

LGBTQ+ IDENTITY AND DISPLACEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FICTION: A STUDY OF OCEAN VUONG'S *ON EARTH WE'RE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS* AND CARMEN MARIA MACHADO'S *HER BODY AND OTHER PARTIES*

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Abstract

*This paper discusses the complex correlation of LGBTQ + identity construction and displacement experiences in modern American literature by comparing and contrasting the works *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong (2019) and *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado (2017). With references to the theory of queer theory and postcolonial, especially the theory of gender performativity developed by Judith Butler, the study examines how both writers address the challenges of queer identity in the realms of geographical, cultural, and mental displacement. The discussion shows that the phenomenon of displacement is not only a condition but also a constituent part of the process of creating queer subjects, in which the subjective sense of being out of place has become inherently connected with the act of asserting a queer identity. This paper, through close textual analysis, will show how Vuong and Machado use innovative textual techniques such as fragmented narration techniques, epistolary type and genre-blending techniques by which they can reflect the multiplicities of displacement experienced by LGBTQ+ people. As the findings indicate, modern American fiction is more inclined to place displacement as the location of trauma and the location of creative resource to re-think queer futurity. This study is part of the current academic debates regarding the overlaps of sexuality, migration, memory and narrative novelty in the American literature of the twenty-first century.*

Keywords: LGBTQ+ identity, displacement, American fiction nowadays, queer theory, Ocean Vuong, Carmen Maria Machado, and narrative innovation.

Introduction

Modern American fiction has been characterized by the spectacular proliferation of stories that have made LGBTQ+ experiences their central subject, going beyond representation to undertake intricate examinations of the ways queer identity is subjected to other forms of displacement (Ahmed, 2020; Wickens, 2011). The early twenty-first century has resulted in a unique literature, which challenges how LGBTQ+ people navigate various displacements, political migration, cultural alienation, the estrangement of their psyches, and the displacement of inhabiting non-normative subject positions in heteronormative societies (Vertosick; 2024). Examples of two literary works that represent this literary moment include the first novel by Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019), and the short story collection *Her Body and Other Parties* (2017) by Carmen Maria Machado. Both writings address displacement as the essential state of queer existence, even as they explore the possibilities of

transforming displacement into a venue for creative reenactment of identity, community, and belonging.

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous by Ocean Vuong is organized as a long letter from Little Dog, a young American gay man of Vietnamese descent, to his illiterate mother. The novel follows the journey of the coming-of-age of Little Dog along several planes of displacement: as a Vietnam-born and displaced refugee, as a racially minority individual in a society dominated by heteronorms, and as a person with the intergenerational trauma of war. In *Her Body and Other Parties*, Carmen Maria Machado offers eight narratives that defy genre and investigate queer female desire and identity within the control of horror, science fiction, and psychological realism. The characters in Machado are displaced with alienation of their bodies, loss of queer histories and violence of heteronormative expectations that make the desires of their characters unintelligible.

The contrast between the two works is especially fruitful, as they address the overlap between LGBTQ+ identity and displacement in two different yet complementary ways (Ahmad, 2023). The work by Vuong prefigures the experience of a male, gay immigrant whose queerness cannot be separated due to his racialized and diasporic experience, whereas Machado's collection revolves around the experiences of queer women in different settings of bodily autonomy, historical erasure, and interpersonal violence. Taken together, they show the diversity of LGBTQ+ experiences and, at the same time, unearth common trends in how new American fiction portrays the intersection of queer identity and displacement.

Research Problem

Although there has been an increased focus on LGBTQ+ literature as well as additional academic interest in migration texts, discussion on how modern American fiction actually theorizes the constitutive linkage between the identity of queers and displacement has not been adequately covered. A large body of the current literature discusses displacement as a context in which queer space is established rather than an essential situation that predetermines the formation of queer identity. Moreover, there is little comparative work that unites the various kinds of displacement, namely, diasporic, bodily, temporal, and psychological. This study fills these gaps by examining how Vuong and Machado create literary worlds in which displacement does not merely affect queer identity but is instead part of its expression and experience.

