þÿ T h e y r e a b i t b o r i n g , a r e n t t h e y ? : Q u e e r p e o p l e s d i s non-queer people

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“They’re a bit boring, aren’t they?”: Queer people’s discourse about non-queer people

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Travail de fin d’études réalisé par Julien Sohier en vue de l’obtention du grade de Master en linguistique, à finalité approfondie.

Sous la direction de Lieselotte Brems

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Finally, to my queers, my outcasts, and my community, may we live one day in total queerness.

0. Information

0.1. Notes on pronouns

In this work, I will use the singular *they* for authors that did not mention their pronouns. I believe that using the neutral *he* goes against feminist theories and Queer Theory. Although all persons interviewed for the thesis have their identities hidden, their pronouns will be respected.

0.2. Transcriptions of the interviews

This thesis mostly uses interviews with four different participants. All the interviews were individually recorded and transcribed. I prefer approaching research with the view that participants are the creators of knowledge, therefore I focused my analysis on the content of the interviews and not on the form i.e., I focused on what was said and implied rather than on how it was said. This is also the reason why the transcription of the interviews does not consider any prosodic changes, silence, or different tonalities…

0.3. Presentation of the participants

Name	Amber	Jayce	Jean	Sam
Age	24	16	25	25
Place of birth	USA	USA	USA	USA
Gender	Cisgender woman	Cisgender man	Transgender woman	Non-binary
Pronouns	She/her	He/Him	She/Her	He/They
Sexual orientation	Bisexual	Gay	Pansexual	Pansexual
Residency	California	North Carolina	Preferred not to disclaim	Preferred not to disclaim
First language	English	English	English	English
Education	Law School (Master's degree)	High School (ongoing)	High School	BA in Spanish
Identify as queer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. Introduction

In recent years, the battle for inclusivity and political actions taken to create a more equal and fair society took over the social sphere. Queer people in the United States of America have more rights than ever before, yet not all queer people are protected by law. The recent case of the "Don't Say Gay" bill in Florida shows that conservative ideologies still reside within society. The overturn of Joe v. Wade also shows that no rights are forever granted. In this climate and with the history of queer people in mind, one could wonder how queer people perceive society, especially a society dominated by heterosexism. Starting with a theoretical background, I will use interviews of queer people to analyse today's societal behaviour regarding identities and examine how queer people perceive non-queer people.

2. Gender and sex

In our society, even before birth, children are put into categories as soon as physicians look at their genitals. The rise of gender reveals shows that categorization starts before birth and is based on a binary boy-girl. However, the gendered socialization pre-birth is based on the "heterosexual matrix" (Butler, 2019), which explains that a penis will be linked to male which then will be linked to man and that a vagina will be linked to female, which then will be linked to woman. Once an individual is said to be within the man or woman category, they are socialized in that way and are expected to follow stereotypical characteristics of the category they belong to (Butler, 2019; Ahearn, 2012; Wittig, 2018); a woman will have to be soft whilst a man will have to be strong. As a result, women and men will be seen as clear opposites that have to complete each other (Butler, 2019). This categorization is immensely present in our society, so much so that it is seen as a natural distinction (Ahearn, 2012). However, mapping one's sex onto one's gender is a common false idea which can be explained by understating the concept of sex and gender.

I will first begin to talk about the definition of *gender* as I will argue that the concept of "sex" only exists if our idea of gender exists. Gender is a set of features that is created culturally, historically, and socially which attach itself to one's identity (Ahearn, 2012, p. 190). Therefore, following the heterosexual matrix, a child born with a vagina, will be a woman, which is a set of characteristics that the child will have to follow to be in accordance with the gender they were given. In our western society, the binary woman-

man has been adopted and people are expected to fit in those two genders. Hence, gender is learned through social interactions with others and oneself (Ahearn, 2012). Seen as a set of characteristics, Judith Butler (2019) considers gender to be performative, that is to say, gender is something that one does through discourse and social actions. Gender is then socially constructed. However, it does not mean that people are free to construct their gender; socialized people are bound to follow societal stereotypes about their gender (Butler, 2019; Ahearn, 2016). Also, being socially constructed does not mean that it does not create problems, as the dichotomy of gender creates an asymmetry and a balance of power (Ahearn, 2016). Considering women to be weaker than men, men less likely to show emotions etc. is the result of the socially constructed binary present in our western society which impacted all fields of human activity, even science (Ahearn, 2016; Wittig, 2018). Understanding that gender is a social construct helps to denaturalize the hierarchy between woman and man but can reinforce the idea that sex is natural (Dorlin, 2008).

A way scholars tried to clarify that gender and sex were different, was to clarify that sex is related to biology whilst gender relates to culture (Ahearn, 2016). Although, the idea that gender relates to culture is not wrong, equating sex to biology is also a misconception (Ahearn, 2016; Dorlin, 2008). It cannot be denied that there are physical differences between individuals, however, this difference is seen through a gendered paradigm (Dorlin, 2018). As Ahearn (2016) explained, there is not a single criterion for male and female sex; what is understood to be male, or female is a combination of anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones. It is argued that this combination is not accurate enough to even define *male* and *female* (van Anders & al., 2017). Dorlin (2018) adds that if the above criteria are taken into account, sex is divided into more than two sexes. Wittig (2018) adds that sex is the product of oppression and domination; the dominant group created the idea of biological sex to hide that all systems of oppression always relate to social, cultural, and economical differences. For example, once the oppressed group (called “slaves” in Wittig’s work) starts to speak up, the dominant group (called “masters” in Wittig’s work) will claim natural order and biological facts, whilst the oppressed individuals will claim social and economic factors behind the separation of the groups (Wittig, 2018).

The idea of male and female as biologically natural does not work when intersex people are considered in the equation. Intersex people are often disregarded or not considered in the conversation as they are seen as taboo though intersex people are said to

represent 1 in 1,000 to 30,000 babies (Ahearn, 2016). A baby is considered intersex when they are born with ambiguous genitalia or when their level of hormones does not match with those of what is considered to be a male or a female, or when they have chromosomes outside of the XX/XY dichotomy (Ahearn, 2016). As Western societies have internalized the dichotomy of female/male (even though it has been proved to be false), people who are born intersex go under surgery to fit into the male/female category (van Anders & al., 2017; Ahearn, 2016). The idea that intersex people should be fixed is directly linked to the way sex is perceived, i.e., how sex is seen through the definition of gender and the stereotypes that go with it (Ahearn, 2016). It is no wonder that intersex people are considered to be within the LGBTQ**I**A+ community as they are seen as deviants from the heterosexual matrix. Therefore, it is understandable that the definition of gender/sex is lacking and does not reflect how individuals are or present themselves. Queer Theory at its core will help to expand the definition of gender, and what it entails and will also bring the idea of gender expression:

> JS: Could you describe your gender identity?
> Sam: I'm non-binary and I use he/they pronouns. In my everyday life, I present as a man most of the time. It's easier that way.

Gender expression does not necessarily correspond to one's gender. Here, Sam explains that although their gender is non-binary, he presents himself as a man in social settings. It could be argued that in this case, presenting as "non-binary" is difficult as there is no way to look "non-binary". However, Sam clearly contrasts between looking like a man and looking like a non-binary person. I will once again refer to gender performance. In this case, the gender performance of "non-binary" is done by the simple act of naming it. It creates a contrast between *non-binary* and *man,* there might not be any visual clues, but the performance of the gender is done through discourse in this case.

Another point that can be explained by Sam's response relates to the idea that categories are detrimental to individuals. Categories are based on stereotypes that help individuals to understand and apprehend the world. Stereotypes are necessary for understanding the world, they serve as a simplified model of one group, and they circulate freely within discourse (Amossy, 2010). In this case, *man* is understood to be all the

characteristics that western society will attribute to man. When asked about the meaning of *man* in their answer Sam explained:

> Sam: When I said man, I meant what straight people will consider man. I don't attach any particularities to man. I just follow what straight people think a man is supposed to look like.

In this case, the stereotype of *man* comes from the definition of the heterosexual matrix. Sam used the stereotype of *man* to create their perceived identity. As Amossy (2010) said, stereotypes are part of one's identity construction although they can become detrimental when people use them to shame and oppress people who correspond to these stereotypes. However, it could be argued that Amossy's idea that stereotypes are necessary to understand the world is not applicable to the case of gender identities:

> JS: So, do you think we need categories? Like man, woman, non-binary?
> Sam: Not really no. Hum, when I'm around queer people I do not assume their gender, I don't care at all what they are, why would I care?

Sam's answer shows that gender categories are not useful to understand the world as Sam explains that it is not something they consider when they are around people. In *Queer Zones*, Bourcier (2021) explains that new definitions of identities, can only happen once humanity disregard existing categories such as gender and sex and that all scientific field also departs from them. Sam's is an example that not considering people's (perceived) gender is possible. However, I will argue that the idea of destroying categories of gender, is not the right approach as it does erase the identity of transgender people, and it erases the entire women's rights movement. I believe that the best approach when it comes to defining gender is to expand its definition, which is part of the work in Queer Theory.

2.1.1. Transgender identity

The notion of gender and sex presented above are expressed in discourse by means of different words, such as *cisgender, transgender, non-binary, genderfluid…* I find it necessary to address the meaning of those words as they are, not only used by the

participants but also, they pertain to the idea of heterosexuality or the perceived heterosexuality of individuals.

The adjective *cisgender* is used to describe an individual whose gender identity corresponds to the gender that was attributed to them at birth, and who will perform their gender following societal rules that are recommended for that specific gender (Zottola, 2021). Therefore, a cisgender person will be expected to accept the gender assigned at birth so they can be socialized and stereotyped by society. If a child does not follow these rules and does not perform the gender assigned to them at birth, they are considered to be transgender, although the definition of *transgender* can expand into different meanings. Indeed, transgender identities are multiple:

> JS: So, you would consider yourself as trans too?
> Sam: Yeah. I'm non-binary and trans. Trans is just an umbrella term.

The understanding that trans is an umbrella term differs from what was previously understood.

Analysing data provided by the OED (2022d), the first appearance of *transexual* relating to people who "identify as the other sex" dates back to 1956 and is attributed to Benjamin. Benjamin is the known figure to define *transexual*, although the term was already defined in *Psychopathia Transexualis* written by Cauldwell, who presented transsexuality as psychopathy (Arnold, 2015). It was years later, that another term tried to overtake *transexual* as it had scientific, medical, and pejorative connotations (Arnold, 2015). V. Prince in 1969, introduced the word *transgenderal* (OED, 2022d). Prince changed the perception of transgender people as she claimed:

> "I, at least, know the difference between sex and gender and have simply elected to change the latter and not the former. If a word is necessary, I should be termed a 'transgenderal'." (From the OED, transgenderal, n. and adj., A)

Prince argued for the difference between gender and sex but also that gender reassignment surgery was not obligatory, and that one could live one's life without needing to change one's genitalia (Burns, 2018). It should be noted that Prince's views were considered

radical views for her time, for example, transgender people now are told that gender reassignment is available but not compulsory[1] (Burns, 2018). The term *transgenderal* transformed into *transgender* with a more inclusive and broad meaning: *transgender* which now refers to everyone who identifies as transgender (i.e., gender identity does not correspond to the one attributed at birth) and to people who undergo gender reassignment surgery (Burns, 2018; Arnold, 2015). On this note, Jean explains:

> Jean: I will say though, being transgender or transexual really depends on how you define yourself. I'm transgender and transexual by scientific terms, but I don't like when straight people say that transgender equals transexual, that's just false and probably transphobic if I have to be honest.

In this part of the interview, Jean explains that *transexual* can only be used by the person who identifies as *transexual*. Discussions on in-group vs out-group usage of words will be dealt with further.

The inclusion of transgender people within the LGBTQ+ community will not be debated in this thesis. Multiple works relate the debates and the transphobia behind such debates (Halberstam, 2018; Marinucci, 2016; Milani, 2018; Muñoz, 2009; Zottola, 2021). I will however position myself as it will be pertinent in later discussions. Transgender people are and will always be members of the LGBTQ+ communities. Although transgender people's experiences differ from gay cismen or lesbian ciswomen, they are still a part of the community, especially given the context in which the gay rights movement started in the USA (Zimman, 2012).

3. LGBTQ+ community: History and definition

To introduce the queer community on the sociolinguistic map, it needs to be clearly understood. The following paragraphs will shed light on my point of view of the queer community; I will try to define, and explain what *queer* is and what it is not if it is possibly doable. It will also serve the purpose of explaining words related to sexualities and gender

[1] In regard to the Law, each country has its own requirements. I only refer to one's self-perceived identity and expression here.

identities, as I believe it is important to understand their values and their history to fully grasp what *queer* is.

3.1. "Pre-homosexuality" world

Before the "invention of homosexuality" (Beachy, 2010) other words were used to describe same-sex orientations such as: *mollies, sodomites, paederasts, pansies…* which all had negative connotations (Beachy, 2010) In this thesis, I will not elaborate on words that came from periods of time that I consider to be "pre-homosexuality" periods (based on Beachy ideas). I will not go into details of words used to talk about "unconventional" relationships before the invention of the concept of homosexuality as we know it today. Indeed, using words such as *gay, queer* or *homosexual* to talk about other periods of time can put assumptions and modern interpretations on people, culture, and events (see Barry Reay (2009) for an in-depth analysis of the subject).

3.2. The invention of homosexuality

The first term was *homosexual*, an umbrella term regrouping all "deviant sexualities" as Fernandez (2015) explains. The English word *homosexual/homosexuality* is modelled on the German word *homosexual/Homosexualität*[2]. It was formed by compounding the formative version of the ancient Greek word *ὁμός* > *ὁμό* > homo- (meaning "same") and the borrowing Latin adjective *sexuallis* > *sexual*[3]. The first recorded appearance of the German word *homosexual* was in Berlin: Kertbeny, a Hungarian-German author, in 1869 published a pamphlet to argue against the antisodomy statute proposed by the Prussian state (Beachy, 2010, p. 804). Kertbeny did not use *homosexual* with negative feelings or attitudes; his word was a call for liberty, and it was meant to be a neutral word (Fernandez, 2015). Foucault in his *Histoire de la sexualité* (1976) blames Westphal for introducing *homosexuality* into the psychology/psychiatric field as a mental illness which led to negative connotations. Fernandez also shows his despise for psychiatrists, as he says:

[2] "Homosexual, adj. and n." OED Online, Oxford University Press, March 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/88110. Accessed 4 May 2022.
[3] Based on the etymology provided by the Oxford English Dictionary (consulted in May 2022).

