homosexual movements, sources of finance or places to advertise were limited. Also, they found that the homosexual identity that was used in general did not include their lesbian experiences and were concerned that the homosexual movement might be seen only as gay. Thus, in 1995, when 'Between Friends', a Korean gay homosexuals human rights group was formed, 'The Likes', a Korean lesbian homosexuals human rights group was established openly for the first time in Korea.⁷⁾ Through highly connected Internet services, they formed online lesbian communities while remaining anonymous and in 1996 published a first edition of *Another World*, a lesbian magazine. These online and offline lesbian community activities spread nationwide starting from Seoul and allowed lesbians to meet in diverse places.

Since 2000, the Queer Cultural Festival is held every year and homosexuals and sexual minorities come to the streets to make their existence and requests known. This was in direct contrast with the mass media and the education system providing limited information on homosexuals and portraying them as sexually self-indulgent and promiscuous.⁸⁾ This made it harder for homosexuals to have a clear image about themselves. In 1997, 「Happy Together」, a Chinese movie on gay homosexual love was banned due to the fact that it went against Korea's social sentiment.⁹⁾ However, it was reconsidered after one year and was allowed for screening with an R-rating. Celebrity Seok Cheon Hong, who created dramatic implications by coming out in 2000 was supposed to show up as a witness at "The

6) This acted as a defining opportunity to confirm that rather than having a sense of kinship with gay activists, they were not dissimilar with Korean men with innate patriarchy. They did not stay together because they did not share the same sentiment. This shows the lack of political experience of forming homosexual movements or organizations and that those activists were not entirely free from the homosexual history of Korea.

7) Hae Sol Lee(1999), *Korean Woman Rights Movement History*(Seoul: Hanul Publishing Group). p.15.

8) Jeong Hoon Jo (2011), A Novel Parade in the 'Conservative City' Daegu, *Ohmynews* (2011.10.30) /<<http://kqcf.org/korean>(Queer cultural festival), 2011.9.11>

9) 「River flows to Tomorrow」 by director Jae Ho Park in 1994 is the first queer cinema from Korea.

National Assembly's Parliamentary inspections on the Ministry of Health and Welfare," but was blocked for defaming the National Assembly. The national human rights commission law was passed in 2001 which included a clause on indiscrimination against sexual tendencies, but common law marriage is still not possible for homosexuals and they do not have rights to separation of property, adoption, and artificial insemination. Most of the time, when employees come out, they cannot continue working and when refusing to go to the army, due to their self-acknowledgement as a woman, they are sentenced to prison for evading military service. Also sites do not allow rent for any homosexual related events so opening of businesses are often cancelled. These events tend to confirm an innate homophobic tendency in our society as the existence and issues of homosexuals are made explicit.

Those who show up on reporting programs are put in mosaics. There are few homosexuals who have publicly come out and most homosexuals living in Korea hide their sexual identity and there have been reports of violence towards transgenders and suicide. Their image is in the hands of others and so the malaises of Korean society where stereotypes and specific sexual roles are overtly portrayed are directed at them. Ji Hun Kim and Chei Won Jang who have recently come out have committed suicide leaving word "We do not want sympathy nor help, at least do not point fingers at sexual minorities." They wanted to live as simply individuals, but Korean society may not have allowed them to do so. Korean society may be progressive in politics, economics, or social issues, but they are not in sex, especially toward homosexuals.

Unusually, celebrity Lee Su Ha gained fame and power in the media as a transgender. She had an exceptional face and a beautiful body size of 34-25-35 and quickly became the subject of longing and envy of most men and women. She exceptionally won over the Korean people while tearing down Korea's ideology, but this phenomenon was limited to her.¹⁰⁾

Since late 2000, movies and TV dramas portraying homosexuality were introduced. Movies such as 「The King's Man」 (2005), 「SShanghwaJeum」 (2008), and TV dramas such as 「Coffee Prince」 (2007), and 「Beautiful Life」 (2010) included stories of homosexuals and gained popularity from the

10) Here Seuk Cheon Hong's image or body was different than what the public required of a man and Lee Sue Ha's sexual attractiveness coaxed and fanned men's desires.

audience.¹¹⁾ Besides the aforementioned works, many fictions, comics, and musicals brought homosexuality to the surface, but the commonality was that they were all based on a sweet fantasy where all the main characters were beautiful, and stories consisted of the agonizing young and inadmissible love. The gay image within Korean society acts as a sensual fashion code of mass culture.