The research problem is as follows: How do the modern American writers reveal the notion of queer identity and different displacements? And what are the narrative strategies that may be used to reflect the intricacies of that relationship? In more precise terms, in what ways do Vuong and Machado formulate displacement as being both of a traumatized state and as generating a space of queer world-making?

Research Questions

This study aims to find answers to the following research questions:

What do *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong and *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado say about the interplay between the LGBTQ+ identity and displacement?

What narrative devices and formal experimentations do those authors use to depict the multiplicities of displacement of LGBTQ+ characters?

What role does displacement play as a place of violence and the possible location of queer futurity in such texts?

How do these works fit into larger discourses of the relationship between marginalized identities and belonging/unbelonging in modern American literature?

Significance of the Study

This study is important in various areas of literature. First, it can contribute to queer literary criticism by showing how modern American fiction theorizes displacement as constitutive of queer identity but not contextual. Second, it contributes to the domain of scholarship on migration and diaspora literature as it predicts the unique experience of LGBTQ+ migrants whose sexuality overlaps with other identity categories that are already marginalized. Third, it adds to narrative theory by discussing the formal novelties the authors employ to capture the temporal, spatial, and psychological aspects of displacement.

In addition to its academic importance, this study has broader cultural implications in a modern context characterized by ongoing debates over immigration, the rights of refugees, and LGBTQ+ rights. The study sheds light on the human interests in these policy discussions and, therefore, adds to general knowledge of how various oppressed identities intersect to construct personal experiences. Moreover, this study confirms the experiences of LGBTQ+ people who have to face a multi-layered displacement and adds to the current project of visibility that allows seeing those whose lives are shaped at the intersection of different forms of marginalization.

Literature Review

The study of LGBTQ+ literature has developed in a significantly different way throughout the last three decades; it has come out of early recovery and representation work to theorize sexuality as it intersects with other identity groups and social organizations. The literature review below will systematize the existing literature on the primary themes discussed in this paper: queer theory and identity construction, displacement and migration in LGBTQ+ texts, the use of queer themes in modern American fiction, and the critical reception of the works of Vuong and Machado.

The Queer Theory and Identity Formation

The development of queer theory in the 1990s has had a tremendous influence on the theoretical basis of LGBTQ+ identity. *Gender Trouble* (1990) by Judith Butler criticized the essentialist concept of gender and sexuality, arguing that gender identity is performatively lived out through repetitive acts as opposed to representing an inner being. This paradigm has been generative for literary criticism, enabling scholars to analyze how literary texts manifest the performative aspects of queer identity. Her subsequent writing, especially *Bodies That Matter* (1993), attempted to respond to criticism of her earlier constructivism by paying more attention to the materiality of bodies and the disciplines that circumscribe performative practices.

Another source of queer literary criticism was Epistemology of the *Closet* (1990) by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who suggests that the hetero/homosexual dichotomy has provided a structure to the organization of Western culture since the late nineteenth century. The focus Sedgwick placed on the constitutive role of the closet- and coming out-processes in the formation of modern sexuality has helped shape many literary studies on LGBTQ+ texts. Extending the theory of queer, Jose Esteban Muñoz wrote *Disidentifications* (1999), exploring the methods of disidentification used by the queer people of color that neither assimilate to nor entirely deny the major discourses. The work by Muñoz is especially pertinent when it comes to the analysis of such texts as the one by Vuong that focus on the main characters who are queers occupying several disadvantaged roles.

More recent queer theory has become more concerned with temporality, futurity, and touch. Provocatively, *No Future* (2004) by Lee Edelman suggested that the idea of queerness could be seen as the opposite extreme to the reproductive futurism which structures the politics of representation. Though Edelman has had an influential impact on his anti-relational thesis, it has produced counterarguments. *Cruising Utopia* (2009) by José Esteban Muñoz offered a

different view of queer futurity, grounded in hope and the transformation of the masses rather than the negativity Edelman adopted. The work of Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), helped to join these discussions by considering queerness as both spatial and orientational, and by discussing the implications of being oriented towards certain objects and not others.

