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**Queer Resistance against Biopolitical Governance and
Subversion of Gender Roles in *Cantoras***

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Abstract: This paper attempts to analyze the ‘biopolitical’ aspect of masculinity through a critical reading of Carolina De Robertis’s novel *Cantoras*. According to Foucault, ‘biopolitics’ is a form of domination where the dictator keeps complete possession of their subject, the subject’s bodily being, his mental being, his life and death as well (*Society Must Be Defended* 245). This Foucauldian concept is applied to Carolina de Robertis’s novel *Cantoras* (2019) to understand the military regime’s control over the body of individuals in a dictatorship and subsequently the resistance against such biopolitical control. The proposed paper also attempts to establish through Butler that both masculinity and femininity are performative (Butler 9). Masculinity, if seen as a performative act, as suggested by Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble*, can also be practised by women, just as femininity can be practised by men (Butler 180). This performative act is used as a subversion of the cultural norms of societal and state authority. Following this argument, this paper attempts to examine the traits of masculinity adopted by female characters in Robertis’s novel. This paper intends to show how far these women characters constitute traits of so-called masculinity and femininity, and subsequently how the role of femininity and masculinity is subverted in the course of the novel to challenge the biopolitical domination of the regime.

Keywords: *Biopolitics, Butler, Dictatorship, Foucault, Performativity, Robertis, Uruguay*

Introduction

Contemporary authors from all over the globe are often vocal about the discrimination and prejudice against their own disciplines, themes, genres, cultures and freedom. It is extremely important for an LGBTQ+ activist to write about their experience and reception of their kind in society. They always try to promote her view of the world and society in her book. *Cantoras* (2019) by Carolina de Robertis is no exception. Robertis is a Uruguayan-American author and a social activist, especially for the queer people. Her book *Cantoras* is a prime example of a queer fiction, where she explores queer themes and characters, basing the story on the history of Uruguay from 1970s to 1980s. This paper aims to see the text of Robertis through the lens of ‘queer resistance’ and ‘gender performativity’. It traces queer resistance through the secret activities of the main characters in the novel. In addition to that, it demonstrates how the concept of gender performativity makes the reversal of gender roles possible in the text. To substantiate this concept, the actions and inclinations of the main characters are studied critically. As the paper talks about resistance, it will inevitably talk about biopolitics, against which the resistance takes place. To understand biopolitics in the context of the novel, the paper refers to Michel Foucault’s two books, *Society Must be Defended* (1976) and *The Birth of Biopolitics* (1979) respectively. In addition to these, it also refers to Judith Butler’s book *Gender Trouble* (1990) to understand gender performativity in the text.

Biopolitics in *Cantoras*

Foucault first mentioned the term ‘biopolitics’ in *The History of Sexuality* (1976). He elaborated on the term later in his lectures at College de France in 1976. The lectures were later compiled in a book form called *Society Must Be Defended*. This Foucauldian term denotes the state authority’s complete control over the biological body of an individual. The state has its mechanism and apparatuses for keeping surveillance over the individual bodies. Having this power to control the biological body of an individual, the state exerts violence whenever the biological body becomes a threat to its sovereignty. In other words, the state has power over the life and death of an individual. In Foucault’s words, the state possesses the ‘biopower’ which is centred “on the individual body as a machine, and this biopower has access to the exhortation of the body’s forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into the systems of efficient and economic controls” (*The History of Sexuality* 139).

After Foucault, this term has been widely discussed and critiqued over decades. In critical theory, it has been used as a major term for understanding hegemony and dictatorship. Foucault describes ‘biopolitics’ as a “new technology of power” that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century (*Society Must Be Defended* 243). According to him, “There is a ‘continuity’ between fascism

and Stalinism at the level of biopolitics of the exclusion and extermination of the politically dangerous and ethnically impure” (*Society Must Be Defended* 276). It is the state itself that decides who is “politically dangerous and ethnically impure” or a threat to the integrity and ideality of the state. In Robertis’s novel, the sexual orientation of the female characters causes ideological problems for the state of Uruguay. Being a girl Malena was sexually attracted towards another girl in *Cantoras*, and this characteristic of her was a crime not only to the Uruguayan society itself but also to her parents. Her orthodox parents deemed her sexual orientation to be a disease, just the way the state and the society wanted them to think. Therefore, the biopolitical state employed a doctor to cure her ‘illness’. The doctor’s voice said to Malena “You will answer our questions. We are here to fix you” (Robertis 268).

