REFLECTIONS ON QUEER CULTURE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SELECT NOVELS OF ALAN HOLLINGHURST AND R. RAJ RAO

THE FINAL REPORT OF THE MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE,
PUNE – 411 007

FILE NO. 23-1421/14 (WRO), DATED 20th FEBRUARY, 2015

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Dr. NAMDEV KASHINATH PATIL
M. A., M. Phil., Ph. D.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,
R. B. MADKHOLKAR MAHAVIDYALAYA, CHANDGAD

APRIL, 2017
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It gives me an immense pleasure to submit my Minor Research Project entitled *Reflections on Queer Culture, A Comparative Study of the Select Novels of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao* to the Western Regional Office, UGC, Ganeshkhind, Pune.

I express my sincere gratitude to University Grants Commission, New Delhi for sanctioning Minor Research Project and providing me an opportunity to carry out my research work in the field of queer cultural studies. I extend my deep sense of gratitude to Hon. Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and BCUD Director, Shivaji University, Kolhapur for their help to complete this project work.

I am highly grateful to Dr. P. R. Patil, Principal, R. B. Madkholkar Mahavidyalaya, Chandgad for his constant support and encouragement in pursuing the project work. I am also thankful to my colleagues, the teaching and non-teaching faculty members, and librarian of R. B. Madkholkar Mahavidyalaya, Chandgad for their valuable suggestions, encouragement, support and cooperation.

I express my special thanks to Dr. Rajashri Barvekar, Dr. I. R. Jarali, Prof. Shahu Gawade, Prof. S. S. Sawant, Prof. S. K. Sawant, Dr. N. S. Masal, and Prof. V. K. Gawade for their inspiration and valuable help in the completion of the project work.

I am thankful to the librarians of Barr. Balasaheb Khardekar Library of Shivaji University, Kolhapur, and English and Foreign
Languages University, Hyderabad for furnishing me with relevant books and useful information.

I express my sincere gratitude to my family members. They have been a great source of inspiration and support throughout my project work.

Last but not least, I thank all those who helped me directly or indirectly to complete my research project.

Dr. Namdev Kashinath Patil
Principal Investigator
CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ............................................................................. i-ii

Introduction ...................................................................................... 1-8

Chapter I: Queer Theory ...................................................................... 9-29

Chapter II: Queer Culture in Alan Hollinghurst’s Novels ............... 31-66

Chapter III: Queer Culture in R. Raj Rao’s Novels ......................... 67-107

Chapter IV: Comparative Perspective ............................................... 109-127

Chapter V: Conclusion ....................................................................... 129-135

Bibliography ....................................................................................... 137-140
INTRODUCTION

Introduction:

The present study proposes a comparative perspective on the reflections of queer culture in the select novels of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao. Both Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao are significant writers emerged in the postmodern era who are unravelling social realities and modern queer culture through their literary artefacts. Their novels seem to explore gay subculture with the emotional complexities of everyday lives of the individuals. Alan Hollinghurst is a British writer whose works are always praised for its daring and fastidious depiction. His novels unfold the modern, decriminalized gay life of British society against the dangers and excitements of earlier decades. His elegant prose style, subtle representations of moral ambiguities coupled with frank representations of casual gay sex leads him to be the most important gay novelist of the recent period in British fiction. His works are filled with sharp witty quotes which gives some kind of glint to the queer cultural world unfolded in the novels. His explorations of gay life in the United Kingdom since the early mid-1970s with exact social notation and total nuance lead him to emerge as one of the influential novelists. He succeeds to project the utter depravity and despicability of his characters who find pointlessness in their privileged, selfish lives.

Similarly, R. Raj Rao becomes famous in India for his articulations of gay subculture in the society where it is almost difficult to represent such thematic concerns. He is the first writer in India who has depicted gay sexuality devoid of sentimentality, and with irreverent and dry humour. He blends together the socio-political realities with fiction to lead the readers to sudden shocks, rude jolts and abrupt awakenings.
Thus, both the novelists explore gay subculture rooted in the ordinary lives of the human beings; however, the queer, they represent, belongs to the different cultural backgrounds.