Therefore, unlike the past, homosexuality can be a passage of communication among people living in the same era. It is significant that media focused on communicating the gay code that contains public interest and mass appeal, and that homosexuality was included in life stories that society deemed important. This suggests that the existence of homosexuality itself and homosexuals cannot be denied even if they are not acknowledged or criticized. Even though Korea, in the 21st century, still overflows of discriminating perspectives against homosexuality, we are starting to realize that it is one of our realities and that they are indeed our neighbors.

III. Queer Tendencies Shown in Korean Contemporary Dance 「Inside Out」

In cases of imported performances, Korean audiences are tolerant of explicit homosexual codes. For example, Micheal Clark's nude dancing body, Bill T. Jones' reproduction of masculinity, Mark Morris's transsexual attempts are thought of as Classics even in Korea. Diverse analysis was suggested such as them being solutions to a depletion of materials, sexual oppression, social flexibility towards homosexuality, and provocative materials that appeal to the audience.¹²⁾ Audiences are trained enough to have no aversions to works with a "revolt against norm" or a comical portrayal of homosexuals for amusement. It is interesting that they are only parsimonious and intolerant to works by Korean choreographers.

In Korea, there is a strong tendency for artists to stress "universal bond of sympathy" on stage to avoid any queer tendencies that require persuasion and

11) Between Friends(2011), *Gay Culture Holic*(Seoul: Cine21), pp. 52-65.

12) Ji won Lee(2007), "A Study on the Expression of the 'Body Politics' Seen in Contemporary Art", *The Korean Journal of Dance Studies*, Vol. 20. pp. 211-258.

discussion. Only recently and occasionally do we see movements that seem queer. This occurred in the late 1990s when there were diverse endeavors after people returned from study abroad and the open market. First generation woman choreographers (composed of university professors)¹³⁾ made active works with male duets, disrobing of male dancers and womanized movements and expressions. Dance companies in league with coeducation universities could secure male dancers and showed queer tendencies based on men. The Tatmaroo Dance Company established by Cheong Ja Choi, who has studied in the Laban Center in England, produced works such as 「The Men on the Beach」 (1995), eliminating the authoritarian and patriarchal standard male image and instead showing cute and lovely male images on stage, becoming the first to overturn the male image. Also 「Nice to Meet You?」 (2005) by Mi Sook Jeon, a Ewha Womans University graduate and 2nd generation Korean contemporary, deals with the meaning of man and woman, and their duplicity. This is also centered on male movements from the LDP Dance Company with the co-educated Korean National University of Arts. Male dancers wearing dresses show movements that attempt to show humorous, bright, and enjoyable mentality on the surface and the gay sensibility with a double perversion.

Korea made a stable transition from first generation contemporary women choreographers to second generation choreographers, but the commonality is that queer aspects are comically portrayed centrally around male dancers and women choreographers. The movements of women dancers show unisexual modes and daring transsexual attempts, but it is yet a queer expression towards true queer liberation. Moreover, there is no report of works that reveal the sexual tendencies of a male choreographer. The movements with transcending sexual roles arouse the audiences' curiosity and trigger any possibility or interest in various bodies.