> " […] la médecine et la psychiatrie ont d'emblée considérée l'homosexuel comme un malade, auquel il fallait appliquer un traitement, comme un pauvre type à guérir, comme un spécimen pathologique idéal pour leurs expériences." (2015, 14).

It is also in the psychiatric field that the English-speaking world saw the term *homosexual* appear. The Encyclopædia Britannica proposes that Richard von Frafft-Ebing introduced the word in his book *Psychopathia Sexualis* (published in 1886 in German, then in 1892 in English) where homosexuality was treated as a disease. Though the OED (2022a) also shows the appearance of *homosexual* in 1892, the OED records its first appearance in 1891[4]. Beachy does not mention the 1891 appearance nor does the work of Foucault, Baker, and Fernandez.

It is then understandable that the word *homosexual* (in German, French and English) is avoided by a lot of non-straight people, as it still bears negative connotations as shown by Foucault (1976), Fernandez (2015), and Motschenbacher (2021). The OED also shows that the word has a strong tendency for *homosexual* to be used for male homosexuality which could be influenced by the folk etymology *homo* meaning *human* in post-classical Latin. This "male" meaning is also present in the work of Frafft-Ebing who talked only about male-homosexuality (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2018). A recurring pattern can be seen in the early literature on homosexuality; most of the work was focused on what was called "male homosexuality", the "female homosexuality" was not of interest to scholars as it was mostly men scholars writing about other men (Laurie 2012). Marinucci (2016) also shows that works on lesbian women only started in the last decade of the twentieth century and that it barely focused on the past of lesbianism. In our modern days, the term "lesbian" is preferred as "female homosexuality" is restrictive, binary, and medically connoted as the OED (2022a) specifies.

It can be argued, based on gender theory and Queer Theory, that specifying "male" or "female" homosexuality is restrictive and does not reflect the realities of gender. I will take examples from Motschenbacher's work (2021) to emphasize that defining sexuality based on what society considers "sex" is restrictive and not relevant. Using terms such as "same-sex relationship" is not inclusive and potentially wrong as sex – considered to be

[4] homosexual, adj. and n." OED Online, Oxford University Press, March 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/88110.

someone's genitalia—is not the defining matter in queer relationships. In today's dictionaries, such as the OED (2022a), *homosexuality* and *homosexual* are still defined by same-sex desire. Dictionaries are seen as artefacts representative of a culture (Nossem, 2017). The OED claims to be a representative record of the English language but also an authority (Ten Hacken, 2014). As they are regarded with such dignity and trust, dictionaries can influence the way their readers perceive the words (Nossem, 2017) and in this case, how homosexuality is perceived. Non-queer lexicographers, as in most cases, are bound to follow heteronormative ideas to create their entries, especially when these entries are about non-heteronormative ideas, errors are bound to happen. In the case of *homosexuality,* the focus on sex is misleading. I will, however, point out the almost impossibility of defining homosexuality with non-binary terms as it is impossible to leave out words such as *woman, man, sex* etc. out of the definition, as the words themselves are rooted in a binary system. Motschenbacher (2021) also notes the difficulties of naming desire in non-heteronormative ways as it was always non-queer people who defined the desire of the queer community.

3.3. The use of the word *gay*

On his website, David Wilton, Doctor in Medieval English Literature, describes the history of the word *gay* and its semantic shifts. The word *gay* comes from the French word "gai." However, the origin of "gai" is uncertain. The first use of the word in English was recorded in a poem called *Blow, Notherne Wind* where it meant "beautiful". The word changed meaning over the decades to mean "light-hearted" or "carefree" as we can see in Chaucer's work (Wilton, 2009). The origin of the use of the word *gay* as "homosexual" (i.e., a man having sex with another man) is up to debate and its earlier uses are unclear whether or not they meant "homosexual". For example, it is known that at the end of the 19th century, the word "gay-cat" was used to describe men prostitutes without meaning "homosexual". However, the first record of the meaning "gay" as "homosexual" can be seen in the musical "Bitter sweet" in 1923 (Wilton, 2009).

Looking at examples from the OED (2022b), the word *gay* can be seen to mean "carefree" (such as proposed by Wilton in 2009) but in some examples, it also meant "someone who enjoyed social pleasures" or "female prostitutes". It could be argued that the meaning of *gay* as in "homosexual" is a metaphor based on pleasure. If *gay* is

understood to define enjoyable pleasures, it could be linked to luxury and vanity (as in the Bible). Numerous conservative news articles and communities talk about queer people as people who live luxury lives, away from God. It could then be argued that the metaphor behind *gay* as in "homosexual" is the homophobic idea that queer people choose a luxurious lifestyle. This theory is based on the interview with Amber. Amber grew up in a religious community in Texas where it was taught that homosexuality was a sin and that it was vanity that led humans to it:

> Amber: I was always told that homosexuals were luxurious people… but uhm… but not in the sense of wealth, it was people who wanted everything and who loved themselves too much.

Amber also explained that this idea was present in other religious communities in the USA and not only in the one she grew up in. Stollznow (2020) also shows some connotations of luxury, sexual pleasures, and immorality in her work *On the Offensive*. The author also talks about the way the Church contributes to homophobic behaviours, with the idea that queer people, "chose" to be queer (2020, p. 101). It is interesting then, that the idea that queer people chose to be queer is also presented with the idea that they are luxurious. Indeed, when describe as someone who wanted something, it is implied that they can choose it.

I will note, however, that this theory is flawed as it cannot work universally as what is considered "a sin" depends on your religion but I do believe that it raises an interesting point about one of the uses of the word *gay*. Nowadays this metaphor could be obscure, and the word *gay* is still the preferred alternative to the word *homosexual* (GLAAD).

The word *gay* also had another shift in meaning as seen in the idiom *that is so gay* which means that something is lame. One research showed that people using *gay* as "lame" were not always homophobic (Chonody & al., 2012). However, it still perpetuates the idea that being gay is abnormal, weird, and lame, which should be avoided (Stollznow, 2020)

It could also be noted that the word *gay* can be said to mean "good as you", as in the book *Good As You: From Prejudice to Pride: 30 years of gay Britain*. However, this is considered to be a false etymology based on activists' slogans used during manifestations (Stollznow, 2020).

Gay is not the more inclusive term to describe people who are not straight/cisgender, as *gay* is more related to gay men, hence the need for another word to include all other people as well (Kulick, 2000). An example of this can be found in the lesbian community where some lesbians do not feel comfortable using *gay* for themselves as it is linked to gay men (Laurie, 2012). The term lesbian has been firstly used in the 18th century to talk about inhabitants of the Lesbos Island located in the Aegean Sea (Stollznow, 2020). Stollznow (2020) explains that it was the home of the famous writer Sapho whose writing was about love no matter people's gender. Sapho became a symbol of women's love in the 18th century, so much so that the word *sapphic* can be used as a synonym for lesbians (2020, p. 110).

3.4. Use of LGBTQ (community)

A way to represent and consider people is to link them to stereotypes and characteristics that they all share. Stereotypes are not inherently pejorative as they create mental representations of people and categories. However, they are restrictive and reductive as they do tend to create a false sense of unity (Boyer, 2017). Though they might be reductive to people's identity, they can also create a community. People who do not fit straight normative ideas, are stereotyped in different ways: they are feminized if they are gay men (such as told by Jayce), they are masculinized if they are women loving women (such as told by Amber and Sam), they are seen as aliens or not humans (such as told by Jean) … Hence it comes to no surprise that people who are stereotyped, are also stigmatized by them. Stigmatization and stereotypes can lead to a creation of community i.e., groups of people seen as one identity. In this case, everything that is not straight, and cisgender will be one big category of people, previously called perverts, deviants, or freaks (see above), this minority created safe spaces and associations to fight back against oppression. The rise of riots and protests in the seventies and eighties in the USA led to the LGBT rights movement, where people who were oppressed for their non-conforming gender identity and sexual orientation were marching together with a sense of community. GLAAD explains that LGBT was used to represent all people within the community – the initialism has later been changed to LGBTQ+ to add more inclusivity. *LGBTQ* has a better sense of inclusivity. However, it still does not encompass all possibilities of identities, therefore

other terms exist such as: *LGBTQIA+*, *LGBTIQ2S+*… However, GLAAD explains that the most common term is *LGBTQ+*.

In this thesis, I will barely use the initialism *LGBTQ+* but I will use *queer community* more frequently. Indeed, not all LGBTQ+ people consider themselves to be queer (Motschenbacher, 2021) and not all people within the LGBTQ+ community correspond to what I consider a member of the queer community. People who abide by normative rules, who follow the characteristics of the "good, well-behaved homosexuals" (Ward & Schneider, 2009, p. 435), still participate in normative behaviours, which is called homonormativity (Milani, 2018).

4. Queer Theory

4.1. Definition of *queer*

Throughout this work, I use *queer* to talk about people who are not straight and/or cisgender. However, this term is not universally understood the same way and there is a significant difference between what is understood in academia and what is understood in popular culture. I will start with the popular culture meaning of queer, which is the meaning I mostly use in this work, and which was one of my criteria for the selection of the participants. Then, I will move on to the use of *queer* in academia and what problems can occur when both meanings mix up together.

4.1.1. Popular definition of *queer*

I will start with the definition given in the OED as it traces back to the origin of the word and it focuses on the use of *queer* in the USA.

> Queer (adj.)
>
> > 1a. Strange, odd, peculiar, eccentric. Also: of questionable character; suspicious, dubious (OED, 2022c)
> >
> > 3. colloquial (originally U.S.). Of a person: homosexual (frequently derogatory and offensive). In later use: denoting or relating to a sexual or

> gender identity that does not correspond to established ideas of sexuality and gender, especially heterosexual norms. (OED, 2022c)

The definitions given in the OED show how *queer* can be used in a derogatory way as its first meaning is "strange" or "odd". It comes as no surprise that it was used against non-straight people as they were seen as strange or ill (as explained in 3.1.). The definition proposed by the OED was the definition that I used when I interviewed queer people. It was important that words such as straight, gay… did not come into my selection of participants as not all members of the LGBTQIA+ community are comfortable with the word *queer*, and some do not identify as such. It is also important to note that there are people who are straight[5] in the queer community, for example, a trans man can be straight but is still queer as he is a transgender person. The OED notes that *queer* is frequently derogatory but not always. Indeed, *queer* is an example of the linguistical reappropriation phenomenon (also called linguistic reclamation).

Literature on linguistic reappropriation defines it as "the phenomenon whereby a stigmatized group revalues an externally imposed negative label by self-consciously referring to itself in terms of that label" (Galinsky & al. in Curzan Anne, 2016, p. 141). Earlier work used *inversion* or only explained the phenomenon without naming it (Curzan, 2016). Curzan's work (2016) analyses linguistic reappropriation thoroughly and she points out the power metaphor behind linguistic reclamation. It is not only a word that is "reappropriated" it is also the power to name people, and consequently, to name oneself (Curzan, 2016). The power of naming concepts, things, people, identities, and desires is always under the jurisdiction of the people in power, in this case, straight people (mostly men, cf Sally McConnell-Ginet). Queer people were never able to define themselves in their own terms and words, straight people always had the upper hand in naming them, Eribon (2012) called it an asymmetry: straight people always defined and explained homosexuality[6], they decided what was and was not considered gay, they were always in a better position to talk about homosexuality, and they always had the habits of rejecting everything LGBTQIA+ people said about themselves. Therefore, the power that the dominant group has, is what is fundamentally being reclaimed. Reclamation can occur in two different ways; it is either pride reclamation or insular reclamation. Pride reclamation

[5] The meaning of *straight* as intended in the interviews will be talked about in section 7.3.
[6] Eribon does not use the word *queer*. Though it is applied to *homosexualité* in his book, it can also be applied to *queerness* in this work.

deals with slurs, words and stereotypes attributed to stigmatized communities that are now used with a sense of pride by the in-group (stigmatized group) but also the out-group, which is the case for *queer*. Meanwhile, insular reclamation deals with pejorative words that are now being used by the in-group and only the in-group such as the N-word (Cervone & al., 2021). For the case of insular reclamation, the words that are prohibited to the out-group are usually replaced by another one deemed neutral: N-word > African American (Curzan, 2016). However, words from both categories can still be used with negative meanings if the intention of the speakers is to humiliate the hearer. Different points of view exist concerning whether reclamation creates a positive meaning to the word being reclaimed. Cervone & al. (2021) claim that it creates a positive meaning and a sense of unity, whilst it could be argued that reclamation is not adding a positive meaning, but the point is to rather bleach its meaning to neutralize the pejorative aspect of the word (Curzan, 2016). In the interviews, all participants used *queer* to define themselves and did not find it insulting if it is used by the out-group (in non-confrontational contexts). Examples of the connotation that *queer* can still hold can be seen in Jayce's interview:

> Jayce: I've been called a queer and a faggot multiple times if that counts.
> JS: And would you use the word queer to describe yourself?
> Jayce: Yes of course. It's not insulting when I use it myself.

Here, Jayce puts *queer* and *faggot* in the same paradigmatic axis, which shows that *queer* can still be used as an insult if the speaker's intention is to provoke or hurt the other person. They all also use *queer* to describe people who are not straight and/or cisgender. Thus, it can then be confirmed that *queer* is indeed a reclaimed term that can be categorized as "pride reclamation".

I will once again note that the use of *queer* presented here only applies to the USA.