Queer theory is a relatively recent and evolving school of criticism, which questions the issues of gender identity and sexual orientation in literary texts. It overlaps in many respects with feminist theory in its aims and goals, being at once political and practical. It has been developed out of the concerns of feminist conceptions of gender issues and investigations of gay and lesbian studies regarding sexual identities. It not only covers the topics of bisexual, lesbian and gay subjects, but also focuses on the topics such as intersex, gender ambiguity, gender-corrective surgery, cross-dressing, etc. It claims to understand sexuality in terms of shifting boundaries, ambivalences, and cultural constructions in socio-cultural and historical contexts. It challenges heterosexuality, which is traditionally considered as the natural sexual norm in the society, to bring forth the strange and unsettled sexual behaviour which is binary to the hegemonic ideology. To many queer theorists, gender is not a fixed identity that shapes actions and thoughts, but rather a role that is performed. It also challenges the notion that there is such a thing as ‘normal,’ because that assumes the existence of a category for ‘deviant.’ Queer theorists study and challenge the idea that these categories exist at all, but particularly in terms of sexual activities and identities. They go beyond the boundaries of gay and lesbian studies as the focus is shifted from the homosexuality to anything that falls in the category of sexual activities. The novels of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao pose questions to the gender identities and sexual orientations and demonstrate the complex relationships as well as the complications in identity of the individuals in the society.
Significance and Objectives of the Study:

The present research project is a significant documentation on the terms related with queer culture in the light of the analysis of select literary artefacts. It should be treated as a multidisciplinary study as, on the many occasions, it refers to the treatises from the disciplines like Philosophy, World History, Sociology, Gender Studies and the theories of Cultural Studies. It throws light on certain major thematic concerns of queer culture such as gender relations, feminist consciousness, gay sexuality, social identity constructs, masculinity etc. in the select novels of the select writers. Therefore, the primary objective of the present research project is to analyse queer culture and to focus on gay sexuality in the select novels of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao.

Another important objective of the present study is to prepare a theoretical framework of queer cultural representations which will be useful for the further analysis of the select novels. The study aims to set specific characteristic features, which can be generalised in the queer literary theory in general and in the works of select writers in particular. In order to achieve this objective an attempt is made to take a brief survey of queer literary artefacts in the history of literature, which also helps to enhance the understanding of the social, political, economical, and philosophical context of the select works. In the light of above discussion some general objectives of the present study are:

- to understand the recent developments in Queer theory and to prepare the theoretical framework to analyse the select novels.

- to make a comprehensive statement on the explorations of queer thematic concerns in literature and for that to take the review of
literary history.

- to analyse the select novels of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao in the light of the theoretical framework prepared in the initial phase of the research work.

- to make an overarching and all encompassing statement on the select novels of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao in the light of queer theoretical conceptions.

**Scope and Limitations of the Study:**

The scope of the present study is limited only to the gay and homosexual reflections in the select novels of the select writers. The novels of both the writers – Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao – deal with the different issues pertaining to the socio-cultural and economic developments in the present century. Their novels represent the caste and class struggle in the society, the homosexual desires of the human beings, political and moral ambiguities, the identity crisis especially in terms of sex, etc. It is not possible to deal with all the thematic concerns of their works in a single research work as it would widen the scope of the study; therefore, only the gay and homosexual representations in the select novels are under scrutiny. The study is limited to the following novels of the select writers:

- Alan Hollinghurst’s *The Swimming-Pool Library* (1988)

It is also not possible to deal with the vast and ever-growing
concept of queer which not only includes the gay subculture and homosexual desires but also covers the bisexual, lesbian and gay subjects, intersex, gender ambiguity, shifting paradigms of gender roles in the socio-cultural and historical contexts, history of gender, etc. Therefore, the study is limited only to the gay and homosexual yearnings.

**Methodology:**

Interpretative, evaluative and analytical methods are used for the present research work. The emphasis is laid on the close reading and analysis of primary and secondary material available on the subject.

The first chapter of the research work attempts to conceptualize queer theoretical perspectives in the philosophical and literary context and generalizes certain maxims that are further used for the analysis of the select novels. The second and third chapters assess the select works of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao respectively in the light of queer theory. The forth chapter throws light on the comparative perspective that helps to discuss major differences and similarities in articulations of the both writers. The fifth chapter concludes the research work with some of the research findings. Thus, the present research work is a modest attempt in the exploration of select works in the preview of queer theoretical perspective.