13) Korean contemporary dance continues from the department of modern dance in Ewha Womans University and to Wan Sun Yook who studied in Graduate school at University of Illinois and studied under Martha Graham. After 1963 when the department of dance was first established in Ewha Womans University, many other universities have opened dance departments as well and students (except for students who studied abroad) under Wan Sun Yook are located in each university. Therefore, 2nd generation after the first is made up of dominantly women and in the second and third generation when dance departments were created in coed schools, the numbers of male dancers have increased. As in the advent of modern dance in American, modern dance in Korea was also dominated by women choreographers and women influence is still strong. (Wan Sun Yook (2003), *Wan Sun Yook*, (Seoul: Maroo), pp. 290-308)

From this perspective, the only work in Korean dance history that puts sexual tendencies, especially the life of lesbians, as key subject matter is the 2001 work 「Inside Out」 by a female choreographer named Hyun Young Woo.

Thus, this paper centers on 「Inside Out」 by Korean Contemporary artist Hyun Young Woo (1971 ~) and focuses on the lesbian expression, sensibility and symbolic meaning. Hyun Young Woo is an artist known for her individual style and movement in Korea. After majoring in ballet from Seoul Art School and studying jazz and modern dance in New York, she established a dance academy in her 20s all the while strengthening her style and has received attention for her varied subjects and movements. In conservative Korean society, the mass public might think that artistic expression is unrestricted, however, the fact that queer tendencies in sexual matters, especially subjects on lesbians, are lacking shows the social realities of Korea.

It is known that lesbian movement or expression on stage is not welcome by the public. What is certain is that targeting audiences with expressions balancing between social taboo and artistic stimulation is difficult in case of women unlike men. Thus, it is our artistic task for the homosexual code on stage to be approached with equality and perceived earnestly. Convergence, transcending boundaries, and cross-overs flood the stage, but still the borders of sexual tendencies are shadows and limiting in Korean society.

1. Background of 「Inside Out」

As mentioned previously, 「Inside Out」 is the only work in Korean dance history that deals with women's sexual tendencies or brings to surface the desires and lives between homosexuals. Perhaps, the desires of women toward men have been built as one classic subject but it is greatly exceptional for one woman to regard another woman as the subject of desire. Hyun Young Woo's¹⁴⁾ 「Inside Out」 is especially significant because it shows homosexuality, a shocking subject for

14) She was born in Seoul in 1971. In 1996, she created her own dance company and engraved movements and contemporary diversities while being appraised as Korea's representing dance company that overwhelm the audience with dizzy techniques and continuous unfolding of works. Until now she has choreographed over 20 and is the dean of Seoul Art Technical College since 2011.(an interview with Woo(Oct. 11. 2012) / <<http://www.pozjazz.co.kr>, 2001.9.11>)

Korean society, breaking free from universality in a society where the social atmosphere does not acknowledge sexual relationships. Korean society especially does not recognize lesbians. As one follow-up story to gay issues, they are reproduced by the media as a social problem, wicked women, or deviators. The media or articles describe opinions that deny the lesbian existence itself, or speak of it as an existence that causes social chaos or collapse, and tends to expose or be suggestive of lesbians. They postulate and consider the majority of society who are heterosexuals and so lesbian issues are excluded or distorted. In a society with such a homophobic awareness against lesbians, stories about them introduced on stage were of great shock. It procured interest on the reality of women homosexuals that was non-existent or taboo.

The significance of this piece is that I, the researcher, have participated directly as one guest dancer of the dance company, have performed the premiere, and also have participated in the process of production preparatory work, advertising, and marketing as a planner and endeavored to deliver the choreographer's exact intents to the dancers. This work of queer tendencies can be of great help in understanding the birth and progress of the queer genre in Korea. It rose from the belief that in a conservative Korean art world, one audience, and one small thought can have a Butterfly Effect in restructuring understanding, not inconvenience towards the queer.