The recent scholarship has also given attention to the particular experience of LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers. The article by Karma Chavez focuses on the politics of LGBTQ+ asylum and shows how humanitarian discourses both acknowledge the agency of queer migrants and limit it. This scholarship raises significant concerns about the role of displacement and asylum-seeking in creating opportunities for forming queer identity and communities.

Contemporary American Fiction and LGBTQ+ Themes

The literary works focused on LGBTQ+ themes have undergone significant evolution in modern American fiction. Research on this literature has analyzed different themes, such as the AIDS crisis, same-sex marriage, same-sex kinship set-ups, and the rising popularity of transgender narratives. Critics have commented that the modern literature of LGBTQ+ is shifting away from the realist narrative trajectory characteristic of coming-out literature towards more formal experimentation with narrative form.

The analysis of modern American fiction has determined that there was a turn towards a postmillennial era marked by a greater genre experimentation and discontinuity of the narrative form, as well as the integration of visual and digital media. The leaders of these formal innovations have been LGBTQ+ writers who have used non-linear chronologies, multiple points of view, and genre-bending to capture the manifoldness of the queer experience. An example of such a trend is the horror and speculative fiction used by Machado, and the epistolary novel by Vuong demonstrates how classic forms of literature can be reimagined to meet modern needs.

Methodology

The study uses a qualitative literary analysis method, employing close reading alongside theoretical approaches grounded in queer theory and postcolonial studies. The work is essentially interpretive, seeking to comprehend how the works of Vuong and Machado establish meaning through their formal qualities, narrative strategies, and thematic interests. In this section, the methodological approach, data collection procedures, and theoretical framework used to guide the analysis are outlined.

Research Design and Approach

The research design is comparative and textual, that is, it is based on the close analysis of primary literary texts, with reference to appropriate theoretical frames and secondary literature. The methodological approach of close reading implies serious attention to the particular language use, the formal elements, the plot division, and the literary devices used by writers to form meaning. This approach to literary analysis is suitable for analyzing literary texts, as it allows one to examine how they create their effect through particular artistic decisions rather than viewing them as the manifestation of an existing theoretical approach.

The comparative aspect of the study is essential for uncovering trends and variations among contemporary American writers as they illustrate the intersection between LGBTQ+ identity and displacement. The two texts studied in this paper share similar thematic issues but employ different formal strategies and address them from varying subject positions; therefore, this study will identify both common aspects of modern-day LGBTQ+ literature and the variety of approaches to the subject matter. The analogy is never meant to create hierarchies between the texts, but rather to help cast light on how each text can produce a unique knowledge of the connection between queer identity and displacement.

Data Collection

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous (2019) by Ocean Vuong

Her Body and Other Parties (2017) by Carmen Maria Machado

Secondary sources are scholarly articles, books, and critical essays on queer theory, displacement and migration studies, contemporary American fiction, and critical reviews of the works of Vuong and Machado.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, we draw on Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, as developed in *Gender Trouble* (1990) and other publications, to explain the topic. Butler's framework is especially well-suited to examining how Vuong and Machado signify LGBTQ+ identity, as it offers a complex explanation of how gender and sexual identities are created through repetitive enactments rather than manifesting preexisting essences. According to Butler, gender is the repetition of the body, a series of repetitions under a highly strict regulatory restriction that solidifies over the years so as to create an impression of substance, of a natural kind of being (Butler, 1990, p. 33). This interpretation of identity as something performatively made rather than just given makes it possible to examine how the characters in these texts negotiate the restraints and opportunities of queer identity formation.

Butler's theory has proven very fruitful for the study of displacement, as it posits that every identity is, in a sense, displaced from the fantasy of a solid, necessary self. To Butler, stability and citationality of identity are spaces in which subversive repetitions can be made, used to challenge the norms of control. This model allows us to examine the specific ways in which the displaced characters of Vuong and Machado experience the performativity of identity at a particular intensity, due to their displacement from normative contexts, putting into view the constructedness of the identity categories.