**Life and Works of the Select Writers:**

**Alan Hollinghurst:**

Alan James Hollinghurst is an English novelist, poet and short story writer born in 26th May 1954 at Stroud, Gloucestershire. After completing his education from Magdalen College, Oxford, he worked as
a lecturer in different colleges including University College London. During his stay at Oxford, he was living with Andrew Motion, where they both shared their poetic views, which lead him to win the Newdigate Prize for poetry in 1974, which is a prestigious award. In 1982, he worked as paper’s deputy editor in *The Times Literary Supplement*, the leading international weekly for literary culture. In 1995, he left *The Times Literary Supplement* to become a full time writer. Presently he lives alone in London.

Hollinghurst has written five novels, four poetry collections, and three short stories. He has also translated two works of Jean – *Bajazet* (1991) and *Bérénice* (2012). His poetry collection entitled *Isherwood is at Santa Monica* was published in 1975 which also covers two hand-printed poems on a single folded sheet. His next ten poems are published in the book entitled *Poetry: Introduction 4*, a collection of poems of six writers including him. His next collection of provocative poetry entitled *Confidential Chats with Boy* was published in 1982, which is based on the book with the same name by the writer William Lee Howard. His poem *Mud* was published in London Review of Books in 1982.

Tory family during the Thatcher years, at the height of the aids epidemic. His next novel *The Stranger’s Child* (2011), which was long listed for the Booker Prize, reviews the gay history of Britain in the course of the life of minor poet, Cecil Valance.

Besides these novel Hollinghurst has written three short story collections – *A Thieving Boy* (1983), *Sharps and Flats* (1993) *Highlights* (2007). So far he has received number of awards for his fictional work including Man Booker Prize for *The Line of Beauty* in 2004 and Bill Whitehead Award for Lifetime Achievement from Publishing Triangle in 2011.

**R. Raj Rao:**

R. Raj Rao is an Indian novelist, poet and play writer born in 1955 in Bombay. After completing his Ph. D. in 1986 from University of Bombay, he has completed his post-doctoral research work at the Centre for Caribbean Studies, University of Warwick, UK for which he has also received the Nehru Centenary British Fellowship. Presently he is working as a professor and head of the Department of English at University of Pune. Like Hollinghurst, he also openly acknowledges that he is a gay.

Rao has published two novels, which are more vivid in describing gay sexuality in the modern Indian society. Rao makes his debut with the publication of The Boyfriend (2003), the first novel written by an Indian writer, through which he represents an unsparring irony, the realities of caste, class, religion, masculinity and the gay subculture in India. The novel unfolds the life of its protagonist Yudi, a gay journalist, who is frequently engaged in gay sex. His next novel, Hostel Room 131 (2010) unfolds the life of Siddharth, a man with unconventional beliefs, who becomes a full-time lover over the next seven years and stubbornly pursues the object of his lust and affection, despite his job as a college lecturer in Bombay.

Thus, both Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao are the significant novelists who have unfolded the gay subculture with the emotional complexities of everyday lives of the individuals. They pose questions to the gender identities, sexual orientations and demonstrate the complex relationships as well as the complications in identity of the individuals in the society. As the present study makes a comprehensive statement on the queer culture in the light of the select novels of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao, it is essential here to prepare a theoretical framework of queer.
CHAPTER I
QUEER THEORY

1.1 Introduction:

Queer theory is the discipline of post-structuralism that provides insights in the reading of queer texts as well as theorisation of queerness itself. It has been emerged especially in the early 1990s as a reaction to the feminist disputes over the topic of gender which is able to form its essential self. It is also emerged as a reaction to gay and lesbian studies which investigates sexual acts and identities as the formation of the society. While gay and lesbian studies scrutinize the natural and unnatural homosexual behaviour, queer studies go beyond a step further to analyse any kind of sexual activity or identity that falls into normative and deviant categories. It looks into the disparity between sex, gender and sexual desires, intersex, gender ambiguity etc. It questions the formation of stable and correlated sexes, genders, and sexualities to bring forth the formation of identity as a constellation of multiple and unstable positions.

Queer theory focuses on the shifting boundaries, ambivalences, and cultural constructions of the sexuality which has been ever changing in the socio-cultural historical context. It poses questions to the essentialist conceptions of homosexuality and heterosexuality, which proposes naturalised social sexual norm, to point out the strange and unsettled workings of the sexual roles. Where heterosexuality focuses on the straight sexual relations, queer theory develops the notion of non-straightness of sexual desires; however, at the same time, it also touches the realms of fantasy, unconsciousness, repression, and denial, which fall in the category of heterosexuality. It observes diversity in the expression
of gender and sexuality to undermine the feminist belief that each sex comes with its own essential characteristics. Queer theorists believe that sexuality is much more fluid and unpredictable than society’s construction – heterosexuality – suggests.