‘Biopolitics’ also refers to the intersection of politics and biology, particularly about the control and management of populations. Foucault elaborated on the concept in his lectures and writings. In *The Birth of Biopolitics* (1979), he analyzed how modern states began to focus not only on traditional forms of political power (such as law and sovereignty) but also on the management and regulation of life itself. This includes aspects like health, reproduction, and the general well-being of populations. The key concepts and ideas of ‘biopolitics’ include - governmentality, disciplinary power, population management, control of life and death, and all other aspects of civil life. The following part of the paper analyzes the application of these ideas in the text.

The first issue that this study addresses here is ‘Governmentality’. Foucault argued that modern states don’t just exert control through coercive means, but also through more subtle techniques of governance. This involves shaping the behaviour and choices of individuals and populations. Such usage of mechanisms and state apparatuses is subtly represented in Robertis’s novel *Cantoras*. The state manifesto shapes the nature and behaviour of a man and woman. What kind of art will be produced is also controlled by the state as shown in the novel. Anita’s partner Ariella is an artist in the novel, who remarks, “Things are open in Rio de Janeiro, for artists” and not in Montevideo. According to her, in Rio de Janeiro “there’s more embrace of mixing genres. Fusion is the future” (Robertis 170).

The second issue it addresses from *The Birth of Biopolitics* is ‘Disciplinary Control’. Biopolitics is closely related to Foucault’s concept of disciplinary power, which involves the techniques and institutions (like schools, hospitals, and prisons) that regulate and control individuals and their bodies. According to Foucault, “...disciplinary techniques for taking charge of the behaviour of individuals” were disseminated throughout society day by day (*Birth of Biopolitics* 67). He refers to Jeremy Bentham’s concept of the ‘Panopticon’ as a model for supervising the conduct of individuals in institutions like schools, factories, hospitals, and prisons (67). The example of disciplinary power and its execution is evident in Robertis’ novel. Romina recalls the history classes in her high school, where

she was told the story of a progressive democracy, and Uruguay was a prime example of such democracy. She remembers with irony those days. During the dictatorship in Uruguay, the history was altered. Now she studies distorted history and she has to teach the same to others in school. Romina taught history at a private school, to eleven and twelve-year-olds in “just the careful, dry and lying way the regime wanted her to. It was painful to distort history” (Robertis 195). The regime had censored their history books. She knows that the history makers are liars, “Their histories were a lie. But she studied them. She memorized them” (Robertis 82).

The context of the hospital is revealed in the recollections of Malena in the concluding part of the novel. In her retrospection, Malena recalls how she was caught in an intimate position with her childhood friend Belen. The consequence was that she was taken to a psychiatric hospital in Buenos Aires for ‘treatment’ as it was considered to be a disease to be homosexual. The pathetic part was that her parents insisted on taking her to the psychiatric hospital thinking it to be a mental disorder. Malena repeatedly told the doctor, “I don’t feel sick” but all was in vain (Robertis 267). She was there with her parent’s consent. The doctor was to “fix” her. He told her, “your parents asked us to do this, it’s their will” (Robertis 284). Therefore, her parents, by adhering to the ideological belief of the society at large, become the undeclared agents of the biopolitical state. They reinforce the domination of the state by keeping an eye of surveillance on their own daughter.

Prison is a very significant mechanism of the dictatorship to reinforce and exercise its power and domination. Romina, her brother Felipe, and Paz have been imprisoned in the course of the novel. The reason for their imprisonment was no serious crime, but only dissent. The number of people who were imprisoned or confined because of dissent is not limited to these three only, there were many more as the author has described in her novel. Paz was put into jail and was subjected to interrogation by the soldiers because of her unwomanly attitude in front of an old lady who was the wife of a minister. The soldiers interrogated all of them to make that they were not Tupamaros (Robertis 133). Putting the dissenters into prison is another form of exercise of biopower because the aim of the state is not only to regulate the behavior of the dissenters, but also to carefully categorize them and mark them as potential threats for the regime.