These texts have been analyzed through the Butler framework, considering how these characters practice gender and sexuality through repetition, how these practices reference and possibly disrupt expectations of normalcy, and whether displacement influences opportunities to perform identities. The focus of the body, as well as the materiality and performativity put forward by Butler, also affect the analysis of the representation of bodily experiences and the limitations placed on queer agency in these texts.

Although the main theoretical perspective of this research is Butler's, the study also draws on concepts of hybridity, diaspora, and multiple belongings developed in postcolonial theory. Such ideas are required for studying how the Vuong protagonist exists in the realm of identities across several cultural systems and how these authors portray both temporal and spatial aspects of displacement. The combination of the two theoretical frameworks allows one to analyze the image of contemporary American fiction as depicting the intricacies of LGBTQ+ identity in situations where multiple displacement modes are observed.

Textual Analysis

This section provides analytical coverage of how the themes of LGBTQ+ identity and displacement intersect in *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong and *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado. The analysis is structured thematically, exploring the main dimensions of how these texts constructively frame queer identity and using novel narrative techniques to reflect the intricacies of this relationship.

Displacement as Constitutive of Identity

Vuong and Machado create their own literary worlds where displacement is not an incidental part of the queer identities of their characters, but central to the experience and expression of the latter. In *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, the queerness in Little Dog is manifested within the frame and through various aspects of displacement. Little Dog, being a Vietnamese refugee

in Connecticut, is displaced by his land of origin, by his mother, and by the mainstream American culture. The first lines of the novel create the state of displacement as the regulating state of the text: "Let me begin again. I am writing to get in touch with you, Ma—even though every word I write on my paper brings me closer to you by a single word (Vuong, 2019, p. 3). This contradictory statement—writing to a person and yet realizing that every word both makes the distance function as a barrier and as a cement—defines how communication across displacement simultaneously makes contact and separates.

The sexual awakening of Little Dog happens within the context of his sexual relationship with Trevor, a white boy of a working-class family whom Little Dog met when the latter was working in tobacco fields. Their interaction takes place within the areas of displacement: the tobacco barns where migrant immigrants work, Trevor and his trailer home, characterized by severe poverty and drug addiction, and motels where they seek temporary shelter. Vuong states that we were swapping truths, I thought, meaning that we were chopping each other (Vuong, 2019, p. 119). This objectification introduces intimacy as something that can never be separated by violence, a relationship as something that is obtained by wounding each other. Their displacement, as encountered by both boys—Little Dog across various cultural backgrounds and Trevor between financial security and family—determines the possibilities and constraints the relationship may face.

The novel is a manifestation of queerness as a displacement into non-normative paths. Little Dog thinks over his inability to be similar to other boys: "I wanted to be noticed as I was, which was not white, which was not American as I knew America to be American (Vuong, 2019, p. 105). This is the place where the racial and sexual differences are formulated in order to put Little Dog outside of normative American identity. His queerness cannot be dislocated from his status as an immigrant; rather, these various displacements constitute the territory of his identity formation.

Her Body and Other Parties by Machado is another text that builds displacement as the central theme of the queer female experience, albeit with varying narrative effects. The first story in the collection, *The Husband Stitch*, is a horror story that symbolizes the exile of women's bodies from their authority. The narrator informs her husband that she does not know whether she wants to become a mother (Machado, 2017, p. 11), which displaces the reproductive futurity that shapes heteronormative life. Her body becomes a point of contention, especially over the green ribbon around her neck, and she refuses to take it off even when her husband insists. By the time he unties the ribbon, her head has fallen off, and the metaphor of the literalization of violence of demands that women relinquish bodily autonomy takes reality.

Machado discusses the issue of bodily displacement in "Eight Bites" by telling of a woman who undergoes gastric surgery. The narrator describes her changed body: "I was a stranger to myself" (Machado, 2017, p. 61). This narrative links the body's modification to the underlying issues of identity and belonging to imply that the protagonist's estrangement from the body is part of a broader alienation. The speculative aspect, where she starts to see small versions of herself that she has to kill, is a metaphoric symbol of the process of weight loss surgery, which is a violent displacement of the self.