4.1.2. Definition of *queer* in the scientific field

In the world of academics, *queer* does not mean non-heterosexual/non-cisgender for all the researchers in the field. Sicurella (2016) explains that it was first used as a linguistic experiment i.e., a signifier without a signified. *Queer* in the academic field is impossible to define, it is an identity without essence (Sicurella, 2016). It has been told that even

defining what *queer* is, goes against the idea of queer and that it destroys the concept of *queerness* (Butler, 1994 in Sicurella, 2016). Indeed, due to the anti-normative ideas of *queer*, categorizing it will go against it. Sicurella (2016) explains that it is not possible to define *queer*, but it is possible to explain what it does. *Queer* is an empty signifier, there is no consensus in the field of academia as to what *queer* means (Motschenbacher, 2021). As it is an empty signifier it can develop multiple meanings and change over time, hence the difference between the popular meaning (where the word went through semantic materialization) and the academic meaning (Motschenbacher, 2021).

Queer in academia is unstable. In this regard, I was confronted with the paradox that was presented in Sicurella's work. If *queer* is claimed as a hierarchic scientific field, it goes against everything that it stands for, which is the destruction of normative ideas (again, this does not define queer, it explains what it does), yet it was not feasible to not explain what *queer* was for the thesis and the interviews. Sicurella's work (2016) is against defining *queer* in academia as it is said that it will create a "queer elite" that rejects criticism over its own structure and principles. I found a solution to this problem by accepting that *queer* is not an identity in the academic field, they are no Queer researchers, but they are queer persons who are researchers (Motschenbacher, 2021). Therefore, I use *queer* in the popular sense throughout the interview as it was in a social setting that those took place. Moreover, the meaning of terms is mostly influenced by their popular use (Barret, 2019). Motschenbacher (2021) explains that though *queer* started empty, it is now accepted to mean non-heterosexual/non-cisgender even in the academic field. Though it can be seen that some non-queer people (pop.) are described as queer (academia) in scientific papers or books about Queer Theory.

An example of non-queer people considering themselves queer (method), is the writer known as bell hooks. Jane Ward (2020) explains that though bell hooks is a cisgender straight woman, she is considered queer (but not gay) because her view and ideas criticize the heteronormative society. This presentation aligns with Marinucci's principles of Queer Theory. Marinucci (2016) considers that everyone has a unique sexuality and a unique relationship with gender, making everyone more or less queer. However, Marinucci (2016) notes that this idea is symbolic and should not be a pretext for straight people to proclaim they are queer if they decide they can get some advantages by claiming queerness. Hence, these ideas help to make Queer Theory even more inclusive and open to debate as never before.

I do not fully agree with Marinucci's statement or Sicurella's refusal to define *queer*. I will point out what I think is the main problem by not defining *queer* and opening queerness to straight and cisgender people. I will take on the examples from the interviews and also one particular event that happened in popular culture in 2022. On the fourteenth of June 2022, TikTok user @Kierabreaugh published her video talking about Zendaya and Tom Holland, a famous couple, saying that the way they act around each other is queer. The tiktoker goes on to explain that they subvert gender roles and expectations that heterosexual couples may have. The TikTok had more than one million views in less than a day and received backlash from the queer community, not only on TikTok but on Twitter as well. I believe this to be an example of the difference between *queer* as in Queer Theory, and *queer* as in not straight/not cisgender. Indeed, the confusion starts with the difference between theory and praxis. Queer Theory, in its name, bears *theory*. The word *theory* in Queer Theory is to be understood as the explanation of how specific relationships relate to specific events, in other words, it reflects generic behaviours throughout specific instances (Wacker, 1998). Moreover, Baker & Balirano (2018) relate that Queer Theory has problems existing outside a theoretical field. In theory, Zendaya and Tom Holland are queer if they deviate from what is expected from a straight couple. In praxis, however, they still remain under the influence of heterosexuality, are actors within its culture, and do not correspond to the popular idea of *queerness*.

The concept of queerness is vague, and it depends on one's view of the world. Its debatable existence has a central place within the scientific field and lots of researchers tried to define and refine the idea of queerness by applying it to society.

4.2. History of Queer Studies[7]

Foucault proposes that genealogies are not another way of exposing the foundations for a scientific paradigm, but it is rather a deconstruction of the theory that is considered to be unified (Amin, 2020). Genealogies are not a search for the origins, they are used to expose and understand the political factors that influenced the construction of categories or paradigms (Butler, 2019; Foucault, 1976). For the sake of tracing back Queer Studies genealogy, even though some definitions differ and that the field could be divided, I will

[7] I use Queer Studies and Queer Theory interchangeably as I consider Queer Studies to be the application of Queer Theory.

consider the field to be unified as people familiar with Queer Theory all understand it as an independent and cohesive field.

Queer Studies' genealogy is a complex case as the authors whose works are credited to the beginning of Queer Theory, were never called "queer works" by the authors themselves; they were all considered to be fundamentals years later (Amin, 2020). For example, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* first published in 1990 is considered to be a must-read for Queer Studies. She published her work in order to challenge the perception of feminist movements but also to challenge her own knowledge and political ideas, she explains that she did not publish it with the intention of starting a new paradigm (Butler, 2019). Butler is not the only one whose work is regarded as the starting point for Queer Theory, Sedgwick put homosexuality as a barrier from Western binaries in 1990 in *Epistemology of the closet* (Amin, 2020). Foucault's definitions of terms such as *sexuality, normativity* and *biopolitics* helped to shape and create an official scientific inquiry (Amin, 2020, p. 21). Foucault (1976) considers sexuality and desires to be shaped by capitalistic ideas: heterosexuality is profitable to society as it will create more money – sexuality is thus monetized, and on the contrary, homosexuality stops the growth of economic power (Ward, 2020). Foucault's normativity principle is said to be at the centre of Queer Theory, as *queer* refers to non-normative identities rather than LGBTQ+ identities (Amin, 2020). Though these works and authors are presented as the foundation of Queer Theory, it is important to note that some of their ideas are now being criticized by the field. Judith Butler's antifoundationalism (Amin, 2020) is not seen as a starting point but as a problem to be solved in current Queer Theory debates**.** Indeed, if followed, her ideas will not only change the entire field of Queer Studies but also annihilate it, as she does not consider queerness to be able to institutionalize itself without going "against-the-grain" (Butler, 1994 in Sicurella, 2016). Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the closet*, though ground-breaking in terms of contradicting the binaries, is now perceived as a work lacking intersectionality as its focus was on white gay men (Amin, 2020; Marinucci, 2016). Therefore, Queer Theory is not a field set in stone and fossilized as the paradigm still changes and expands. For example, Motschenbacher (2021) explains that *queer* needs to be more inclusive of trans identities and people of colour; Judith Butler (2019) in a new edition of *Gender Trouble* explains that if she had to rewrite her work, she will put more emphasis of racial theory and transgender people; William Leap also proposes new openings to African

American in the field of queer linguistics (2021); Lucy Jones (2021) calls for a better understanding of non-binaries identities.

Paradigm change played an important part in the appearance of Queer Theory and its development into Queer Studies and Queer Linguistics. As Kuhn explains, scientific paradigms change and fluctuate the same way political paradigms change; once they do not provide enough resolutions to society's problem, they have to change and adapt or make place for a new paradigm that will correspond to the needs of the society (Kuhn 1970; Marinucci, 2016.). Marinucci (2016), based on Kuhn (1970), explains how the shift of the paradigm of sexuality can be seen as the starting point for the field of Queer Studies. The paradigm of sexuality, that came to existence around the late nineteenth century (Foucault, 1976), put homosexuality at the margin of society whilst heterosexuality was considered normal.[8] This paradigm was based on western ideas of sex and deviance but also based on Christianity, as Foucault (1976) explained that Christianity silenced sexual discourse and made them taboo. The *scientia sexualis* (Foucault, 1976), started to change once societies and people change their views on sexuality and gender. One of the starting points would be the riots of Stonewall in 1969. The Stonewall riot is considered to be the beginning of the gay liberation movement (Marinucci, 2016), though other movements were already present at the time, such as the homophile movement in the fifties. The riots started when policemen raided the bar (StoneWall Inn.) as they claimed it went against decency – because there were many drag performers, some display of non-heterosexual love and different gender identities. The Stonewall bar was mostly frequented by people of colour, which given the evolution of Queer Theory can be seen as ironic, as Queer Theory and Queer Studies were predominantly white. This revolution (with the women's rights movement and Black civil rights movement) started to impact political parties and societies (Marinucci, 2016), which according to Kuhn (1970) will lead to a revolution within sciences as well. Bourdieu (2014) also comments on political change as he explains that what is considered "discours hérétique" helps to break societal barriers and change the scientific field. Hence, the paradigm of sexuality had to change and adapt to follow societal changes. Marinucci (2016) and Kuhn (1970) proposed three ways in which a paradigm can adapt itself: the crisis in the paradigm could find its solution within said paradigm; other times the crisis cannot be resolved at the time and scientists of the field will wait for a

[8] I refer to homosexuality and heterosexuality as concepts constructed in *Psychopathia sexualis* published by Heinrich Kaan in 1846.

better understanding, or for a new generation of researchers to tackle on the crisis; finally, a new paradigm can emerge and will have to fight to gain acceptance and relevance. The paradigm of sexuality followed the third path, as a new paradigm emerged and tried to take its space within academia (Marinucci, 2016). Interestingly, the new paradigm of sexuality which firstly focused on gay men and lesbian women also had its crisis as a crisis can happen every time in a paradigm because they are always unanswered questions and unattainable knowledge (Kuhn, 1970). The new crisis can be seen in the multiple changes of denomination for people who did not conform to heterosexuality, for example, the change from homosexuals, to gay, to LGBTQ+ or queer (Marinucci, 2016). Hence it was clear that older paradigms could not change to fit the multiple identities, a new paradigm had to be constructed to resolve the crisis, which lead to Queer Theory. The need to create a new paradigm is understandable as Kuhn (1970) explains that if one rejects a paradigm without accepting a new one, the researcher will reject science itself.

Queer Theory then came to life as a way to find solutions to the crisis of older paradigms. As I already explained, many "founding" works were not published with the idea of resolving the crisis. Indeed, it is believed that Queer Theory was coined in the late eighties by Teresa de Lauretis (Halperin, 2003 in Marinucci 2016, p. 44). At the time, *queer* was used either as an insult or by group activists that were reclaiming the word. Teresa de Lauretis for a conference in 1990, decided to link the popular word *queer* with the academic word *theory* to create Queer Theory (Marinucci, 2016). It has to be said that the conference on Queer Theory did not receive praise, as a lot of researchers found the use of *queer* to be distasteful or even insulting given the pejorative meaning that the word can have (Marinucci, 2016) It was also received with criticisms as it tried to change the paradigm of sexuality, as Milani (2018) explained, Queer Theory was seen as an attack on those with more conservative views of sexuality and gender.

Once Queer Theory was coined and works of authors started to be influenced by the paradigm, Queer Theory developed as Queer Studies as it spread throughout numerous disciplines (Amin, 2020). In recent years, most of the work published is said to somewhat follow Queer Theory ideas (Motschenbacher, 2021).

4.2.1. Ideas and subjects of study

In previous sections, Queer Theory is mentioned but never defined. It would be impossible for this thesis to go on without giving it a definition, though a word of caution is required. As it was already explained in section 4.1. defining *queer* is complex and there is no consensus as to what it should be. Given those circumstances, defining Queer Theory is as complex as defining *queer* though its implications are easier to expose thus making it easier to define. As already hinted in the section above, *queer* can be understood either with the popular meaning or the academic meaning. Queer Theory, given its origin, is defined within the world of academia. Therefore, I do want to emphasize that although researchers can follow Queer Theory, if they are cisgender and/or heterosexual, I will not consider them to be queer. Other researchers will not agree with this point of view such as Jane Ward (2022) who classified a straight cisgender woman as queer as she had non-normative views or Zottola (2021) who agreed with Livia's claim (2000) that anybody can be someone else's queer**.**

Queer Theory, then, deals with normative behaviours and how society constructs them. The paradigm of sexuality based on heterosexuality was unsalvageable even after its change with the women's rights movement, which still based its ideas and principles on heterosexuality (Wittig, 2018; Butler, 2019; Marinucci, 2016). Indeed, the first feminist movements were based on white heterosexual women, the idea that gender/sex were synonyms and its fight to preserve heterosexuality could not save the paradigm, as lesbian women, trans individuals, and gender non-conforming people were still not included (Wittig 2018). Butler's (2019) argument that feminist movements were in a crisis as they wanted to preserve the idea that women could be seen as a monolith can be considered to be one crisis of the paradigm of sexuality that was present at the time. Butler (2019) extended her thoughts as she explained that feminism could not move past its problems if it still tries to define its subject in terms of *woman*. The idea of reimagining categories of gender and sexual identities is already a step towards Queer Theory. However, Butler's idea of deconstructing *woman* has been dropped as Queer Theory does not necessarily mean the destruction of the binarism (Marinucci, 2016). Indeed, Queer Theory does not destroy the binary paradigm (called "heterosexual matrix" by Judith Butler), it tries to avoid it. Instead of defining individuals by creating a boundary around what they are or are not, Queer Theory proposes to define individuals through social constructionism

(Marinucci, 2016). It does not mean that Queer Theory is not compatible with already established words such as *heterosexual, homosexual, woman, man…* as Queer Theory does not want to destroy these words/categories, but it wants to expand its meaning and characteristics based on cultural development (Marinucci, 2016). Cultural development is an essential part of Queer Theory, for example, one will be considered homosexual in culture X only if there's a word that applies to homosexuality and if this word can be applied to their identity (Marinucci, 2016). By expanding the already existing categories, Queer Theory tries to reconceptualize the dominant discourse about gender and identity (Motschenbacher & Stegu 2013) and tries to put forth problems with norms in our society (Milani, 2018). Queer Theory can then be summarized as:

> […] capable of resisting essentialism while simultaneously affirming the experiences of people for whom the established categories are problematic, as well as people for whom the established categories are unproblematic (Marinucci 2016, 47).