The third issue to be addressed from Foucault’s book is ‘Population Management’. Biopolitics is concerned with managing populations, not just individuals. This includes policies related to public health, welfare, immigration, and other areas that affect the well-being and composition of society. The management of population can be seen from different perspectives in the novel, such as in the disappearance of the dissenters in the dictatorship, keeping surveillance over the sexuality of individual citizens. In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault remarks, “biopolitics deals with the population, the

population as a political problem... as a biological problem and as power's problem" (245). Therefore, the management of the population is a determining factor of the state to exercise political power. Foucault talks about the 'Regulation of Life and Death' in *The Birth of Biopolitics*. Biopolitical concerns extend from birth (regulation of childbirth, prenatal care) to death (eugenics, euthanasia etc.). The novel is about life under the dictatorship in Uruguay, which is always uncertain and lies in the hands of the dictator; therefore, both life and death are controlled by the dictator in the text.

Foucault argued that individuals internalize societal norms and practices, effectively governing themselves. This is important in a biopolitical context because it reduces the need for external coercion. Biopolitics raises ethical questions about who has the authority to make decisions about life and death, health and wellness, and reproduction. In a dictatorship like Uruguay, which Robertis portrays, the decision is always in the hands of the military junta which runs the state according to its choice. It is evident in *Cantoras*, where sexuality, liberty, life and death everything are under the control of the state power.

Brief History of Military Dictatorship in Uruguay

In the acknowledgement of her book, Carolina de Robertis has mentioned that the content of her fiction is based on the history of Uruguay, especially Cabo Polonio. She acknowledges, "I have been listening to stories of Cabo Polonio's cultural history for eighteen years" (Robertis 315). Being a Uruguayan-American author, she had many resources and acquaintances with people who had first-hand experience of the dictatorship in Uruguay, during the period between 1973 to 1985.

The legacy of dictatorship in Latin America is still a recurrent phenomenon in literary and cultural studies of the continent. The nations of the continent have long witnessed the butchery of military power led by major generals or any other chief authority of the army, who overthrew the ruler elected by the citizens. In the twentieth century, from the 1950s onwards, almost every country on the continent suffered the tortures of military dictatorship. In almost every country in South America, there was a coup d'état, and subsequently transfer of power. Uruguay is no exception. Before the coup in 1973, Uruguay was already suffering from political crises.

From the 1960s onward, there had been conflict between the ruling presidential government and other leftist and socialist parties. As the presidential government had failed to reform economic conditions in the country, the left-wing started doing activities against the presidential government. Because of their guerrilla activities, which they did to resist the repression of the government, they became 'Tupamaros'. The authoritarian presidential government tried to suppress the 'Tupamaros' by declaring an emergency (Mazz 83). All of these happened before the actual military dictatorship. The

authoritarian presidential rule paved the way for the military dictatorship in Uruguay. Juan Maria Bordaberry was the president when the military regime took over the power. Although Bordaberry remained president till 1976, the ruling power was in the hands of the military regime, the armed forces of Uruguay. The dismissal of the democratically elected parliament of Uruguay by the regime or military junta in June of 1973, officially announced the beginning of dictatorship.

Uruguay was, according to Romina, a developed country in comparison to other Latin American countries. As Uruguayans “they had arrived at social advances - the abolition of slavery, votes for women, separation of church and state, eight-hour workdays, the right to divorce - before the giant nations around them” (Robertis 24). Many authors have recounted their first-hand experience of living under the dictatorship and described the living conditions and other crises in their books. Plenty of fictional and non-fictional writings are now available on the bitter experience of dictatorship. However, there are a few authors who have taken the responsibility to represent the experience of the queer community in their books. Carolina De Robertis is one amongst them, who has fictionalized the experience of five queer women during the time of dictatorship in the city of Montevideo. About the coup, Robertis writes:

That morning, the morning of June 27, 1973, the headline was gigantic and in thicker black letters than she'd ever seen. PARLIAMENT DISSOLVED. President Bordaberry had turned over his powers to the generals of the military, an institution to which Uruguayans had rarely given much thought until the recent years, when troops had been called out to quell the workers' strikes and round up the Tupamaro guerrillas (Robertis 24).