Narrative Form and Temporal Displacement

Both writers employ novelistic narrative techniques that formally foreground the time displacements their characters undergo. The epistolary novel by Vuong features multiple time levels: Little Dog addresses his mother in the present, describing his past, with references to his grandmother's narratives, who lived through the Vietnam War. This stratified temporality denies chronology and travels associatively between time periods in a way that reflects how trauma and memory really operate. The form of the novel represents what critics have termed

queer temporality—a non-conformity to heteronormative developmental scripts based on marriage and childbirth.

Little Dog contemplates the idea of time displacement literally: They say that nothing lasts forever, but they are just afraid it will last longer than they can love it (Vuong, 2019, p. 238). This contemplation of time and changeability embodies the concern with the novel on the subject of the experience of time by queer subjects in a way other than how dominant culture supposes. The connection between Little Dog and Trevor is characterized by the realization of its temporality, but this realization only deepens it and makes it more important. According to Vuong, it is impossible not to be the man in this room—the man in the photo, holding the jug of Agent Orange—saying: undetonated (Vuong, 2019, p. 51). In this text, the personal and historical violence are linked by compression of time, which implies that historical evils still resonate in the present.

The temporal strategies of Machado are dissimilar, yet they perform displacement in a similar manner. The Husband Stitch has a circular form that begins and ends with similar scenes, suggesting the cyclical nature of gendered violence across generations. The narrative uses urban legends about ghostly women in interludes to create a collective time, linking the narrator's personal experience to broader tendencies in describing women's bodies.

Linear temporality is most violently upset in "Especially Heinous ." The 272 episode synopses unfold consecutively by season and episode number; however, the material becomes increasingly surreal and increasingly disconnected from the television show's premise. The ghosts continue growing throughout the episodes, with Detective Benson experiencing numerous versions of herself, and the girls who were killed but still exist. Machado explains that the girls are suspended from the ceiling as wind chimes, with their mouths open and their eyes dark. This has been awaited by them. They are long-awaited, long-awaited, the same things they waited (Machado, 2017, p. 245). This picture employs the effect of the temporal arrangement of the story to play the role of accumulating violence against women over time; the murdered girls remain in the past and present at the same time.

Physical Motion and Corporeal Sensation

Both writers are keen on the displacement as experienced and inscribed on bodies. Bodily vulnerability, violence, and pleasure are recurring themes in Vuong's novel where displacement becomes materialized. The scars of his various marginalized statuses can be seen physically on Little Dog, as he is described as a yellowed photograph with a bruise still forming on his skin (Vuong, 2019, p. 99). This definition is a form of description that entails both the body as the historical object and the active location of violence.

The sexual life in Little Dog and Trevor is presented in a very vivid physical manner that, in some way, highlights the pleasure and pain. Vuong says, I am thinking of beauty once again, how the things are hunted, as we have called them beautiful (Vuong, 2019, p. 180). This consideration relates to the desire for violence, which implies that the experience of being desired as a queer Asian body is to be placed as exotic prey. The novel will not divide the pleasure by the structural violence that allows only certain people to desire others and to do it in a particular way.

The fact that Little Dog has been working in the tobacco fields makes a displacement mark on his body through labor. The labor involved in agriculture, which causes him to sweat, the heat, the nicotine that leaves its mark on his flesh — all of these make the economic displacement leave its traces on the working-class bodies. This collision between racial, sexual, and class displacement is being subjected to the experience of the body being worn out: I want to know what it is like to be missed. Be loved so that you can be missed (Vuong, 2019, p. 173). This is the need aroused by the corporeality of feeling disposable, replaceable.