I will point out that straight/cisgender people are included in this definition as "for whom the established categories are problematic" refers to them.

4.2.2. Criticisms and problems

However, multiple problems arise concerning Queer Theory, some of which were already presented, for example, the different meanings given to the word *queer*. Another interesting point relates to the heavy influence of Western ideologies within Queer Theory. As it takes its roots in the United States of America, it has to be understood within the context of that society. As already explained, a parallel can be made between the Stonewall riots and Queer Theory. This is why, many researchers often argue that Queer Theory cannot be universal and is exclusive (Leap, 2021; Jones, 2021; Muñoz, 2009). To tackle this issue, Queer Theory influenced other researchers who created their own paradigms with their cultural heritage in mind, such as *Teoria do cu* in Brazil, which aims at translating Queer Theory into Latin American scientific institutions (Nicholus, 2020).

The major problem that Queer Theory has been facing is rooted in the way it has been conceived. The way Queer Theory works as an anti-system, anti-hierarchy, and anti-

norm… does not mix well with the world of academia. For example, it could be argued that all the previous sections of this work go against Queer Theory as I tried to explain it. The notion of "Big Nouns" can help to understand this problem. Big nouns can either be defined as "entry tickets" or the "currency of the academic market" (Sicurella, 2016). Sicurella adapts Bourdieu's idea, which sees linguistic exchange as an economic exchange to well-known or prestigious academic fields; a researcher will put their research within the paradigm X to profit symbolically in terms of distinctions (Sicurella, 2016). The race to profit creates self-censorship as it will not be profitable for a researcher to deviate from X hence the research will give up looking at X critically, thus creating what is called a "Big Noun", which are ideas/paradigm/methods that are immune to criticisms (Sicurella, 2016). I found Sicurella's work to be eye-opening as it asks if Queer Theory can be considered a Big Noun, as it is now immensely popularized within social sciences. Butler, Jagose, Morton and Halperin, Malinowitz (in Sicurella, 2016) all argue that the academic professionalization of queer is against Queer Theory; Queer Theorist can be seen as a privileged group, above critics and might even become exclusive in its practice (Sicurella, 2016). However, Sicurella does not agree with this view and tries to find a way to avoid it: first, they proposed that Queer Theorist should always reflect on their own utilization of categories and norms to avoid a false sense of immunity to criticism, and they proposed the creation of a queer agency that will make sure queer stays a free-floating signifier, hence eliminating the risks of hierarchization (Sicurella, 2016). Although I agree with the self-critical approach, I do not concur with the idea of the queer agency. Sicurella does not provide any directions to which this agency should take place or how it should be formed, they only provide us with more questions. I also believe that Queer Theory can still exist if the meaning of queer is defined. As I previously said, one can be a [Queer Theorist] but that does not make them a [Queer] [Theorist], though they should avoid expressing themselves as *queer* in non-academic groups, or in groups where people are queer (popular meaning).

To be more critical of my own point of view, I do agree that this approach excludes non-queer people (popular meaning) in the definition of *queer* in the world of academia. However, there is no research or papers that are free of one's political agenda (Motschenbacher, 2011). I believe that meanings are not to be debated within a defined circle of researchers, but rather considered by their popular usage:

> JS: Have you ever heard someone refer to themselves as “queer” though they were cisgender or straight?
>
> Amber: Yes, I have. I have heard some friends during my master’s who claimed they were queer though they was straight… A bit funny to think they’re claiming our identities. I do not consider them to be queer though.
>
> Sam: It’s weird. It’s not because you read Queer Theory papers that suddenly you are queer. I read a lot about racial theory… does not make me black.

Jayce and Jean did not comment on this issue. Amber and Sam, however, expressed their concerns about people “claiming” queer identity. It is rather interesting to see the verb *to claim* being used. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines *to claim* as “to take as the rightful owner” (2021). In the context of queerness and identity, it is interesting to note that *to claim* can have a sense of power. Indeed, if one claims something, it creates a power relationship between those who could claim it and those who could not. Here, non-queer people claiming the word *queer* takes away its cultural significance for queer people who reclaimed the word and used it as a symbol of unity and pride. It could even be said that non-queer people using the word *queer* to describe themselves participate in the oppression of queer people. Indeed, non-queer people have to power to appropriate *queerness* without consequences, and they also have to ability to silence queer people and tell them whether or not they should be offended (Eribon, 2012).

Sicurella’s point (2016) and examples from the interview display that Queer Theory is a field under constant tension and debate. Queer Theory is also a field where one has to be careful to stay critical of one’s work, such as the way CDA stayed critical (2016, 78).

5. Ethos and the queer community

Considering that the word *queer* is debatable, it could be intriguing to understand how the queer community constructs itself in terms of language. Didier Eribon (2012) supposes that the identity of queer people starts the second they are insulted:

> Au commencement, il y a l'injure. Celle que tout gay peut entendre à un moment ou à un autre de sa vie, et qui est le signe de vulnérabilité psychologique et sociale… (Eribon, 2012).

As the insult is the starting point of one's identity, it is through it that queer people will construct and understand themselves (Eribon, 2012). In the interviews, Jean explains:

> Jean: I was called a queer before knowing what it meant. I think I was around five or six years old. But I understood very quickly that it was not something good to be.

This phenomenon can be linked to two aspects: the individual insulted becomes the object of discourse. The majority will have all the power to define and shape what the individual is, and the individual, even if they do not understand the insult, will create their identity around it (Eribon, 2012). In this case, Jean knew that *queer* was meant as "something bad", therefore it is something that will have to be rejected by the individual, even if the characteristics can be applied to that person (Jouhandeau & Bachelot, 2012). For example, Jean rejected her queer identity for so long that she tried everything to "fit in", she rejected everything that was considered "feminine" and only followed what is considered to be "masculine" interests. To the extreme, the rejection of one's queerness is called "internalized homophobia" (Baker, 2019). Therefore, the insult will not only create the individual but will also create a false version of that individual (if they decide to reject to insult) (Eribon, 2012).

It is, then, the insult that will create the individuals but also the community. The LGBTQ+ community does not exist on its own, as queer people do not exist in a society that does not separate them from the rest (Eribon, 2012). Indeed, there is not a "universal

gay identity" (Eribon, 2012; Baker, 2019). However, the community still exists and can be seen thanks to their "ethos collectif" (Amossy, 2015, p. 156). The individual creates their identity from another person's perceptive, but also from their community. The case for the queer community can be summarized as such:

> Pejorative adjectives → Individual becomes object within the discourse → Creation of identity through the insults → Individual ethos to collective/shared ethos → Linguistics reappropriation.

The slurs used against the individual will give them substance to create their own identity, people with shared slurs will create a shared ethos which will result in linguistics reappropriation. I believe the creation of community and shared ethos precedes linguistic reappropriation for the case of the queer community. Indeed, as explained above, *queer* was reclaimed at the start of the gay rights movement. The shared ethos that was created during the demonstrations created the opportunity for reappropriation. However, the shared ethos leads to a simplification of the individuals (Amossy, 2015). In this case, the ethos was mostly dominated by cis white men, hence the "we" did not represent the entire community.

The queer community created its ethos through non-queer discourse. Therefore, I wanted to study how the queer community conceptualized straightness and if it could be linked to its own origin.

6. **Analysing Queer people's discourse**

Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) played a significant part in this thesis. Indeed, as ideologies are shared and expressed within discourse, I used methods taken from CDA to approach the interviews but used them for the context of queer people, which led the investigation to enter the paradigm of Queer Linguistics.

6.1.1. Queer Linguistics

Queer Theory has an impact on academic and scientific fields: all disciplines within humanities can be seen through Queer Theory and especially linguistics (Motschenbacher & Stegu, 2013). The paradigm shift of sexuality explained with Kuhn's ideas can also be seen in relation to Queer Linguistics: it started as a sociolinguistic sub-field where scholars analysed the way gay and lesbian individuals spoke, which is referred to as Lavender Linguistics (Motschenbacher & Stegu, 2013). The term *lavender* is used because the colour was once linked to same-sex desire and the smell was linked to effeminate men (Stollznow, 2020). The first appearance of Queer Linguistics was in 1997 in the volume *Queerly Phrased* by Livia and Hall (Motschenbacher, 2011). Since then, Queer Linguistics research attracted more attention: as for example, with the creation of the *Journal of Language and Sexuality* in 2011 or with the *Lavender Languages and Linguistics Conference* (Motschenbacher & Stegu, 2013). More recently, for the 10th anniversary of the *Journal of Language and Sexuality*, multiple researchers proposed ideas and theories to expand the field of Queer Linguistics. If Queer Theory is considered to apply to westernized countries, the same goes for Queer Linguistics. Therefore, linguists should try to expand their views and include more people of colour in their research, include more transgender participants and try to step away from the colonial mindset that might be present within research (Motschenbacher, 2021; Jones, 2021; Leap, 2021).

As of now, Queer Linguistics follows much of the poststructuralist and social constructionist approaches to language i.e., they do not see identity as something stable or pre-given. For example, humans do not have an identity already created that they reflect in language, but rather the opposite: they create their identity, which is fluid in time, through language (Motschenbacher & Stegu, 2013; Motschenbacher, 2011). However, social constructionists and poststructuralists do not share the same point of view, for example, social constructionists leave the biological elements out of the equation, they do not question it, hence, they cling to biological sex whilst Queer Linguistics will focus on socially constructed gender ideas (Motschenbacher & Stegu, 2013).

Queer Linguistics also tends to focus on discourse rather than focusing on more structural linguistics aspects of language, however, some research can be found that fits in

the Queer Linguistics paradigm[9]. Discourse within Queer Linguistics is understood in the Foucauldian sense, i.e., "the practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Motschenbacher, 2011, p. 152).

6.1.2. Queer Discourse Analysis

Queer Linguistics applied to discourse analysis, can be referred to as Queer Discourse Analysis. However, the field and its appellation can be debated as it does not differ vaguely from Queer Linguistics. Although it is debatable, I believe that for the sake of the thesis, it will be interesting as the work presented here can be considered to be Queer Discourse Analysis.

Motschenbacher and Stegu (2013) consider that Queer Discourse Analysis can be understood in two different ways, each of them relating and focusing on different aspects of linguistics. The first possible reading corresponds to Queer Studies and is understood as Queer [Discourse Studies]; this field takes from Queer Theory and applies its ideas to discourse analysis; the second possible reading is [Queer Discourse] Studies, which will focus on analysing queer people discourse without the influence of Queer Studies (Motschenbacher & Stegu, 2013). The first reading of Queer Discourse Analysis can be subdivided into three different categories: heteronormative discourse, *non*-hetero*normative* discourse (non-normative heterosexualities) and *non-hetero*normative discourse (all forms of non-heterosexuality) (2013, p. 527).

Within this field, the interview and the study proposed here, follow both the understandings. Indeed, it is the discourse of queer people that is being analysed and it is analysed with Queer Theory in mind.

6.1.3. Queer Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis

Considering how Queer Linguistics analyse ideologies within discourse, it could be argued that it does not differ from Critical Discourse Analysis. However, William Leap argues that CDA and Queer Linguistics differ; CDA proposes analyses of naturalizations and "social wrong" (Leap, 2018, p. 676) but does not necessarily focus on normative authority around sexual discourses, the performativity of gender, and the normative authority behind

[9] See: Peterson (2016) and Motschenbacher (2014)

gender and sexual orientations (Leap, 2018). Moreover, whilst listing the social fields that CDA can analyse, some authors do not include genders that are outside of the binary. As an example, Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) listed gender but only to talk about womanhood. Therefore, Queer Linguistics might use the foundation of CDA to analyse discourse, its focus on normative gender/binary discourse and its study of power and privilege related to it will separate it from CDA.

7. Queer Discourse Analysis: Queer people's way of expressing non-queer identities

7.1. Research question

This thesis is presented for the obtention of a master's degree in linguistics proposed by the University of Liège, Belgium. Throughout the academic journey that I followed, I was interested in discourse and especially the representation of oppressed minorities (especially queer people) within discourse. However, I also started to get interested in power shifts within discourse. Not only influenced by my personal as a queer person myself, but also by the growth of content made by queer people relating their experiences with non-queer people (such as TikToks, Tweets and Instagram posts), I submitted the idea of this thesis: analysing the way oppressed groups describe dominant groups.

7.1.1. Hypotheses

All the hypotheses have to be taken into the context in which they were created. They were based on what was presented in popular (queer) media at the time of the thesis, which is the year 2021-2022. They came from various resources, such as social media such as TikTok or Twitter, Youtube or even Discord servers. Based on the interviews I wanted to analyse the following ideas:

1. The definition of *straight* and *heterosexuality* can be debated within the community. I hypothesise that straight and heterosexual do not connote the same meanings and implications and they might be context based.
2. The homophobic linguistics resources used by non-queer people against queer people can be reappropriated by queer people to talk about non-queer people.

Those were my first hypotheses. Another emerged after the interviews, which was talked about in the second set of interviews with the participants:

3. Queer people will not describe a cisgender straight woman the same way they describe a cisgender straight man.

7.2. Method

7.2.1. Context

As previously said, this thesis based itself on interactions with queer people. The work presented here does not aim to be quantitative, but qualitative. Indeed, I believe it is in the best interest of researchers to include the researcher entirely within the researcher. I see the participants as the ones who own the knowledge. Moreover, given the role of science and the way researchers treated queer people, I did not want to participate in the exclusion of queer people as actors in research. The difference between "savoirs profanes" and "savoirs savants" is rooted in elitism (Frère, 2015) which does not go in accordance with Queer Theory—by extension, the way I approach research. I believe, in the case of discourse analysis or any sociological-oriented field, that academics should analyse critically and with impartiality the discourse of their participants. Throughout the master's degree, the emphasis on critical thinking and analysis was at the centre of discussion, I wanted to apply critical thinking to understand with a somewhat neutral point of view how minorities construct heterosexuality in their discourse.