The dictatorship lasted more than a decade in Uruguay, from 1973 to 1985. *Cantoras* (2019) is fictionalized in this time of great turmoil. Although the novel does not describe any direct encounter or combat between civilians and armed soldiers, it traces instances of resistance in the quotidian lives of the people of Uruguay.

Queer Resistance in *Cantoras*

The term, queer resistance refers to the various forms of activism, advocacy, and cultural expression undertaken by LGBTQ+ individuals and communities to challenge and counteract systemic oppression, discrimination, and marginalization against people belonging to their community. Some of their forms of resistance are - community building, creating safe spaces, protests, and community organizations. These spaces help individuals navigate challenges related to their identity, providing a sense of belonging and empowerment.

Queer artists, writers, filmmakers, and performers have used their work to challenge heteronormative narratives and to celebrate LGBTQ+ experiences. Their utterance found expression in several artistic forms including literature, visual art, theatre, and film. Carolina de Robertis' novel *Cantoras* is one such example of artistic expression of queer resistance. It is the central idea in the novel, if not the only one. Besides queer resistance, she also promotes the practice of homosexuality and advocates the normalisation of queer relationships.

The kind of queer resistance that this paper talks about is not represented either through direct combat between cops and queer men and women, or through open demonstration of activists. Rather, this kind of resistance grows in clandestine places through organizations and gatherings from the community. This kind of resistance is represented through the endurance of the characters who suffer but do not leave hope, who recover from past tortures and return back stronger. A fine example is Romina herself in the novel, who was arrested along with her brother, schooled not to dissent and join communist party meetings, yet she continued the internal resistance clandestinely. She said to Malena, "I want to get involved again. You know, with the Resistance. I have been thinking about it for some time" (Robertis 115). Carolina De Robertis aptly portrays the effect of Military dictatorship in Uruguay and how "queer resistance" stands against the dictatorship. Five young women, namely - Flaca, Romina, Anita, Malena, and Paz, venture to go against the state's restriction on homosexuality. The five women choose their own sexuality and practise the same in an unfrequented sea beach called Cabo Polonio, miles away from the city of Montevideo. Romina, one of the five, exhibits her intense commitment to resistance by secretly joining the communist party. She and her brother Felipe both got arrested on suspicion of joining communist groups who were against the dictatorship. Despite suffering at the hands of the soldiers, Romina could not be totally suppressed. She was released soon after, but her zeal for resistance did not extinguish. She continued working for the communist party as an underground agent. Oppression, physical abuse, rape, bodily and mental torture did not stop her from going against the dictatorship. She secretly supplied letters, compositions, correspondences, and foreign newspapers to the raw agents of the communist party.

Romina secretly corresponded with the communist dissenters, who were exiled for rebellion. About this underground resistance the author writes, "Romina had become involved with a secret circle of dissidents who smuggled written words into the country: letters, essays, and newspaper clippings from Uruguayan exiles speaking out abroad about the human rights abuses back home" (Robertis 167). Through such dissemination of news, characters like Romina carry out secret resistance movements against the dictatorship.

It is Flaca, a butcher by profession, who leads the groups to Cabo Polonio, away from the city of Montevideo. On their first visit, they stayed in an abandoned house, which was half-built and with no roof, four unfinished walls and an open sky. Later, they bought the abandoned house and gave it a new look and a new name, 'The Prow' (Robertis 125). From then onward, it became their favourite and only destination for vacation. They called themselves 'the witches of Cabo Polonio' (Robertis 71). Their staying together on the sea beach of Cabo Polonio itself is an instance of resistance. Resistance is a recurring aspect of the novel. It recurs in each stage of the novel with each character. Flaca's resistance lies in her audacious nature to express herself and her sexuality even in the time of sexual surveillance. She practises her sexuality at home as well as in the distant sea beach Cabo Polonio. She has been in love with several women before and after Romina and Anita. She is never suppressed by the regime's authoritarian regulations against her sexuality.

The youngest character of the five, Paz, is no less important in the discussion of resistance. A woman from a high official punished her by putting her in prison because she did not "sit properly, ...like a lady" on the sea beach (Robertis 128). The interesting fact is, that this threat and punishment did not stop her from practising what she was. Paz shares a story with the cantoras, the women who sing at the prow, about her love for a woman called Puma, at the age of twelve. She invests in business and soon becomes a successful businesswoman. She opens a secret basement for queer people despite knowing the dangers of it in a dictatorship. This is how she copes with the threat of dictatorship. This is how she gave way to her resistance against the imposition of the regime.

