

The Glitch in Hyperreal of Love: Relationship Anarchy

Literature Review: Glitch Feminism – Legacy Russell

Glitch Feminism is a manifesto deriving both from cyber-feminist theory, and queer theory while reflecting on the contemporary world. Legacy Russell suggests that, today (contemporary world), a way in which we can express our true selves is enabled via internet, forums and chatrooms. (Russell 2020, 4-15) These processes and cyber-communities allow our generation to build and accept themselves without having to face the extreme consequences of real-life social situations. That these online personalities allow us to perform and express identities beyond societal (oppressive) structures of society: colonial, patriarchal, capitalistic etc. (Russell 2020, 20)

Although I agree that this allows for a new way of self-expression and exploration, the text lacks to explain how this results in the non-digital space. We live in a digital age, but I believe that questions of identity need to be applicable to our every day in non-digital sphere and the text lacks clarity on that. More often than not, the digital sphere also creates echo-chambers and filter bubbles which in result can cause cyber-personas to stay within their comfort zone and avoid confronting the 'real structures'.

'A glitch is an error' in the system. From a computational perspective, a glitch happens when the system fails to execute its tasks. (Russell 2020, 7) Glitch Feminism then refers to the ways in which social authority and systems of powers fail to accommodate people in their entirety, therefore creating a glitch, an active purpose for change. 'The etymology of glitch finds its deep roots in the Yiddish *gletshn* (to slide, glide, slip) or the German *glitschen* (to slip). Glitch is thus an active word, one that implies movement and change from outset; this movement triggers error.' (Russell 2020, 29)

The manifesto argues that through these errors in society, we can finally create new ideal identities for society. I find this section of the manifesto quite hopeful, however, I find it still quite unclear in which way that can happen. To re-introduce new norms and creating new 'normals'? If so, then what about people that also do not fit in those norms?

Glitch proposes a new approach in the way we resist to conform to these norms I mentioned above. An act of 'non-performance', non-conformance. An active refusal of the system to rethink and reframe our identity. (Russell 2020, 29) This 'non-performance' comes from the critical approach to the feminist theory: 'co-dependent on the gender binary and working change only within an existing social order.' (Russell 2020, 31)

I would argue that in order for this 'glitch' to really challenge and change society, it needs to create that glitch in structures and social constructions, instead of in individuals. I understand that the change starts in individuality, however I still think the text fails to expand on how this glitch works and can benefit individuals in the longer term on a structural level. This is why I believe this glitch in the form of Relationship Anarchy can be very powerful, and trigger social change. Marriage/Relationships are one of the oldest social constructs that is fuelled by patriarchy. By abolishing marriage as an institution and de-capitalising love, I can see a path in which we break free from the structures in play and experience love as it is.

Bibliography:

Russell, Legacy. 2020. *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*. Verso.