1.2 Origin and Development of Queer Theory:

Queer theory is developed out of the post-structuralists readings of the texts, and especially from the ideology of deconstruction. It was used in deconstructionist critical approaches over the issues of sexual identity in terms of normative constructions of straight ideology. However, it was Teresa de Lauretis, an Italian feminist and film theorist, who coined the term ‘queer theory’ for a conference organized at the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1990. She has edited the special issue based on that conference entitled *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, where the term queer theory was used to refer to the disparities between the sexes. Since then, the term queer theory has been used in various ways to deconstruct the existing massive standards of social codes and classifications; as well as, how these codes emerge as metanarratives.

Queer theory examines the association among power distribution and identification; and at the same time, tries to understand the diverse facades of repression and privilege. It goes beyond merely sexual identification of the genders and provides an applicable framework to investigate various issues in relations to a social hegemony and marginalized self resulted out of social practices and identity. Thus, queer theory is multifaceted field of study which is complex in nature as it touches to different layers of sexual identification. At this stage, it is essential here to define queer theory.
1.3 Defining Queer:

Queer theory is generally associated with homosexuality. It is both the continuation as well as break with the liberal ideas of gay theorists and the adherents of lesbian models. It comes to forth out of the pressures created in the debates about questions of lesbian and gay identity. Annamarie Jagose concentrated his thoughts around these debates and defined queer in the book entitled *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (1997) as:

Queer focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire. For most, queer has prominently been associated with simply those who identify as lesbian and gay. Unknown to many, queer is in association with more than just gay and lesbian, but also cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery. (21)

According to Jagose queer deals with the identification of disparities between what is considered as the normal sexual recognition and desires. It not only focuses on the gay and lesbian identities but also concentrates on the cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery. It identifies culturally marginalized sexual identities and the role of contributing factors to such feelings like race, class, religion, etc.

David Halperin is another theorist who has defined queer in his book *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* published in 1997 as:

Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an
essence. ‘Queer’ then, demarcates not a positivity but a positionality vis-à-vis the normative. (6)

He refers queer as something which is odd to the existing association and socially determined codes of sexuality. He places queer in direct opposition of the normative or essentialists views.

Another queer theorist Michael Warner tries to present a concrete definition of a queer which expands its scope. He defines queer as:

Social reflection carried out in such a manner tends to be creative, fragmentary, and defensive, and leaves us perpetually at a disadvantage. . . . Because the logic of the sexual order is so deeply embedded by now in an indescribably wide range of social institutions, and is embedded in the most standard accounts of the world, queer struggles aim not just at toleration or equal status but at challenging those institutions and accounts. The dawning realisation that themes of homophobia and heterosexism may be read in almost any document of our culture means that we are only beginning to have an idea of how widespread those institutions and accounts are. (57)

He puts forth the fragmentary nature of the social institutions which defend the created norms of sexuality to which queer challenges. He believes that heterosexuality is deeply rooted in the society, which does not provide any ground to the human being; and, therefore, it is a disadvantage to the social lives of the people. Queer focuses on this situation to point out how institutions have taken heterosexuality to the extreme point, which ultimately provides realisation to the existing norms
Queer theory investigates and challenges the categorisation of sexuality which is further extended into the categories of gender. It is necessary to determine the gender identities which are formed with many layers of characters that make the categorization very difficult as a personality cannot be labelled with one characteristic. This resistance destabilizes personality classes, which are intended to recognize the sexed subject and place people inside a solitary prohibitive sexual introduction.

1.4 Philosophical Perceptions of Queer:

The philosophical debates about gender relations has a long history; however, it was the decade of 1970s and 1980s, where critics started to discuss seriously sexuality as a field of philosophical phenomenon as they began to see it as the part and parcel of culture and society. The word queer was firstly applied in relation to the nation to understand the paradoxes in politics which were the results of new ways of thinking in the respective field. Yet in the subsequent period, the term queer nation no longer began to project the issues of politics; but the small gay resurgence began to take shape in the decade of late 1980s and early 1990s which gave rise to new discipline called queer theory in the fields of gay and lesbian studies. During the period, Teresa de Lauretis first time used the term queer in the special issues entitled Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities which was the result of the proliferation of the sexual discourses raised in the conference. She writes that “similar to the description Berube and Escoffier used for Queer Nation, queer unsettles and questions the genderedness of sexuality” (123). After three years of the event, she relinquished the expression in the light of the fact that it had been assumed control by standard strengths and foundations it
was initially begat to resist.