However, the premise of analysing with a neutral point of view could be argued in the case of my thesis. I find this criticism to be founded because I am myself part of the queer community. The existence of biases and how to avoid them was also a particular problem that was presented during different courses. It is true that I could have been influenced by my own opinions and discursive methods. This is why I chose a distinct sample of participants, although they are queer, all my participants are native in English and from the United States – which do not correspond to my characteristics. It is also true that the queer culture that is present in Belgium can be influenced by the USA (Martel & al., 2018), I would not say that they are equal. Although it is impossible to set aside one's

entire biases (Motschenbacher, 2011), I also tried to put my own biases and ideas hidden from the participants; I never directly proposed terms related to straight culture; I kept the questions towards them and their lives. The only influence I might have over them was that they might still see me as "a researcher" who studies them, which could have led them to be extremely careful of the language that they use, as it is a phenomenon that has been recorded in scientific literature (Arnold & Greco, 2016).

7.2.2. Interviews

I interviewed four persons individually. All had to have certain characteristics: they all had to self-identify as queer, be from the United States, and have English as their native language. The age range had to be between 16 to 25 which roughly corresponds to the age range of generation Z. Multiple factors influenced how I chose those parameters. I wanted people from the USA with English as their native language, as the word *queer* and its meaning originated in the USA. I wanted people to self-identify as queer as everyone has a different opinion on what queer is, although the participants all agreed that it meant non-cisgender and/or heterosexual. Finally, I wanted people who were between sixteen and twenty-five years old because the target demographic of the media platforms on which I based my hypotheses, was the same age range.

The participants are composed of four people; two persons whom I personally know from a language exchange program, whilst the other two were met through a Discord server. Discord servers can be an amazing way to find participants as they function as a community of practice. A community of practice is defined as a group of people coming together on their own terms, Wenger (1998) explains that a community of practice can be defined by three key concepts: mutual engagements (here they all accepted the terms and conditions of using a discord server); a joint enterprise (they joined a particular server that is about one specific topic); shared repertoire (here they use the same pattern to talk about their interests). Therefore, I tried to find discord servers created by queer people, for queer people. The queer community seen as a community of practice can be paradoxical, as CoP should tackle communities that are not based on pre-determined characteristics. I believe analysing the queer community from this point of view can be relevant for two reasons. Although the community was formed by non-queer people (i.e., us versus them), the queer community today is seen as a second family and a supposedly safe place for queer people

(Ward, 2022). Queer people can decide whether or not to partake in queer culture, hence creating a CoP if they decide to do so. The queer community as a CoP can also lead to a better understanding of language use, as it can be used to analyse language in a natural context and because the community is not just analysed but also engages with the researcher. As I was not able to go to the USA and find queer communities, using Discord to find a community of practice was an interesting solution. Discord is an application that allows its users to create private or public servers with different chatrooms. There are millions of servers, and there are servers for about anything. Discord is also mostly used by people from the United States; hence it was a better fit to find participants. The servers that were used to find participants were: Chaotic Queers and Gay Geeks.

All participants had to sign a consent form[10] before the interview. The interviews took place between the 3rd of May and the 14th of June. Two sets of interviews were made. All the interviews happened online, either through Discord or Instagram and were recorded. The first set of interviews was semi-directed as I followed a questionnaire with broad questions. I believe semi-directive interviews were the best method for this thesis as they let space for the participants to talk and express themselves freely without them feeling too restricted. Following the first set of interviews, I interviewed them again to go back to what was said. Doing two sets of interviews was useful as it helped to go into more depth. In total eight interviews were done and lasted around 30-45 minutes each. The interviews were transcribed and analysed manually first as it was not an excessive amount.

I realize, however, that having two participants whom I personally know and two participants who were strangers, probably changed the dynamic of the conversations. Hence, it could have created a less-natural environment. Doing the interview online could also influence the conversations. Therefore, it is important to keep these factors in mind.

7.3. Straight culture and straightness

Throughout the different points that were discussed, I used *straight* or *non-queer people* without giving a definition. As explained, non-queer people usually defined themselves as what they are not, rather than what they are (Eribon, 2012; Baker, 2019; Motschenbacher, 2021). During the interviews, discussions around straightness emerged. One of the

[10] See appendix 1: Consent Form

hypotheses was that *straight* and *heterosexual* were not synonyms and that they were used to describe different phenomena.

7.3.1. Definition of *straight*

Straightness or being straight, in Western societies is understood as what Judith Butler calls the "heterosexual matrix" (2019); A child born with a penis, will be considered a man and a child born with a vagina will be considered a woman, both of these children are seen as perfect opposite and are expected, in the future, to form a (sexual) relationship to procreate. This definition puts forward two principles: straight people have to be cisgender and men and women are opposites.

If straight people have to be cisgender, one can wonder what adjective has to be used for transgender people. Let's take for example Jean who, when asked about straight relationships as a transwoman, said:

> Jean: It's funny to think about it. If being straight is a woman with a man, yes, I am in straight passing relationships sometimes. If being straight is a man with a penis and a woman with a vagina… well then, it's another story.
> JS: Straight passing?
> Jean: Yes, people can't tell that I'm trans, so when they see me and my boyfriend on the street, they see a straight couple but I'm not straight.

Jean's comment confirms the idea that behind heterosexuality, the idea of being cisgender is implied. Indeed, "it's another story" relates to the fact that not all transgender people go under sexual reassignment surgery. Also, Jean differentiates between "straight-passing" relationships and "straight" relationships. Interestingly, the idea that one person in the relationship not being straight does not create a straight relationship is debatable. On this topic, Amber who is in a relationship with a straight man said:

> Amber: I'm bi but my boyfriend is not. We're very much a straight couple though.

The definition of straight is still not clear even with the interviews. I believe that defining *straight* (and at the same time *"homosexuality"*) through a queer lens is not achievable as those two concepts create a clear cut on the spectrum of sexuality and reinforce normative descriptions, which results in Amber and Jean's definitions to be paradoxical. It is interesting that not being able to define heterosexuality is the direct consequence of the power dynamic that heterosexuality has over queerness. Audre Lorde, a black lesbian poet said: "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house". As queerness was created through straight people's discourse, it has no power to surpass its creator; heterosexuality created queerness, hence queerness cannot define its creator except by saying that they are not queer. Wittig (2018) defines heterosexuality as a concept that was made possible by force and dominance (p. 22) and that exists through discourse; heterosexuality is said and shown. Jane Ward (2022) explains heterosexuality through straight culture which takes its root in oppression, dominance and lies. It seems then, that straightness is not definable, yet all the participants used the words *straight, heterosexual(s),* and *heterosexuality.* In the second set of interviews, Amber wanted to add more depth to her statement:

> Amber: I said that we're a straight couple, yes, we are, we don't get insulted on the streets and we have straight privilege. It's straight because people perceive us that way. Our relationship's dynamic might not be stereotypically straight but we're not a queer straight couple because he's not queer.

Amber's statement puts forward the idea of "queer straight couple." A queer straight couple is a couple where both partners are queer in some way. For example, a transman in a relationship with a transwoman will be considered to be a straight couple in the eyes of society, but the couple is fundamentally queer. Amber also used *to perceive*, once again, the denomination of sexuality is created through the eyes of someone else. Amossy (2010) says that "Je" (I) always emerge when someone else is present. Marinucci (2016) explains that homosexuality is only present in a society that has words to describe it; heterosexuality follows the same pattern. Although heterosexuality is the creator of queerness, its social meaning is as variable as its creation. Heterosexuality is still something that is non-queer, but it gains its meaning in context.

The difficulties in defining heterosexuality are the reason why I chose to use the word "non-queer". In the eyes of society, some queer people might be in a straight relationship, although they are not straight; some straight people might be in a queer relationship, although they are not queer (i.e., people whose partner transitioned and stayed with that partner).

7.4. Usage of *straight(s)* and *heterosexual(s)*

It is a known fact within the queer community that the word *gay* is preferred over the term *homosexual(s)*, especially if the latter is used as a noun and not an adjective (GLAAD). In this part, I focused on the use of *straight(s)* and *heterosexual(s)* by the participants.

7.4.1. Use of *straight(s)*

Throughout all the interviews, all participants used the word *straight*. It was mostly used as an adjective that is followed by *people* or preceded by *being* – which corresponds to the usage of *gay* as Motschenbacher shows in his study in 2021. Indeed, *being gay* and *gay people* were the most occurrences in which the word was used (Motschenbacher, 2021). However, an interesting use of *straight* was also present but was only shown in Jayce and Sam's interviews. In their interviews, *straight* was not only used as an adjective but also as a noun:

> Jayce: I get that the straights can't understand the impact that they have on us. But it's traumatizing to have your identity always up to debate you know.

> Sam: I really do not care if the straights are uncomfortable around me. I'm not living for them or to be accepted by them.

Using *straight* as a noun reduces the individuals to one characteristic of their identity, which is a process usually done by dominant groups (Zottola, 2022). However, the value of using *straight* as a noun is not to be compared with the use of *the gays*. The term *the gays* used by a straight person is often seen as pejorative (Motschenbacher, 2021) and is proscribed (GLAAD). Neither Jayce nor Sam argued that saying *the straights* was

pejorative. I believe that using *the straights* is used symbolically, it tries to reach a state of equilibrium within discourse. As Fairclough (2010) explains, ideologies and power, can all be analysed through the effect that they have on social events, practices, and structures. The dominant group using a nominalized adjective to talk about the minority group creates an imbalance of power within the discourse. To tackle this imbalance, the minority group will follow the same process used by the dominant group, they will nominalize an adjective to talk about the dominant group. In this case, straight people created an imbalance by using the terms *the gays*, *the homosexuals*, *the queers* which resulted in the queer community using *the straights*.

It could be also noted that in the two cases of *straight* (noun) in the interviews, they were used in context with negative feelings. Jayce explains the psychological impact of casual homophobia and Sam's usage of *do not care* implies a negative attitude. It is understandable that using *the straights* might be related to negative contexts as the use of *the gays* is considered to be negative (Motschenbacher, 2021).

7.4.2. Use of *heterosexual(s)*

Although the word *straight* was mostly used to talk about heterosexuality, the term *heterosexual(s)* was also present. The term was also associated with *people*. *Heterosexual(s)* was also mainly used as an adjective, but it was also found as a noun, with a shortened variant: *the heteros*. I believe the same principle that applies to *the straights* also applies to *the heterosexuals/the heteros.* The term *heteros* is a reaction to the imbalance created by the term *homos* (short for homosexuals). However, the context in which *heteros* was used differs from the context of *the straights*:

> Sam: But it's like in memes and such. Like you know the meme that was on Twitter? Like" the heteros are upseteros" or something?

The use of *heteros* here is influenced by two different factors. Sam refers to it as a meme[11], which is created to joke about something. In this case, it is to joke about heterosexual people. If the support that it takes place is supposed to be funny, the link between *heteros* and *upset(eros)* contrasts this idea. The use of *heteros* is linked to negative situations but

[11] See appendix "Heteros are upseteros"

portrayed in a humorous format. None of the other participants used *heteros* in the interviews.

7.4.3. Straight or heterosexuals?

One of the hypotheses was that *heterosexual* and *straight* might not be used in the same context. However, in the interviews, both were used within the same context, and all followed the same pattern in terms of nominalization. The analysis of the interviews did not show significant differences. In the second set of interviews, when asked if they considered *straight* and *heterosexual* to be different, the only difference was noted by Jayce when he explained:

> Jayce: … Heterosexual is used in formal writing. With my friends I just use straight.

Using *heterosexual* in formal writing or setting can be linked to the creation of the terms. Such as the term *homosexual*, its creation was firstly used within the scientific field. Hence, it would make sense that *heterosexual* is more relevant in formal contexts.

The results from the interview did not give any information to answer the hypothesis. Some conclusions could be made; differences between *straight* and *heterosexual* might not be relevant enough for the participants; the lack of data could be due to the nature of the interviews, as it is a small sample of people and that it was not a "natural" conversation; or there is a discrepancy between everyday language and language used in the media (i.e., tv shows, Youtube videos). The difference between everyday language and media language is well attested in Lits (2005). The meanings of *straight* and *heterosexual* then could depend on the media that one consumes, as for example, in the Youtube TV Shows UNHhhh produced by WoWPresents, the hosts explain that *straight* refers to people who partake in straight culture, whereas *heterosexual* refers only to the sexual attraction between a man and a woman. Therefore, I would encourage deeper investigation on this subject as the study did not have any proof of differences in usage and meanings.

7.5. Influence of queerphobic constructions

The queer community is subject to multiple discourses made about them. As already explained, the slurs affect and create their identity. In this part of the thesis, I will start with queerphobic constructions and see how they might or might not impact queer people's discourse about non-queer people.

7.5.1. Definition of queerphobic behaviours

It is useful to determine what can be considered to be queerphobic behaviours within discourse as it can help to understand queer people's discourse about cis-heterosexuality.

Homophobia is defined as "the irrational fear, abhorrence, and dislike of homosexuality and of those who engage in it" (Yep, 2002, p. 165). The definition can be used to fit the purpose of this study if *homosexuality* is replaced with *queerness*. Yep (2002) explains that homophobia does not englobe the entirety of discrimination made against queer people. One of the reasons put forward is that homophobia, just like the term homosexuality, has a sense of "gay men." I do not intend to retrace the history of queerphobic behaviours and practices, but I ought to reflect that although numerous articles will deal with "homophobia," I will consider them to deal with queerphobic behaviours. Yep (2002) decides to use *heteronormativity* to talk about behaviours that oppress queer people. Heteronormativity is defined as "the presumption and assumption that all human experiences is unquestionably and automatically heterosexual" (Yep, 2002, p. 168). Heteronormativity finds its playfield within discourse, as it is through discourse that the foundation of heteronormativity is created and upheld (Wittig, 2018).

7.5.2. Discriminatory practices in discourse

Discriminatory practices were already expressed in the interviews, such as: use of slurs, metaphors used in religious contexts, power imbalance, nominalization etc. The impact of stigmatization of the word *queer, homosexual(s)* was already presented, but as one of the hypotheses is centred around the influence of queerphobic practices on discourse, I believe that it deserves a better understanding and a deeper analysis.