「Inside Out」 was a piece performed in 2001 in the Arko Art Theater with eight women dancers and one male dancer. It deals with women homosexuals' journey into discovering their inner preferences and looking for their dreams and hope. The understanding of the dance piece is focused on movement with the voices of the dancers and mixed women and man's costumes while women dancers have strong powers and energy. However, rather than "Revealing the innate tendencies as lesbians or reevaluating their meaning in society," they advertised indirectly with "Examining diversity as a woman and self-identification through a journey." This was due to worries that if one seriously confesses to dealing with homosexuality with the expression "lesbian," there might be extreme repulsion from main stream society. So this piece was run at the same time as another famous Poz Dance Theater. In all honesty, it was intended to be received naturally with other performances and by showing it together with a successful performance intended to probe the response of future audiences. Furthermore, in a culture where no production cost is supported until it is set on a bigger stage, the birth of this

meaningful piece came with much personal connections, and most at the choreographers' own expense. Poz Dance Theater needed roughly six months of practice to be perfected.

「Inside Out」 focused on making the existence of lesbians known and adjusting the social stigma that lie on homosexuals. They wanted to dispel any social bias of a perverted dominatrix and wished to be accepted in a more general idea as “a woman who loves woman.” They showed on stage their wish to normalize lesbians by correcting social prejudice that focused on sexual love and also wished to define lesbians as beings that were more emotionally and sexually attracted to woman. In fact, at the start of choreographing this piece, the main focus was the main material which was repulsion against homosexuality. With a subject matter which could easily take a turn for the worst with a social issue, it was difficult to make a piece that everyone could sympathize just with ambience and abstractness. Thus, this performance did not unilaterally require the minorities' lives to be revealed, but insinuated warmth towards the minorities. It reported diversity centering on women in modern society and abstractly told of their lives and love, unraveled their true nature, existence, internal outcry, and lack of communication starting from a group movement of women. It embodied women's homosexuality on stage that did not rise up to the surface even when it was well established as the society's subculture.

2. Expression and Meaning of 「Inside Out」

The movements in 「Inside Out」 are the intended expressions of sexuality. The subject matter itself is brave and shocking, but it also was an alarm-raising challenge in society. The use of the hip is very flexible and lines that extend and hang the limbs are dominant. The upper torso and lower half are twisted and a spasmodic movement of the hips stimulates the sexual code and magnifies the desire of the women body.

A woman's daring boyish movement and in contrast, a women's simple hearted and unique movement form a long line of duets. Movements that suggest adhesiveness among the same sex is noticeable. At the moment when the bodies make contact, movements show a strong reaction and seem to symbolize various sexual intercourses. They call attention to the relationship of a woman and woman

couple. Through this, the audience focuses on the desires of women and thinks of what the oppressive mechanisms are. By suggesting the diversity of homosexual love through the body, it calls for and exposes coming out on stage, and promotes to pioneer one's own fate. In the case of lesbians, they were not focused on interpreting their identity and experiences, and so it is significant that the movements resist and reveal their absence. Furthermore, by providing a source for thought, it transpires efforts to communicate what the worries and torments are.

Sexual desire is not the only thing alluded to by movement. It also emphasizes movements of them being hesitant and not being able to move forward. By moving backwards, they tell of how their social interest and sympathy is swayed by the media. Many woman dancers put their hands to their mouth signifying the present where their existence in society is seen as vampires. By covering their mouths, they show efforts in hiding their secrets and that society limits their existence with gags. Their movements symbolize sexual minorities trying to deny their sexual code and struggling to forget oneself.

Movements themselves do not make sexual distinctions between a man and woman or between women. It is the same for all costumes and hair styles. The costumes worn by women are not all dresses and even if they have short hair, it is difficult to distinguish them unless one takes a closer look. This is the same reason why there is only one male dancer among many woman dancers. The one male dancer reflects a patriarchal Korean society's uniform perception and their identical perspective on women. Comprising women dancers in a group is to report on the diversity of women and to suggest that lesbians are not a sexual minority and that they are one type among many. That only one among eight women dancers form duets with a male dancer is suggestive of this as well. The last scene where in a women group dance, they mix and pass by each other signifying the many lesbians around us who do not reveal their sexual tendencies to society.