Cantoras is a story of win and loss. The essence of victory lies in the marriage between Romina and Diana, a queer couple, while the loss lies in the disappearance of thousands under the dictatorship and the death of Malena. *Cantoras* promotes queer resistance against any form of homogenisation, be it physical, psychological or mental.

Gender as Performative Act in *Cantoras*

Just like oppression is manifold, forms of resistance against oppression are also numerous. Gender is one of them, which is a site of suppression and at the same time a weapon of subversion. This paper locates the flexibility of gender in terms of its performance; how gender performance can be inclusive and create scope of resistance against any form of oppression. Judith Butler talks about gender performance in her 1990 book *Gender Trouble*. The book introduced the revolutionary concept of gender performativity in the arena of critical theory. Butler contests the traditional idea of gender as something biologically determined and suggests that it is a socially constructed phenomenon that an individual attains through repeated performance of acts and behaviours. According to her, a person's gender identity is not stable or fixed, rather it is a social and cultural construction reinforced by

repeated acts, expressions and interactions. In her words, “The view that gender is performative sought to show that what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body” (Butler xv). These are what Butler calls performances, such as the way a person behaves, dresses, speaks, and does many other actions. Thus, Butler formed the idea of gender performance, which is a groundbreaking theory in the history of Gender studies. Therefore, she argues that the societal construction of gender roles or performances shapes the common people’s understanding of gender identity, and they expect the roles of men and women accordingly. To quote her, “Gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence” (Butler 33). She also says, “That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality” (Butler 173). Thus, the norms of a particular gender identity are set and any deviation from these norms threatens the integrity of the societal norms about gender and sexuality. According to Monique Wittig, language is “a set of acts, repeated over time, that produce reality-effects that are eventually misperceived as ‘facts’”. This repeated practice of naming sexual differences has created this appearance of natural division. Following the arguments of Wittig, Butler remarks, “The ‘naming’ of sex is an act of domination and compulsion, an institutionalized performative that both creates and legislates social reality by requiring the discursive/perceptual construction of bodies in accord with principles of sexual difference” (147). Therefore, Wittig concludes that because of this natural division established, men and women are political categories, and not natural facts.

The purpose of the paper is the application of the idea of gender roles as a performative act in the text. In doing so, it analyses how this idea becomes subversive as it is at the root of the reversal of gender roles in the text. A critical examination of the novel *Cantoras* reveals the implication of gender role reversal through the characters' activities. Thus, it demonstrates that although the main characters are not biologically masculine, their actions and inclinations can be, to some extent, masculine in nature.

Subversion of Gender Role in *Cantoras*

Reversal or subversion of gender roles refers to a scenario in which traditional societal expectations and responsibilities associated with gender are flipped or altered. This can manifest in various ways, such as women taking on roles typically associated with men, and vice versa. This concept is often used in discussions of gender equality and feminism, as it challenges longstanding norms and

stereotypes about what men and women “should” do. It creates discontent in the generally accepted definition of conventional male and female.

The aim of reversing gender roles is to promote a more inclusive and equal society where individuals are not limited or defined by their gender. It acknowledges that people should be free to pursue their interests, careers, and lifestyles based on their own abilities, desires, and preferences, rather than prescribed roles based on gender. This change in thought can lead to greater overall societal well-being and opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their gender. And this is what the paper aims to establish here through the references found in *Cantoras*.

Following Butler, it can be stated that gender construction is absolutely a social phenomenon, it is a cultural inscription on the body of an individual. However, the purpose of this paper is to trace the contestation and eventually the repudiation of such cultural or societal imposition based on an individual's gender. The queer characters in *Cantoras* subvert the established system of gender roles by acquiring and manifesting opposite gender attributes other than the ones that have been long associated with and, to some extent, imposed on them. In other words, the paper intends to trace the masculine traits found in the female characters and establish the fact that gender roles are primarily performative acts.