The recurring theme of body displacement recurs obsessively in Machado's collection. The Husband Stitch revolves around the freedom of the body and specifically focuses on the issue of pregnancy and birth, as well as the medical practices that do not involve the total consent of the women but make modifications to their bodies. The narrator tells about childbirth: I was convinced that I would die there at that table, that I had led the wrong life and spent little time on this planet (Machado, 2017, p. 13). It is a point of contact between the bodily experience and the existential questions of how one has led a life, and that displacement of power over the body signifies larger scales of alienation.

The article "Eight Bites" discusses the introduction of displacement in the body brought about by weight-loss surgery, to the point that the main character cannot even identify herself. The following moments are described in the story: my body was weird, like I was switched inside out, and I was looking at my own organs (Machado, 2017, p. 54). This visceral account of the medical procedure can cause one to feel deeply alienated with one's own flesh. The fact that she has to get rid of tiny versions of herself is the psychological violence of imposing the body to become normalized.

The literalizing of bodily displacement in *Real Women Have Bodies* is in its hypothetical nature of women being eliminated from existence. The main character observes her girlfriend growing increasingly transparent: "I could see through her to the wall behind her" (Machado, 2017, p. 29). This fantasy aspect is used in a metaphorical sense in that the heteronormative culture makes queer female bodies unseen and thus displaced by making them non-recognized and culturally unacceptable.

Displacement and Queer Desire

Both writings embody desire because they were displaced and may offer solutions for reenacting relationships across all forms of distance. The impulse toward Trevor expressed by Little Dog in *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* occurs amid situations of various forms of displacement, racial distinction, economic precariousness, and geographical solitude. Their affair occurs in the in-between places: tobacco barns, motel rooms, and the trailer where Trevor lives. These geographies, characterized by dislocation from the centres of economic and cultural authority, are the sites where the expression of queer desire is possible without surveillance.

Vuong depicts their closeness to the word that is both beautiful and impermanent: How simple, I thought, to go to the closet, to crack your own bones with your own hands, and slide the shiniest of them through the material of your shirt, to become, once again, a violent object, or thing (Vuong, 2019, p. 145). In this text, vulnerability of queer desire is linked to the violence of staying closeted, and this means that to open to desire is to risk brutalization, but this risk is better than the violence of self-repression that people have to endure.

The novel does not romanticize the desire that is queer as absolutely liberatory and still demands its importance. There is a limited relationship between Little Dog and Trevor due to Trevor having internalized homophobia, addiction, and the economic precarity of the two. It is even in these restrictions that there are glimpses of other possibilities of existence in the moments of connection. Little Dog thinks, "I wanted him to realize, the way I never would, that it was like not being born with a hunger like I was (Vuong, 2019, p. 201). It is this unapologetic hunger that describes a queer futurity in which the future of the relationship is already predetermined.

The stories of Machado also depict queer female desire, but they are also limited by displacement and the opportunities for connection presented. *Real Women Have Bodies* tells of the main character's wish to have her girlfriend, but the latter is disappearing as a living being: I loved her more when she disappeared. Her disappearance is what I loved even more

as she was disappearing" (Machado, 2017, p. 34). This contradictory expression implies that the risk of loss of crossing displacement (loving across displacement) is to love increasingly vigorously because of that displacement.

The diverse stories in the collection have addressed the question of queer female desire in a wide range of settings: in long-term commitments, in hookups, and in potential. The story "Mothers" tells of a woman's convoluted yearning for her girlfriend despite their relationship worsening. The novel subjects the idea of desire that doesn't go away despite practical incompatibility: I wanted to want her the way I used to, without obstruction, subconsciously (Machado, 2017, p. 151). This observation explains how the passage of time can cause displacement even in existing relationships.

Inventory manipulates the pretence of enumerating sexual partners to organize a narrative on the AIDS crisis and how the plague develops a radical uprooting of the typical pattern of relationships. The narrator explains relationships that were established under the circumstances of crisis: "We were a flotilla, drifting up against each other in the dark" (Machado, 2017, p. 191). This sea image renders queer community as constructed through displacement and togetherness, where people encounter one another as they drift.