7.5.2.1. Slurs and insults

Slurs and insults are an interesting topic as one lexical item can be considered to be a slur for some people, but not considered one for others. Stollznow (2020), explains that this phenomenon is the reason why dictionaries are flawed in their definition of slurs or insults. Indeed, Stollznow (2020) exemplifies that dictionaries' definitions of slurs can be outdated, obscure or not relevant anymore. Moreover, dictionaries do not analyse what is causing the offence. To be offended is also regarded as a sign of weakness whereas the ability to offend is regarded as a sign of power in some spaces (Stollznow, 2020). What is predominant in Stollznow's ideas is that insults and offences are *taken* and not *given*, i.e., it is the person's fault if they are offended (2020, p.5). The person who is offended falls in an unending circle as, if they speak about the offence, they will be even more ostracized by the offenders, if they play in the offender's game and participate in the offence, the act of offending and stigmatizing is still present (Eribon, 2012; Stollznow, 2020). The offenders will often dismiss that they were being offensive as if it was the offender's role to determine what is or is not offensive. Jayce's interview is relevant for that matter:

> Jayce: I'm always on Twitter and Tiktok, so I'm around a lot of queer people all the time, I usually watch Tiktok about either video games, anime, or videos from queertok. And it baffles me how many videos I see of straight people refusing to realize that what they said is transphobic, like hello? How would you know better than me if something is transphobic or not?

Queertok is a subdivision of TikTok. It refers to the kind of content they are seeing on their For You Page. Here, Jayce has a lot of queer-related Tiktoks where people talk about their experiences with transphobic comments made by heterosexual people who do not consider these comments transphobic. This is a perfect example of Stollznow's explanation. It is also in accordance with Eribon's comment (2012) on insults and identity; heterosexual(s) will always have the power to reject queer people's opinions. As a corollary, it is complicated to extract oneself from offences as speaking up about will lead to many criticisms, Stollznow relates an increase of criticisms against "PC Culture."

PC Culture, short for political correctness culture, is often used to describe a sort of self-censorship in order to be more inclusive and to have a more thoughtful use of language (Fairclough, 2010). People who are put into the PC category, are not the actors of the categorization, it is always by another party that they are categorized (Stollznow, 2020). PC culture is said to be the creation of either a more sensitive generation of people who were overprotected by their parents or because people want to put on a show with their good virtues (Stollznow, 2020). However, PC culture can be the result of the globalization and development of technologies. Bourdieu considers that discourses have a value that can be either symbolic or economic (Bourdieu, 2014). Karl Marx (2008) considered the market to always be expanding for profits. If discourses are seen as a market value, it is no surprise that they seem to also try to expand and reach a mass target (Bourdieu, 2014). Therefore, it is understandable that discourses tend to become more inclusive, as they will reach more audiences; companies, political parties, and media will gain more place within the market (Fairclough, 2010). The market value of discourse is tarnished by the use of slurs as it will drive away potential buyers. That is not to say that media or even individuals will magically stop having offensive language, but it does impact how they will be perceived, hence resulting in PC culture.

The effect of PC culture is limited as I believe that the origin of the offence also impacts the value of discourse, and in general, the reactions that people will have towards it. Jayce talks about transphobic behaviour from TikTok videos, on the second set of interviews, he explained that he sees more videos with transphobic comments. Zottola (2021) explains that there is a rise of transphobic comments within media, whereas homosexuality (as people attracted to the same gender) is now more tolerated. The rise of transphobic comments within discourses does not seem to follow the idea that discourse will tend to change in order to extend its reach. In recent years, more and more queer characters are seen on television shows, series, and movies but they all tend to be cis gay men or rarely lesbian women. Parallelly with the use of *gay* being mostly about gay men, popular discourse tends to be more accepting of queer individuals if they are gay men. As Fairclough (2010) explains, discourses still follow ideologies of a particular time and place, hence it is not surprising that transphobic discourses are still relevant as they are portrayed as the scapegoat of society (Zottola, 2021), and that there are no consequences for the offence. Transphobic discourses are less regarded as offensive or less taken seriously by the majority as trans people are still the most marginalized group within the

queer community (Zottola, 2021). Therefore, discourses can disregard transphobic comments as it will not impact their expansion.

The act of offending someone is then rooted within the discourse and its social implications. However, one could wonder if queerphobic constructions can be seen on a grammatical level as well.

7.5.2.2. Concept of homophobic grammar

Discriminatory practices were already expressed in the interviews, such as: the use of slurs, metaphors used in religious contexts, power imbalance, nominalization etc. Peterson (2016) explains that queerphobic behaviours in discourse are already well documented within different scientific fields. However, it is usually related to language in context. Peterson (2016) argues that grammar also has a part in queerphobic discourse, which is called "homophobic grammar". Starting with Fairclough's idea that structural systems create a set of possibilities for social interactions, Peterson (2016) considers that homophobic grammar sets a system that can manifest itself within discourse, to create homophobic discourse. The concept of homophobic grammar is based on Peterson's analysis of the US Senate hearing regarding the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy, especially on Nunn's (the architect of DADT) speech. The focus of the study was on transitivity and phoricity, Peterson (2016) argues that within the data they had, homophobic ideologies are seen in transitivity through the relational type[12] used to attribute, identify, or possess. Relational processes create a discourse seen as an objective rational fact, in which queer participants are excluded although the entire discourse is about queer people (Peterson, 2016). In the case of phoricity, Peterson (2016) argues that queer individuals are transformed into abstractions and are retrieved through homophoric referencing.

Although Peterson research cannot be generalized, it offers a possible way to see where queerphobic construction resides within grammar and it can influence discourse, Queerphobic construction's starting point is always ideology and power dynamics that will motivate the homophobic grammar and discourse (Peter, 2016; Fairclough, 2010)

[12] All types of transitivity are based on SFL's model (Peterson 2016).

7.5.3. Queer people's discourse

Whilst transcribing the interviews, I focused on the parts that could be linked to the already established queerphobic constructions. I also analysed discourses based on themes and recurrent topics. This section will be divided based on the observations of topics and on the influence that queerphobic constructions might have.

7.5.3.1. Dullness and normality

One theme that was relevant throughout all the interviews is dullness and normality. I chose to group dullness and normality together as they refer more or less to the same idea. The idea that heterosexuality is dull or normal, can be the result of the marginalization that queer people received. Indeed, they were seen as the others, the abnormal. It is no surprise then, that queer people will equate normality to heterosexuality as their lives are within heterosexism. In the interviews, the words *dullness* and *normality* were never present. The theme comes from concepts or other words that can be linked to normality. See for example:

> Jean: … It's just that they're a bit **boring**, aren't they? I would rather spend my time with queer folks than straight people. It's very **tamed** and, well, **straight**… like **do something interesting**, **spice things a bit**.

In this example, the idea of boredom is mentioned. Considering something or someone to be boring does not only imply that it is uninteresting, but it also implies that it is something repetitive and that people are accustomed to it. The use of *tamed* can be also understood as "something that is domesticated" as straight people are tamed by their own heterosexuality. As Jane Ward explains, they are the victims of heteronormativity but also the enablers (2022). Jean's comments show the perfect example that straight people are seen as monotonous and they are predictable, as their life is already planned at birth (Muñoz, 2009), hence the idea that they should "do something interesting". Sam also shares the idea that straight lives are monotonous and tamed:

> Sam: They don't have a sense of community like we do, sometimes I feel bad for them, like can't they say how **tragic** their life is? It just looks so **grey** all the time.

Qualifying something to be grey can either be understood as neither good nor bad, such as in the use of *grey area*, which would mean that as straight people are in the dominant group, they are neither good nor bad, they are neutral – or in other words normal. Grey can also be understood as colourless, something that is uninteresting or even linked to depression. In this case, *grey* could be used to talk about depression and sadness as its surrounded by *tragic* which reinforces the idea that straight lives are rooted in tragedy. The idea of tragedy and straight people can be seen in Butler (2019) with the concept of "heterosexual melancholy". Straight people, and in particular straight women, often feel as though they have to "fix" their husband or partner which leads to disappointment and misery as they do not realize the underlying problem: heteronormativity (Butler, 2019). Therefore, the word *grey* corresponds to the idea of melancholy, sadness and tragedy that queer people perceive in straight culture. Amber also uses colours to contrast between straight people and queer people:

> Amber: … You know I have spent a long time surrounded by straight people before coming out and engaging with queer people. And I will never go back to being only friends with straight people, our community is just **more fun** and **colourful**, we aren't the **rainbow** for nothing.

If straight culture is grey, then queer culture is colourful. The contrast of colourful and grey in relation to straight or queer people can also be seen with the stereotypes that queer people are just "too much" (Ward, 2022). If queer people are "too much", straight people are then "too little", in the sense of being boring and uninteresting (Ward, 2022). The use of colours also shows this idea as queer people are regarded as *colourful* and *fun* which means that straight people are colourless (or grey) and less fun (or sad). To further the point, I will point out that the LGBTQI+ community has a various range of flags, each representing a different part of the gender/sexuality spectrum. The flag representing the

entire LGBTQI+ community is the rainbow flag[13] which contrasts with the straight/ally flag, which is either all different shades of grey or grey with a touch of rainbow. The existence of the straight flag is debatable and not everyone agrees with the idea of straight people having their own flag, as straight people do not need to have an emblem of pride as "straight pride" is linked with queerphobic political movements (Ward, 2022).

All of the examples presented above go in the same direction that normality equals boredom. However, one participant used the term *normal* outside of this theme:

> Jayce: Straight people are people just like us. We're all normal people, nothing more, nothing less.

The use of *normal* in this context does not contrast queer people and straight people but equates them; there are no barriers between straight people and queer people. However, the construction "X is just like me" still separates two people. Indeed, the construction exists because the speaker realizes there is a difference between themselves and the other person, yet the speaker wants to create unity and a "we". I want to point out that the construction "X is just like me" is often used in ally-ship. Indeed, sentences such as "gay people are people like you and I" are often heard in media which could imply that people need to consider people "normal" to accept them. It is a symbolic shift when a queer person uses the construction. Straight people then become the minority group that has to be accepted by the majority. Although Jayce did not use the construction with a sense of irony, it could also be used to make fun of straight allies who use this type of construction, as it can be interpreted as if being queer was a default that non-queer people had to accept (Stollznow, 2020).

The use of normality to talk about straight people is a result of heterosexism. As straight people are seen as the normal way of living, queer people reappropriated being the outcasts and created a sense of pride with it. This can be seen as a form of naturalization. Fairclough (2010) defines naturalisation as background knowledge where ideologies reside, and how these ideologies are being perceived as 'common sense'. In this case, naturalisation happens when queer people naturalize that straight people are "normal" and that they are not. Normal is then something for straight people, although not all queer people would agree, as queer people are not a monolith.

[13] Two variants exist, in the appendix "Flags" the two variants will be provided.

7.5.3.2. Homophobic grammar

Peterson proposed the concept of homophobic grammar to see which grammatical constructions were more dominant within homophobic discourse. I used the concept proposed to see if it could be applied to queer people's discourse.

In terms of phoricity, the interviews showed that the referencing was mostly done through anaphora and esophora. For the data given, the homophoric referencing that was present for homophobic grammar does not seem to be applicable to queer discourse.

For the transitivity, homophobic grammar uses mostly relational process type. In the data taken from the interviews, it seems that it can be applied. Most of the clauses are attributive as in:

Jean:	They	're	a bit	boring
	carrier	process		attribute

In Jean's answer, *they* is the carrier, *'re* is the process and *a bit boring* is the attribute. I identify it to be an attributive relational clause as it follows Halliday's (in Peterson, 2016) classification. Indeed, the process is *be*, the interrogative creates a what/how question, and the clause is not reversible: *A bit boring are they.

The same process can be seen within homophobic grammar. If the relational process type imposes clauses as objective truth within homophobic discourse (Peterson, 2016), then in the interviews, participants impose these attributes/values to straight people as objective truths as well. The use of objective truths within discourse can also be linked to the imbalance of power and the attempts at reaching an equilibrium.

7.5.3.3. Influence of slurs

Queer people created their identity around slurs and pejorative words. Not only they reappropriate these terms, but they also use them to talk about straight people. As Stollznow (2020) explains that the most frequent insult towards queer people is the word *faggot*/*fag*. Within the interviews, the influence of the slur was visible:

> Sam: …I would never say things like **"straggot"** with my straight friends, 'cause they wouldn't understand and if I explain, they'd probably be like "what the fuck are you on?".

Sam explains that around their queer friends, they would use to word *straggot*. *Straggot* is directly related to the word *faggot*. Indeed, the *stra-* corresponds to the beginning of *straight* and the *-got* is the ending of *faggot*. *Straggot* can be linked to the linguistic reappropriation of the slur but also a symbolic change of power imbalance. Such as in the case of the nominalization of straight(s), the use of *straggot* changes the imbalance within the discourse about queer people. The people who are made fun of, are now the majority and not the minority. Its use can be linked to the idea that when making a joke, one should always "punch-up" and not "punch-down". For example, a cis white woman should not make a joke about a black woman as in terms of power dynamics within our society, the white woman is more privileged. The same goes for queer people and straight people. Queer people using *straggot* is a punch-up mechanism and is a reaction to the use of *faggot*. It is also worth to note that Sam considers that straight people would not understand its meaning as it is more of an in-group word. Amber also noted the use of *straggot*, but she considers the word to be more related to social media rather than real-life interactions. However, Amber's interview showed another word being used:

> Amber: I've heard a lot my friends use the word **breeder** to talk about straight people. It's a bit funny to think that I could, actually, breed. I don't really use it myself, it's more TikTok language.