In *Cantoras* it is evident that female characters are not heterosexual, and therefore their behavioural structure is, to some extent, different from the so-called traditional female/feminine attributes and features. Their sexual orientation is different from what the state wants them to be. Through the course of the novel, it is evident that they identify themselves as queer females or lesbians. Their appearance as feminine is only a performative act, but they also have masculine traits in their nature and behaviour. Apart from the fact that they are queer women, they exhibit typical masculine attributes and perform opposite gender roles. The subversion of conventional gender role construction is evident in the queer relationship of the five women characters who identify themselves within the lesbian community. To substantiate the proposed argument, this following part of the paper draws references from the text as evidence and elaborates them accordingly.

All the five queer women have conventional, so-called masculine qualities in addition to their feminine attributes. The masculine traits of each female character are demonstrated and discussed as represented in the text. To begin with, Flaca, one of the main characters in the novel, has numerous qualities in her character that can be categorized as conventionally masculine qualities. However, the ideas and qualities that are being called masculine are stereotypical, and they are being taken as conventional normalised beliefs of society. Flaca is a butcher's daughter, who herself also works as a butcher in her father's shop. The way Robertis portrays her is more like a man than a woman. It is

evident in Romina's observation about Flaca who "...wore her masculinity like a cologne, she even wore cologne, men's cologne, so brazen was she. Hair pulled briskly back into a rubber band, broad shoulders, the tang of masculine scent. A steady gaze. Girl. As dangerous as a snake, coiled and hungry, ready to bite" (Robertis 22-23). Robertis' portrayal of Flaca consolidates her masculine traits and her identity more like a man rather than a female.

Paz, the youngest teen of the group, also doesn't see herself as an ideal girl. She falls into grave trouble for not sitting 'like a woman', and not sitting properly with the manners that a girl should have in front of a woman. This is the first objection in the form of warning that she faces in the dictatorship that also comes from a woman, who is the wife of an important official. Not sitting like a woman, and sitting like a man is an act of subverting gender roles. Here Paz deviates from the traditional, stereotypical gender roles endowed upon her by the unofficial principles of the society she lives in. She breaks the norms and goes beyond the stereotypes and thus performs opposite gender roles. When the old woman ordered Flaca to close her legs and "sit like a lady," Flaca resisted curtly - "There is no law against sitting" (Robertis 129). This is how she maintains her masculine traits in spite of the external threats.

Anita, who is playfully called 'La Venus' by her friends because of her exceptional beauty, displays her masculine traits through her actions. The author remarks, "It seemed that she'd found a way to live beyond the masculine-feminine divide.... She peppered men's clothing into her attire, wearing a necktie over a ruffled blouse, a men's suit jacket with silver bracelets that clamored brashly as she talked, a fedora with a sequined dress and feather boa" (Robertis 160).

Malena is quite different from the rest of the characters both in spirit and appearance. It is perhaps because of the memory of her early life, and the trauma associated with it. She is less zealous in terms of exhibiting masculine characteristics than the other characters of the novel.

Romina is perhaps the most important and mentally strongest character in the novel. She has the zeal for resistance against the dictatorship from an early age. From her childhood, she has been trying to prove herself equal to a man in her family. Like her brother, she also associates herself with communists and Tupamaro guerrillas. Her zeal for freedom from dictatorship made her suffer and endure the torture of machines, of electric shocks. Her eagerness to take responsibility, to replace her father's place in the absence of her brother shows her inclination for liberty. In this way, she also performs reversed gender roles. Therefore, these five main characters show masculine traits in spite of being female lesbians.

Therefore, because of the biopolitical control of the individual characters, they internalize reversed gender roles. Through the internalization and manifestation of the opposite gender roles, they subvert the state authority's radicalization to make common people subservient to the state.

Conclusion

Cantoras is a story of queer love between women of diverse characters and nature. The issues elaborated here are present like a shroud in the novel. The argument of the paper is substantiated with necessary information and quotations from the original texts. The paper has tried to demonstrate that the actions of the queer characters consciously or unconsciously acted against the authoritarian regime, eventually taking the shape of resistance. Besides that, it has also tried to unravel the undercurrent disposition of the queer characters through the concept of gender performativity. A text has many layers of meaning, from which this paper has endeavoured to pick two and examine them thoroughly. Carolina de Robertis is exceptionally good at writing fascinating fiction, the base of which is grounded on reality and history. *Cantoras* leaves scope for further research from different theoretical perspectives.

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