Violence and Survival

Both writings are unabashed depictions of different types of violence that define the existence of displaced queer subjects and discuss displacement, survival, and resistance tactics. Vuong does show domestic violence, homophobic violence, the structural violence of poverty and racism, and the historical violence of war in his novel. Little Dog observes his mother physically harming him and realizes that it is related to the larger trends in violence: I am not a monster, she said. I'm a mother" (Vuong, 2019, p. 71). This is how the novel refuses to isolate individual violence from its social contexts and, at the same time, considers the damage it causes.

Trevor is a victim of his father and his homophobia, as well as a victim of the epidemic of opioid addiction that devastates the working-class society. The novel has not depicted addiction as a personal moral failure but as being inseparable from economic displacement and the absence of other futures. When Trevor later dies of an overdose, Trevor seems to die as a tragic loss of a person, and as a symptom of a wide-scale social failure of poor rural people.

However, despite all the violence, the idea of survival and the creation of beauty in the most terrible circumstances is also typical of the novel. Little Dog even talks about the very act of writing itself as a survival method: "Trying to write a story, I am writing, I have learned that words are just as much as bones can be broken and repaired (Vuong, 2019, p. 196). This metaphor presents language as vulnerable to violence and as something to be constructed, offering an example of how the displaced subject can survive and make meaning.

The collection by Machado also embodies several different types of violence against women and queers, and also tries to find resistance tactics. The Husband Stitch ends with the horrific act of removing the ribbon that the narrator has on his body, literally expressing the loss of the autonomy of the body of women. However, the story is also an example of resistance, modeled in its metafictional interventions and in its insistence on telling the stories of women despite cultural pressure to remain silent.

Little Dog is looking back in time by comparing it to the act of writing: "I wanted to be something more than I had made of myself. I would have preferred to become what I was (Vuong, 2019, p. 238). This inversion of agency makes identity less of an entity self-constructed, and more a result of the situation and relations. In this formulation, individualist modes of identity are denied even as it asserts the importance of responding to situations.

The novel's future presents a complex vision of queer futurity. Little Dog is alive, and he has produced something out of his experiences in the form of writing. Success is not made to be the easy way out. The letter to his mother is not delivered, Trevor is already dead, and the trauma of his family has not stopped. According to the novel, queer futurity is about continuing even when one has lost, producing meaning even when one knows it is weak and disputed.

The collection by Machado also touches on the possibilities that queer female subjects continue to undergo as they seek their place in the world amid different modes of displacement. "Inventory" ends with the narrator alive after the plague, as he grieves the loss of so many. The last lines of the story introduce survival as the continuation of the memory of the lost: I am the archive. I am the evidence" (Machado, 2017, p. 198). This definition portrays the survivor as a witness, as an embodiment of memory, implying that queer futurities are shaped by memory and by respect for the lost.

The meaning of especially Heinous is that, at the end, Detective Benson finds herself amidst millions of her own selves and the ghosts of killed girls that have accumulated. The last picture in the story does not offer resolution or despair, but rather a continuing haunting: The girls are singing. The singing by them all along" (Machado, 2017, p. 248). This conclusion denies closure, and thus it implies that the focus on violence against women and the opposition to that violence should be an ongoing process.

The whole collection envisages queer futurity as not an escape from displacement but as sustenance within it. The last narrative, "Difficult at Parties," is that of a woman who has been sexually assaulted, but in recovering, she sees flashbacks caused by looking at pornography. The story's conclusion offers a conditional promise of healing as she connects with her partner, but it is conditional, since healing is a process, not an event.

At the playwriting level, creative writing can be categorized into narrative innovation and formal experimentation: both approaches for constructing a fictional narrative and expressing emotions. Narrative Innovation and Formal Experimentation. At the playwriting level, creative writing is divided into narrative innovation and formal experimentation: both methods are used to build a fictional narrative and reveal emotions.

Both authors use new narrative techniques that disrupt realist depiction, implying that the disruptions of displacement and queer identity demand formal experimentation. By turning the addressee into a non-reader of the letter, Vuong transforms a traditional form of the epistolary novel to formally enact the impossibility and the necessity of communication across displacement.