The light is generally dark. Sexual minorities can be financially stable, but cannot be liberated in the view of heterosexuals and so the lighting portray their atmosphere in a heterosexual scenario. It shows that in a society where living as a lesbian cannot be assured, with endeavors to going along with mainstream society and anxiety about relationships, lives are always unstable. Also it reveals how, due to heterosexual standards, their lesbian lives are oppressed, and show how they try to resist their identities along with the heterosexual standard and disorder. The

atmosphere tended to report on stage a tunnel like a dark path that lesbians practice in real life.

As for the music, electronic music is mixed with static in the beginning and ends like radio channels being turned and trying to be set. This symbolizes lesbians trying to set and confirm their sexual channels. Switching to sharp sounds and loud music is the effort that the women dancers are exerting while trying to persuade and resonate with the audience. Low and heavy sounds contrast with passionate and speedy movements delivering feelings of incongruity. Music beats grow as rapid as heartbeats and their sorrowful movements arouse lingering impressions. Also, along with mysterious and dreamlike music, the low voice of women dancers sporadically shouting “Inside Out” resonates on the quiet stage and the audience pays attention to their voices trying to quietly reveal their sexual tendencies.

The costumes were made in cooperation with famous Korean designer Yun Jeong Vak. Having graduated from Parsons and working as a designer and professor, she has made consistent artistic collaborations with Hyun Young Woo. The women’s costumes are made out of designer clothes, but none are the same. The sleeves and pants are either short or long. This was an appropriate reflection of the choreographer’s will and intention. The thought of giving individuality of their diversity and trying to show persons with their personality was included. Costumes that were not confined to either men or women were based on Judith Butler’s queer theory in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*(1990)¹⁵⁾ that gender and sexuality contain flexible and performative meanings that can be rearranged at any time. It parodies the cultural signifiers of sex by drags or cross dressing. By parading them as more feminine or manly than a biological sexual form, it endeavored to stress that the existing properties related to gender are not natural or innate, but acquired and culturally composed.

As such, 「Inside Out」 was fruitful in the fact that it led lesbian experience in Korean society into a space of resistance and a space of interpretation that can

15) *Gender Trouble* continues to offer a powerful critique of heteronormativity and of the function of gender in the modern world. Judith Butler began to advance the ideas that would go on to take life as “performativity theory,” as well as some of the first articulations of the possibility for subversive gender practices. Since its publication in 1990, “Gender Trouble” has become one of the key works of contemporary feminist theory, and an essential work for anyone interested in the study of gender, queer theory, or the politics of sexuality in culture.

make marks in history. It exposed the silenced, erased, peripheral woman experience and ultimately led them into history while newly reporting from a woman's point of view. Especially, it unearthed the history of lesbians not yet reported of in Korea, and questioned the life of lesbians in a social environment of heterosexual standard professing regularity and generality. It can be assessed as the stepping stones toward tolerant behavior while revealing the existence of lesbians long perceived as taboo.

In conclusion, this piece can be evaluated as the following:

Firstly, it was an attempt at dissolving the existing order with a provocative self-proclaim of women sex not men, and dichotomy chauvinism. Secondly, Hyun Young Woo, like Butler's "Name calling" revealed a body code and emphasized speech as a political action. Her attempt is one Korean women choreographer's tabooed attempt at breaking out of the limitations of society. This can be assessed as a meaningful endeavor that knocks down a dominant discourse on sexual deviation and a brave fight against guilt. It is significant because it is based on the idea of creating a homosexual culture that can be truly welcomed apart from disguise, implications, and silence of society.

IV. Conclusion

In Korea, expressions of gays are more dominant when talking of homosexuals. Also, quantitatively speaking in movies, TV dramas and musicals, lesbian expressions are lacking. This seems to be fitting in a sexually discriminate and patriarchal society where male homosexuals are representative of homosexuals. Socially, lesbians are still under the influence of male dominance within a gender-oriented hierarchy. Since the year 2000, when dance, after movies and TV dramas, began to portray homosexual expressions, what the public became used to be an understanding of gays. Embracing lesbians became a different matter and stories on women were excluded or limited.