Since the emergence of the queer theory, number of philosophers focused on the representation of the sexual identities. They addressed whether individuals of changing sexual introductions had the same political objectives, and whether those in the sexual minority felt that they could be spoken to alongside others of various sexualities and introductions. It has not only been limited to sexual identities, but also extended to the practices and identities in earlier time periods. It examines the restrictions imposed on the recognition of the individual identity. It tries to investigate the way identities are stabilized around gay and lesbian models and provides a ground in the form of queerness to oppose those identities. Queer theory attempts to maintain a critique more than define a specific identity.

Recognizing the inescapable viciousness of personality legislative issues, and having no stake in its own belief system, eccentric is less a character than a scrutiny of character. In any case, it is in no position to envision itself outside the circuit of issues stimulated by personality legislative issues. Rather than guarding itself against those reactions that its operations draw in, strange permits those reactions to shape it’s – until further notice incomprehensible – future headings. The term, composes Brooker, “will be revised, dispelled, rendered obsolete to the extent that it yields to the demands which resist the term precisely because of the exclusions by which it is mobilized” (19). The preparation of eccentric brings to forth the states of political portrayal, its expectations and impacts, its imperviousness to and recuperation by the current systems of power.

Michel Foucault is the prominent theorist who has concentrated his
thoughts around sexual acts and its perception in the society. In his book *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1976), he focuses on the way power emerges as a social construct which has an ability to control everything. He foregrounds the belief of people over traditionally constructed ideas about sexuality to shed light on the gay community which was restricted from the sexual identifications by the so called old, rich, straight white people, to whom he calls ‘new Victorians.’ He finds that the manner in which the discussions about sex are held actually controls the sexual activities. Hence, it is important to re-evaluate the concepts of sexuality, especially by the people who are not straight white people so that it can be set free from the traditional views. According to Foucault, patriarchal capitalist have the power to control the discussions about taboo subjects like sex; and when power speaks, the others are silenced automatically.

However, as Foucault writes, the European straight white people lost their control over power in the early eighteenth century; ultimately the different ways they invented to silence the taboo subjects became futile. As a result, they failed to separate themselves from the previous generation of monarch. It leads to create distance from sex and talks about sex from the social scene. It was Sigmund Freud who, as Foucault points out, exposed people to the new ways of thinking about sex. So, Freud successfully unlocked new dimensions to cast off the Victorian incarceration. Yet the breakthrough given by Freud failed to touch many hidden areas in the sexuality. Foucault claims that though Freudian philosophy aroused debates regarding penis power and penis envy, it could not reach to the so far silenced and very important voices of people like queer and failed to answer the question raised by them.

We are informed that if repression has indeed been the
fundamental link between power, knowledge and sexuality
since the classical age, it stands to reason we will not be able
to free ourselves from it except at a considerable cost:
nothing less than a transgression of laws, a lifting of
prohibitions, an irruption of speech, a reinstating of pleasure
within reality, and a whole new economy in the mechanism
of power will be required. (45)

Foucault concentrates on the law, the right to speak freely, and codes of
sexual ethical quality as three zones where the systems of power need to
change. He believes in new dynamic ways at the primary level to
deconstruct the traditional power constructions established by the new
Victorians. He even goes beyond the sexual debates to touch the realms
of varied thoughts through queer theory; hence, he intends to dismantle
all traditional power centres. His arguments about power and its control
shaped new theoretical grounds.

Judith Butler, is another theorist, a queer woman, intellectual,
activist, humanitarian, who belongs to the category of third-wave
feminism. She accepts the philosophical conceptions of Foucault and
extended them to the categories of gender and sexual orientation. In her
groundbreaking work, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of
Identity (1990), she has forever changed the way the talk about gender
and sexuality was held. Masculine and feminine, straight and gay – most
every category which is used to talk about people is socially constructed.
According to her, when gender is considered merely as performance, then
it should allow the people to take any gender roles they think suitable for
them. She raises the questions regarding the gender roles:

Are there really masculine and feminine traits that come
exclusively with the genes that make us male and female? Why do we care? Is anything really “abnormal”? Isn’t every behaviour just a performance, meant to please someone or something? We’re all actors and all the world’s a stage, right? (57)

She questions the validity of personality traits which separates man and woman, and includes any behaviour into the category of the performance. So there is no difference between feminine and masculine characteristics. The gender only satisfies social codes and not exactly the individual’s physical traits which have so much importance in the society.