The novel's lack of linear chronology reflects the work of memory in people who experience trauma. Time does not move in a linear manner but turns around, and past experiences burst into the present. The text's intense time-travelling is not presented with clearer transitions, so the reader has to navigate it alongside the main character. Such a formal approach gives the readers a sense akin to the temporal dislocation that describes the trauma and displacement.

The poetic language used by Vuong creates images of everyday experience so unfamiliar that they would otherwise be normalized in prose written in the realist tradition. His descriptions often use strange metaphors and synesthetic images: "The rain used to sound like my grandmother sleeping" (Vuong, 2019, p. 65). These formulations establish relations between dissimilar experiences, suggesting how displaced subject matter explores various regimes simultaneously.

These differences are not only of style, but of the position of the subject and of the displacement of a different kind. The main character of Vuong finds herself going through displacement due to and through national and language boundaries and cultural distinctions, and the characters in Machado face displacement through body alienation, erasure of time, and explicit violence

against the bodies of queer women. Collectively, the texts speak to the heterogeneity of LGBTQ+ experiences and, at the same time, indicate common trends in how modern American fiction conceptualizes the connection between queer identity and displacement.

This study relates to several current academic discussions. To begin with, it promotes queer literary criticism by showing how current American fiction increasingly makes displacement constitutive of queer identity rather than contextual. This observation challenges methodologies that treat displacement as a backdrop and indicates that a longer-term focus should be given to the role of displacement in creating the conditions for queer identity formation as possibilities.

Second, the research paper adds to the literature on migration and diaspora literature, which anticipates the particular lives of LGBTQ+ displaced individuals whose sexuality is overlapped by other marginalized identities. The discussion has shown that displacement of queer subjects is not an issue that can be analyzed in terms of structures that overlook sexuality, and queerness is not an issue that can be analyzed outside of displacement. This intersectional method shows how various forms of marginalization are multiplied rather than simply added.

Third, the study contributes to narrative theory by evaluating the formal innovations modern writers use to exhibit displacement. The discussion demonstrates how the two authors defy traditional realist representation through temporal fragmentation, genre mixing, metafictional intervention, and other experimental devices. These are not simply aesthetic decisions but epistemological decisions, a feeling among the authors that traditional forms would not be suitable for reflecting the complexities of displaced queer experience.

Conclusion

This study has broader cultural implications than just a scholarly connotation. At a modern time when LGBTQ+ rights matters have gained greater prominence and when topics of immigration and refugee policies have become more contentious and subject to discussion, literature that addresses these issues of intersectionality is essential. This study helps illuminate the human interests in policy arguments and contributes to the knowledge base on how various forms of marginalization shape human lives by exploring the lived experiences of Vuong and Machado as representatives of displaced queers.

A number of avenues for future research emerge from this study. To begin with, further comparative studies that unite modern LGBTQ+ writers situated in other cultural settings would shed more light on the functioning of the relationship between displacement and queer identity in other national and cultural settings. Second, studying the representation of other modern authors of certain types of displacement, including climate displacement, imprisonment, or homelessness in connection with LGBTQ+ identity, would help provide a fuller picture of displacement experiences. Third, the analysis of medium-specific affordances of representation would be revealed through studies that examine how various genres and media (film, television, digital media, performance, etc.) contain and represent displaced subjects of queerness.

To sum it up, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong and *Her Body and Other Parties* by Carmen Maria Machado can be considered the prominent achievements of modern American fiction in exploring themes of LGBTQ+ identity and uprooting. By their unconventional narrative techniques and their unblinking addressing of the multidimensionality of displacement, these texts are part of the emerging literature that does not make a distinction between the issues of sexuality and migration, race, social positioning, and class. They show that being displaced, rather than an incidental aspect of the queer experience, is one of the key shapers of LGBTQ+ identity as it is lived, experienced, and

expressed. In this way, they increase our knowledge of contemporary American fiction and the intricacies of displaced queer lives.

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