One work reported of being desensitizing of discrimination against lesbians as they were marked as secondary was 「Inside out」 by Hyun Young Woo, which is the first dance piece that introduced in front the lives of lesbians in Korean society. After the 1990s, there have been male dancers who danced a womanized

movement or motion by a woman choreographer, but these asexual movements were to shed light on, and invoke opportunities and interest of diverse bodies for the audience. Visually, they were similar to gay movements, but were not a queer attempt with a true message of liberation that came close to their lives. The importance of the piece is that it was an endeavor to break out of a group mentality that the existence of lesbians can be explained by gays.¹⁶⁾

Unfortunately, despite these efforts, there were no queer subjects on stage after this piece. This conveys the limitations of Korean artistic expression and social conservatism. 90% of 905 seats filled during the three day run of this work and has been selected the “Korea Arts & Culture Education Service’s creative arts support work (2002)” the year after. However, sexual subjects reported to be threatening to Korea’s uniform censoring and national security, and homosexuals out of bounds of morality were met with indifference. Astonishingly, no critics mentioned it with an interpretation of a homosexual code. Most gave favorable reviews on excellent techniques and constituents of movement but were silent on the depicted message of the lesbians. These responses may have held back the opportunity for queer expression in the future.

Thus, there is yet to be reports of a gay or lesbian choreographer in Korea. There are difficulties in expressing sexual tendencies and establishing a queer approach. We seem to proclaim that the meaning of queer as “me being normal and you as abnormal” has been reconciled, but choreographed pieces still not available for gays and lesbians to work. Moreover, perhaps more important than the discussion on whether homosexuals exist is the absence of a dance art that can represent them. Korean society may need more time to foster a culture of correct awareness and differences. It is desirable to see stages where diverse sexual preferences of sexual minorities can be portrayed and when Butler’s “There is no gender” is no longer a hollow academic outcry. Hopefully, dance will join the cultural flexibilities and progress of our era and that liberating perspective of dance can correct and newly design the public eye. The true meaning of diversity in Korean stage art is anticipated henceforth.

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한국 현대춤에 나타난 '퀴어' 연구

- 「인사이드 아웃」을 중심으로 -

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한국사회에서 퀴어의 의미는 생소하며 거부하기까지 하다. 2000년 왕성하게 활동하던 홍석천이 처음으로 자신의 성적취향이 게이임을 밝혔을 때 가히 한국사회는 충격에 빠졌었다. 그는 즉각 부도덕한 인물로 낙인찍혀 모든 공적 프로그램에서 배제되었다. 이미 80년대에 마크 모리스(Mark Morris)나 빌티 존스(Bill T. Jones)가 무대 위에서 공공연하게 성적 취향을 전개하던 미국 예술계의 실정과는 달랐다.

퀴어가 동성애를 병적이지 않는 것, 주변적이지 않는 것을 만들고자하는 시도로 성차에 관한 상식과 선입견을 벗어난 탈동성애화(dehomosexulaize)하려는 노력이라 볼 때 한국에서 보여주는 퀴어적 시도는 어떠한지 본 연구를 통해 살피고자 한다. 한국 현대춤의 지점을 간략하게 살피고 우현영의 「인사이드 아웃」이라는 대표작을 통해 논해보고자 한다. 한국춤에서 나타나는 퀴어에 관한 해석과 함께 중요한 것은 예술의 다양성에 관하여 살피는 것이다. 버틀러의 '젠더가 없다'가 학문적 공허한 외침이 아니라 성소수자에 대한 다양한 성적 취향을 반영하고 제시하는 문화적 유연성과 행보에 동참하기를 희망한다. 서로의 차이를 인정하는 문화에 관하여서도 제한적일 수 없다는 것이며 무대예술에 있어 진정한 의미의 다양성을 향후 기대해본다.

주제어: Queer(퀴어), Gay(게이), Woo, Hyun Young(우현영), Korean Contemporary Dance(한국 컨템포러리 댄스), 「Inside Out」(「인사이드 아웃」)