The use of *breeder* to talk about straight people was already recorded by Stollznow in 2020, it is explained that *breeder* could be linked to a punch-down joke. Indeed, it was firstly used to describe women in Swift's essay in 1729, adding misogyny into the terms (2020, p. 119) but also it can be linked to racist comments as the sentence "they breed like rats" is used against people of colour in the United States (2020, p. 119). People within the queer community could also be considered to be "breeders", such as Amber said. As she is a cisgender woman in a relationship with a cisgender man, they could "breed" as she explains. Therefore, the use of *breed* although aimed at straight people, does not take into consideration people who are capable of giving birth and who are queer. Stollznow (2020)

considers the use of the word to be offensive for all people as it "punches-down" on multiple minorities. I would also add that the idea of reducing straight people to "breeders" is rooted in a binary system and definition of heterosexuality, as it does not include the realities of transgender people. The context in which *breeder* is used is not recorded by Stollznow. I did not have any data to show in which context the word was employed but in the second set of interviews, I specifically asked the participants if *breeder* was a term that used and if so in which context. Jayce, Jean, and Sam all said that they knew of the word, but none of them used it. Jayce explained that he usually heard the word being used on QueerTok. Therefore, I believe that a deeper investigation could be made for the word *breeder* as it creates debates and could open up a discussion about punching-up or down within the queer community.

Within the interviews, another recurring pattern appeared. All participants used words with negative connotations toward straight men. The focus, then, was not on straight people but on straight men.

7.6. Toxic masculinity at the centre of heterosexuality

It is a known fact that within debates on heterosexuality and its dominance, the focus is mostly on cisgender straight men (Ward, 2022; Stollznow, 2020; Wittig, 2018; Eribon, 2012). The interviews showed the same tendency, all the participants mentioned straight men directly or indirectly:

> Amber: I believe that the oppression we face as queer people is the result of misogyny and toxic masculinity. I mean, men have always been the dominant group and they can't imagine a life that is not about them. Everything has to be about them. Straight men really need to change. I'd even say that some queer men also need to change.

Amber submits the idea that queerphobic behaviours stem from misogynistic behaviours. I would argue that it is an interesting link as the predominant stereotype about gay men is that they are effeminate, and therefore not worthy of being a man. This idea means that what is considered feminine is seen as a bad trait to have, therefore in a binary society where femininity equals being a woman, it could be argued that this idea is rooted in

misogyny. Various research shows that what is liked and appreciated by people who identify as a woman, is usually prone to lots of criticism and hate from men (Ward, 2022; Wittig, 2018; Depuis-Déris, 2018). It is also within discourse that the misogyny will create queerphobic behaviours. Indeed, misogynistic comments and adjectives will sometimes be used by straight men to talk about queer people, words such as *sissy* and *pussy* (Stollznow, 2020). Straight men are also said to want "everything to be them" which shows similarities with queerphobic sentences such as "they're just doing it for attention" as recorded by Stollznow (2020). The idea that queer people are queer for attention is used to describe straight men, who, historically always wanted to be the frontrunners of the story (Foucault, 1976; Wittig, 2018). Amber's comments on queer men always bring a point that is debated within the queer community in regard to privileges that queer men still hold. Indeed, queer men can still benefit from male privilege and can sometimes have misogynistic behaviours. The verb *to change* in terms of identity is also to be understood as "to exit toxic masculinity", not as "to change one's sexuality" although, from a queer point of view, heterosexuality is based on toxic masculinity. Indeed, Wittig (2018) supposes that the heterosexual model of life is created for straight men and by straight men: they subject straight women to their will. Heterosexuality, then, is linked to toxic masculinity and patriarchy and to move past it, heterosexuality needs to change:

> Jayce: Straight men are traumatizing that's for sure, but we cannot avoid them. I wish they could change but I don't think it's possible.

The idea of change is engraved within queer people's hope for straight people. It also adds a sense of tragedy, the change is impossible and the system of heterosexuality that straight men use is traumatizing. Throughout the interviews, the theme of *trauma* was present, from the definition of queer to the definition of straight(s), the words were used in a context of hurt and doom. The context in which queer people live does influence the way they perceive straight men, as it was straight men who started queerphobic behaviours (with medicine), it can be argued that queer people's way of describing straight people is rooted in fear.

Another theme that stood out in the interviews was the attitude of straight men towards women or their wives:

> Jean: … Straight men are insufferable, all the jokes they make about hating their wives… aren't you straight? It looks like they don't even like women.
>
> Sam: The audacity of mediocre men is what gets me the most, like please, you're not a "nice guy" because you don't hit your wife… it's basic decency.

These comments do fit in Jane Ward's book where the author asks, "are straight women ok?". The author explains that within straight culture, the most recurring joke is about how much straight people hate their spouse (Ward, 2020). Queer people, as they are outside the narrative, can perceive the paradox: straight men say they love women, but their actions never show it. It is possible that showing affection can be seen as a feminine trait that will be considered to be a default within straight culture. The use of *mediocre* and *insufferable* contrast with the idea of "nice guy". Jane Ward (2020) explains that straight men will consider themselves to be "nice guys", but that queer people will consider it to be basic human decency. The comments of Jean and Sam confirm Ward's idea. It will be interesting to analyse what scale is used by straight men to determine if they are nice guys. Queer people will use their own lives and (ex-)partners to examine and judge straight men in a relationship, especially if one person in the relationship is queer:

> Amber: My boyfriend is straight and sometimes it shows… Like in my past queer relationships I never had a single problem relating to chores or everyday misogyny.
>
> Jean: I dated straight men, and it was hell. The bar is on the ground for straight women.

The bar refers to a set of standards that one has to meet in order to date someone. In this case, straight men are said to have set such low standards that "the bar is on the ground". Amber's comments clearly indicate that being straight implies having a certain set of rules and behaviours as she uses "it shows" to describe the fact that her boyfriend is straight. This set of rules is seen through a queer lens and considered to be "hell", which is a metaphor used to describe eternal suffering.

I will note that straight women were barely talked about during the interviews. It could be explained as straight men are usually more prone to show queerphobic behaviours, hence queer people will show more resentment towards them (White & Franzini, 1999). Straight men and toxic masculinity are at the centre of queer people's discussion when talking about heterosexuality. As they do not follow heterosexuality's rules, they see it happening outside of their lives and reflect on it from a queer perspective. As queerphobia is more relevant with straight men, they put them at the centre of their discourse, which ironically follows a patriarchal idea, that men are and should be at the centre of society.

7.7. Heterophobia and heteronegativism

The interviews presented all show what could be considered resentment or negative feelings towards heterosexuality. The term *heterophobia*[14] and *heteronegativism* was explained by White & Franzini in 1999. Based on their definition of homophobia, which is the pathological hatred towards gay men and lesbians, they defined heterophobia as the pathological hatred towards straight individuals (White & Franzini, 1999). According to them, heterophobia is only a point of a scale that is called heteronegativism. Heteronegativism is seen as a scale that represents different levels of resentment towards straight people – by comparison, homonegativism is the scale that represents different levels of resentment towards homosexuals (1999, p.67). The scale and even the concept of heteronegativism have been debated and even considered to be wrong by some activists, as heteronegativism and heterophobia can be argued to not exist within society (Brazen, 1991; Conley, T. D & al., 2003). However, the research done did not try to see queer people's reactions to heterophobia, they tried to show if it existed or not.

In the interviews, two participants mentioned heterophobia without a direct question:

> Amber: I've heard a lot of ideas about the gay agenda and such, and that queer people are heterophobic now. It baffles me that straight people are so self-absorbed that cannot see that the entire world is made for them.

[14] The term was coined by Patai but explained for the context of homosexuality by White & Franzini (1999).

> Sam: Queerphobia is very real. Not like heterophobia, let's be honest. It makes me laugh that they even think about queer people being heterophobic. Where's your oppression? It makes me so mad.

Both of these comments do not support the idea that heterophobia exists. Indeed, the belief that queer people are heterophobic seems unrealistic as straight people do not live oppressed lives based on their sexual orientation. Amber uses *self-absorbed* which reinforces the idea that straight individuals seem to like to have the attention focused on them. Both extracts show negative feelings and reactions towards the concept with the use of *mad* and *to baffle*. However, the participants did not use *heteronegativism* or even *homonegativism* during the interviews. I would argue that the term is more academically related and is not relevant within everyday language. If the term *heteronegativism* is not known, they would not consider their characterization of straight people as such. However, if the definition is strictly followed as "negative towards heterosexuality" (White & Franzini, 1999, p. 67), it cannot be denied that the concept of heteronegativism is well founded. Indeed, with all the examples provided in this work, the feeling of resentment is present, and the anger is well documented. However, White and Franzini did not seem to include in their work that heteronegativism is a direct repercussion of queerphobic behaviours. Queerphobic comments and discourse lead to heteronegativism. I will also add that heterophobia, only works if it follows the prior definition. In everyday language, heterophobia is seen as the antonym of homophobia, as it relates to the oppression of straight people within a supposedly heterophobic system. Jean, when asked about heterophobia, underlined this issue:

> Jean: … And I get that straight people feel sometimes like they're being attacked or mocked. But they have to understand that it's not because we criticize the system that we are against them. There is no discrimination involved. If a bar is closed to straight people, it's only because we're trying to protect our community.

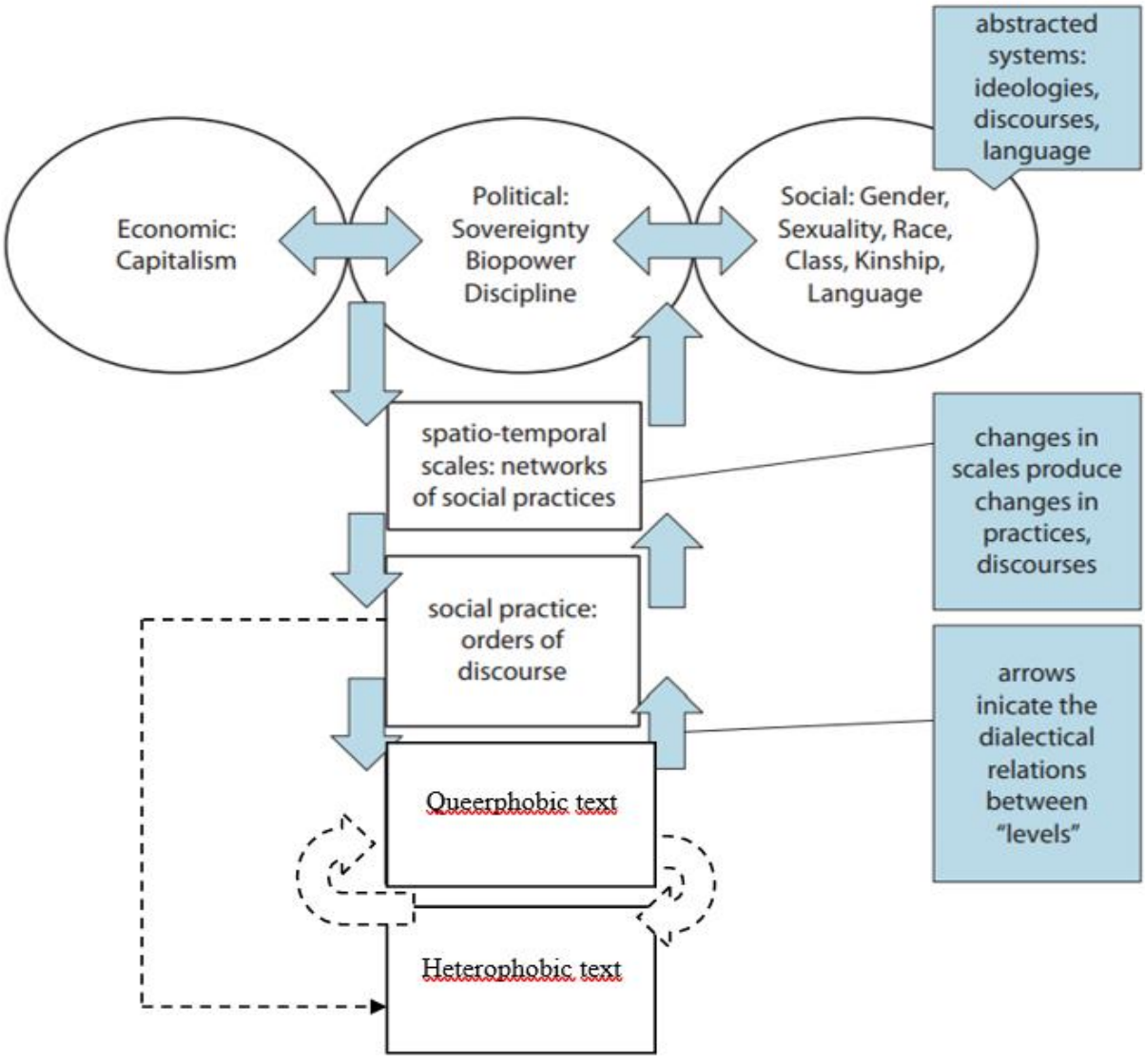
Multiple things can be said with this extract. A major point around heterophobia is the idea that it discriminates against straight people. As it is known, they are no discrimination in our world against straight people, as they are not only the majority but also the dominant

group. In terms of how queer people perceive the concept of heterophobia, it is clear that it is still a community issue. Indeed, straight people might feel like outsiders because they are referred to as such within queer people's discourse, seen in "we are against them". The *them* creates a clear distinction, straight people are not included within the group, therefore they might feel discriminated against. It is important to also underline that there is a sense of empathy within the extract, the use of *I get that* creates a link between straight people and queer people. On the other side, it could also mean that there is a valid reason as to why straight people might feel discriminated against within queer discourse. I believe that the problem resides within the verb *to criticize*. Indeed, the word can be understood in different ways, it is either understood as "to consider the merits and demerits of and judge accordingly" i.e., "to evaluate" or it means "to find fault with" (Merriam-Webster). Therefore, it is possible that when queer people talk about criticizing straight culture, straight individuals understand it with the meaning of "to find fault with", as it is already the case when discourse about patriarchy is criticized. Francis Dupuis-Déri in their work *La crise de la masculinité* (2018) explains that with feminist movements and discourse, men felt that feminist discourse attacked them and that feminists wanted to take over them. In the case of queer discourse about heteronormativity, the same phenomenon is applied. As Amber explained, the idea of the "gay agenda" is a concept based on the idea that queer people are trying to take over, to dominate straight people and create a queer-fascist land.

Although it can be considered that heterophobia does not exist with the examples given, it still has meaning to straight individuals who feel attacked and mocked. I will have to point out that if people feel offended, it is the speaker's responsibility to adapt and change their stance. The communication is then stuck in an endless debate; if straight people are offended by the way queer people talk about them, one should respect their wish to not be referred to as such but how can one criticize the power in place if it is considered offensive? In this matter, none of the participants addressed the subject, as they all consider heterophobia to not exist. From a more critical point of view, I will have to use Wittig's (2018) point of view. Wittig believes that heterosexuality has been implemented by force in society and mostly through discourse, hence imposing itself as the most valuable asset in discourse. Bourdieu (2014) explains that every discourse has a value and that its value fluctuates each time: heterosexuality loses its value within queer discourse. Therefore, queer discourse is seen as a threat to the value of heterosexuality, hence straight people feel as though they are being marginalized. Queer discourse about heterosexuality only tries to

reach an equilibrium within discourse. In terms of value, it does not try to surpass the value of heterosexuality, it is trying to weaken its impact so that they can be at the same level.

Peterson proposed a model[15] to explain the creation of homophobic text. The model explains the relation between texts, social practices, and systems of power. Its aim is to help researchers to analyse discourse with a better understanding of all the dialectal relationships (indicated by the arrows). Based on the observations of the interviews, I would like to modify this model to include what might be considered "heterophobic text" and change homophobic to queerphobic, in order to stay consistent with the interviews. The modified model presents as follows:



[15] See Appendix: Peterson's model of homophobic formation

This addition shows that “heterophobic text” is only a reaction to queerphobic text and that it does not enter the system as it is a consequence. I consider “heterophobic text” to be in a circular relationship with “queerphobic text”. Indeed, the texts will always adapt to the others as minorities tend to reappropriate discourses, hence changing the texts made about them. I also added an arrow that goes from Social Practice to Heterophobic Text as heterophobic text might be the result of “heterophobic discourse” when queer people are in a social setting together, which has been exemplified thanks to the interviews. Moreover, with the modified model, I tried to highlight that “heterophobia” holds no impact within society or on other levels of the model. The participants all agreed that heterophobia does not exist as they are no systems of oppression put in place that ostracized straight individuals.

8. Conclusion

In this thesis, I tried to shed light on current debates around queerness and Queer Theory all based on the active participation of queer people by means of interviews. The debate around what can be considered as queer and what cannot be queer was a central point within this work which reflects the constant debate of defining *queer* not only in academia but also in popular culture.

The focus on participants’ testimonies helped me be more inclusive and follow a queerer approach to research, which is to go against normative categories, in this case, the categories of “researcher” and “participants”. The participants who acted as the primary source of information helped me shed light on some issues that I highlighted in the hypotheses on queer people’s discourse about non-queer people:

I started to hypothesize that just as *gay/homosexual,* terms related to heterosexuality would also be used in different contexts. The hypothesis was not proven by the data collected in the interviews. However, examples within popular culture show that the difference exists. I believe the use of *straight,* and *heterosexual* deserve a further investigation, which should also include work on popular culture against in-group culture use of language.

The second hypothesis that queerphobic constructions directly impact queer people’s discourse about non-queer people had a significant amount of data that would

confirm it. Indeed, the idea of "queer people's discourse" only exists because society created the category, as it was straight individuals who decided to categorize them.

The third hypothesis that queer people will focus more on straight cisgender men rather than on straight cisgender women when expressing negative feelings towards cis-heterosexuality was present in the interviews.

The hypotheses underline a problem called *heterophobia* and its relevant debates. I tried to highlight that such a concept does not exist as it bears no implications in social settings. Queer people's discourse does not create a system, although it can appear to be discriminating at first, it has no implications on society as shown by the modified model of homophobic text.

All the interviews presented here, and their analysis shed light on the influence of queerphobic discourse, toxic masculinity and heterosexism that guide society. Queer people's discourse on non-queer identities is seen as a consequence of queerphobic behaviours. Although the sample was small, I believe that it opens discussions around the impact of heterosexism on discourse and especially on the reaction of queer people towards it.

I will end by hypothesising that queer people's discourse in the United States might impact other parts of the world. As the Stonewall riots impacted the whole world, the queer community of the USA probably still impacts other parts of the world today. It would be interesting to see how French-speaking Belgians compare in terms of discourse about non-queer people and if it can be linked to queer people's discourse from the United States.

Appendix 1: Consent Form

Consent form – Use of personal data[16]

1. Aim of the research

The research focuses of linguistical behaviors of queer people when talking about non-queer people. The study analyses recordings of conversations between Julien Sohier, student at University of Liège, and a queer person from the United States of America. The research tries to analyse how minorities talk about their oppressors and which linguistical factors are dominant in the discourse. The study aims at putting queer people on the creative side of academia, making them participant in the study and not just the objects of the research.

The research will be presented by Julien Sohier as their Thesis to obtain their master's degree in linguistics.

2. Confidentiality

All recordings are used for scientific purposes. All information related to the participant will be treated anonymously (name, state, university, names of the people you talk about…). All participants have the right to ask access to the Thesis if they ask the researcher.

Signing this chart will not give the researcher all rights to your data. You still have the right to refuse J.S to use your personal data after the recording.

3. Contact

For all inquiries feel free to contact Julien Sohier, either by email julien.sohier@student.uliege.be or by direct messages on Instagram [redacted]

[16] Inspired by Barthelemy Emilien *La langue au prisme des transidentités Pour une approche sociolinguistique et une expertise trans** (master thesis available on Matheo.Uliège)

4. Personal Information

NAME Surname:……
Date of birth: …….
Place of birth:…….
Gender:……...
Pronouns…….
Education: …….
Profession (if applicable): …….
Native language(s): ……
Spoken language(s): ……...

5. Authorization

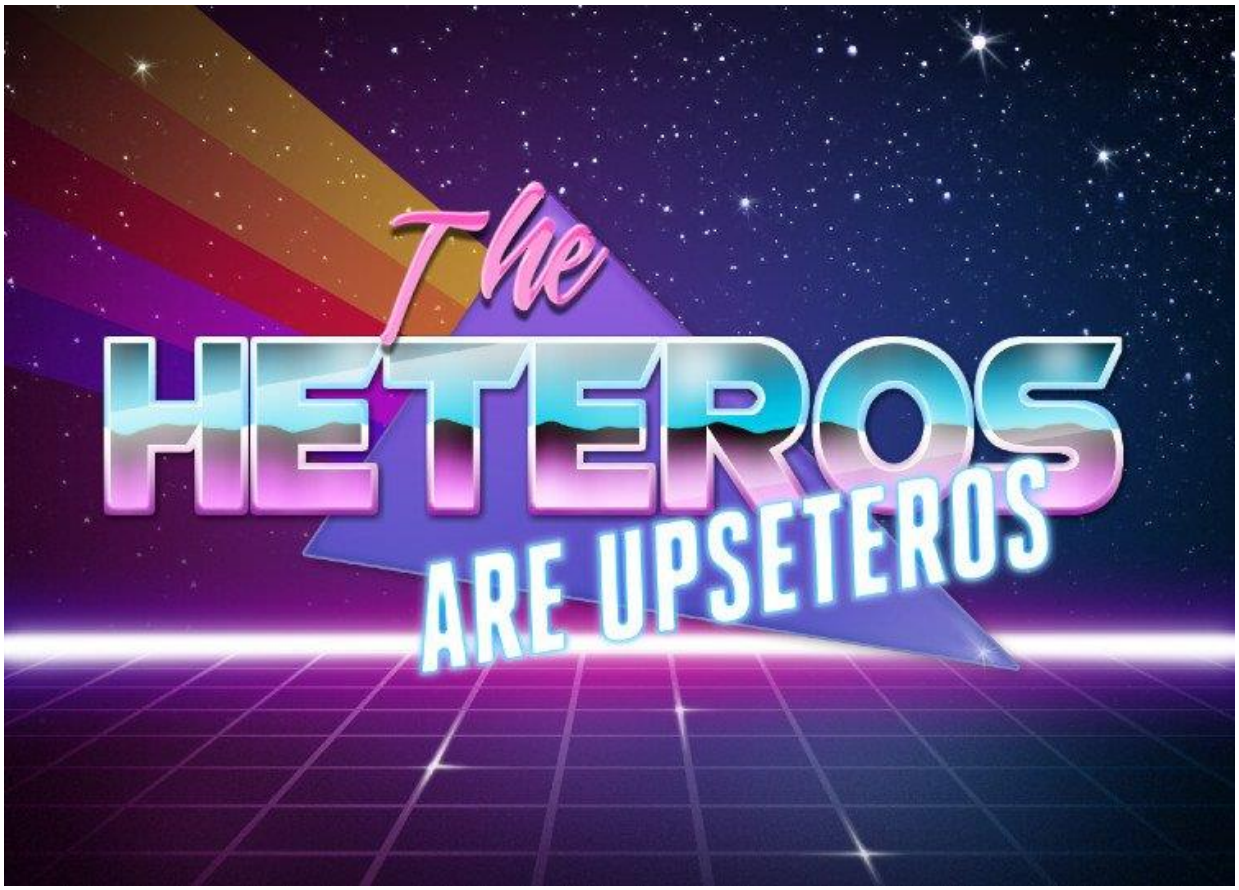
I (NAME, Surname): ……. (Tick the boxes)

- ○ authorize Julien Sohier to record our conversation on this day (date: …….)
- ○ authorize the use of collected data to be transcribed and anonymized for scientific purposes only.
- ○ acknowledge that all data will only be used by Julien Sohier and that they will only be used in their transcribed form.
- ○ accept voluntarily and without compensation to participate in the research.

Date: ……

Signature:

Appendix 2: The Heteros are Upseteros



Format: Meme

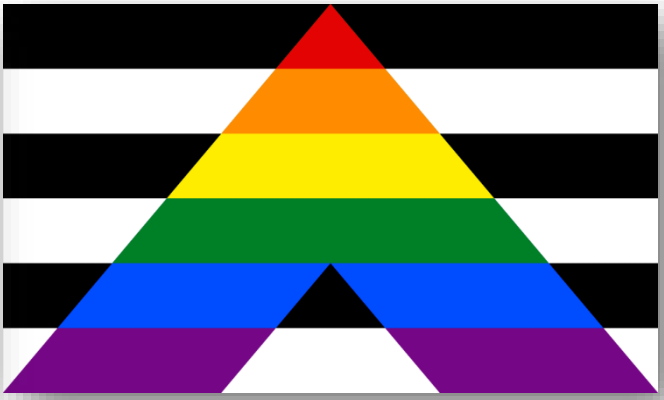
Origin: Unknown

Appendix 3: Pride Flags

Pride Flag

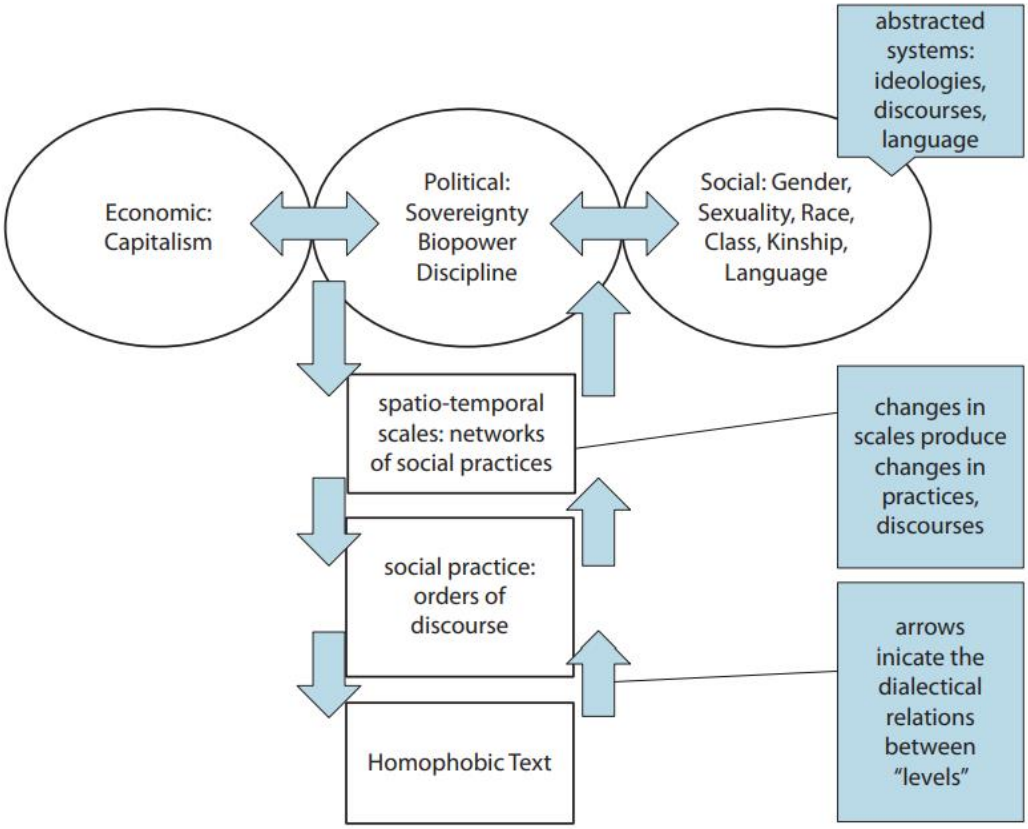
Inclusive Pride Flag

Straight flag



Ally Flag

Appendix 4: Peterson's model of homophobic text



From: Figure 1 in Peterson, D. (2016). Homophobic grammar: The role of transitivity and phoricity in homophobic formation. *Journal of Language and Sexuality*, *5*(1), 61–93. https://doi.org/10.1075/jls.5.1.03pet

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