Butler challenges the male perspectives of Freud and his adherents who suggest that the penis of man is the centre of power. Freud describes this central symbol as phallus and further focuses on the desires of women who attempts to seize this power symbol, and ultimately man who have that power. Jacques Lacan extended the ideas of Freud to claim that man stays at the position of power as long as woman exists to serve for the power. Butler questions to the male superiority having power symbol and undermines phallus as the centre in the discussions about gender and sexuality. She writes:

gender is a choice, or that gender is a role, or that gender is a construction that one puts on, as one puts on clothes in the morning, that there is a ‘one’ who is prior to this gender, a one who goes to the wardrobe of gender and decides with deliberation which gender it will be today. (63)

She claims that gender is a performance, and therefore, it depends upon the choice of person to perform the role. It is very difficult to determine
gender because it is complicate as it is developed in the perspective of various expectations of the individual’s behaviour. She argues that on the basis of patriarchal norms, one can perform any role expected in the society.

Butler asserts that it is difficult to conceptualize women as the opposite of men which detaches women from the masculine traits. In fact, man and woman as a whole are the sexiest and heterosexiest way of categorization which is futile to describe much more complex phenomenon like gender. She illustrates Freud’s theory of Oedipus Complex which states that boy is attracted towards his mother and competes with the father. She accepts the idea and further widens its scope with the assertions of Lacan who have pointed that when mother becomes reason of the competition then she automatically becomes the centre of power; which means that all straight, heterosexual men are indirectly attracted towards power – phallus. She also claims that people have different secret desires which is the result of the incongruity in their sexual identities, and those desires they try to hide in their daily lives. They behave according to their sexual categories only to keep secret those desires. It means that gender is the tool to hide truth about desires.

Eve Sedgwick has concentrated her thoughts around such hidden layers of human mind in her book *The Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) and attempted to show the effects of hidden and exposed desires over the behaviour of human beings. According to her, masculine and feminine are just bare outlines in which number of deliberation, behavioural patterns and human wishes or desires cannot be included. People always try to keep secret those hidden desires when they interact in the society. Hence, as Sedgwick claims, people go in and out of closets every time when they consider such a hidden desires.
Sedgwick’s proposes the idea of closetedness as a performance created out of the speech act of silence, but it differs from the exact silence as it grows in fits and starts in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it. She thinks that the relations created in the closet are similar to the relations between known and unknown, between the explicit and the inexplicit which define homosexual or heterosexual; and which are revealed more specifically in the speech acts. Therefore, all social elements are influenced by the categories of homosexual or heterosexual divide. The speech acts involved in hiding particular areas of sexuality and obstructing the ways of revealing those aspects talks much more about the personality of an individual. The language of silence helps to make the stories about person other than hidden desires which are developed in fits and starts. The hidden desires are articulated in codes or different ways one presents himself or answers the questions about identity. The stories created to hide the secrets become vivid and outlandish as much as the person chooses to shut the doors of closet. Thus, the individual who have closet utilizes silence as the way of expressions. Society understands those expressions and tries to interpret those expressions as per their own point of views; it leads to emerge another silence which is also secure.

Sedgwick asserts that the relationships between known and unknown develops new ways of understanding things. When person decides to share something or not to share something, it affects directly over the perspectives he holds to the world. It means that the homosexual or heterosexual desires affect all streams of the society. Here Sedgwick brings to forth queer theory as a way to discuss these secret issues of the people which they try to hide. The new way in the form of queer theory to reveal the secrets alters the cultural views of traditional harmful
tendencies which have silenced the untold. She claims that the revelation of the secrets helps the person to come out from the silence. She examines the prudish ways of Victorians who have invented the term homosexual to provide only two options for the sexual expressions.

Sedgwick claims that gay and straight or heterosexual categories are created by men to describe the men only. On the other hand a woman is called as lesbian when she is attracted towards other woman. No one calls them as gay woman. However, the women who like other women are discussed only in terms of men and against men. Therefore, Sedgwick expects to categorize third kind of sexuality in the form of queer sex. It gives once again the impression that gender and sexuality have complicated internal connections. When human being performs the role given to him by the straight or heterosexual category, he hides some of the secrets of his personality in the closet. But when someone decides to go beyond the boundaries and step out of closet by declaring, for example being a gay or transsexual, it becomes the gigantic performance for the society. Therefore it is not possible to stabilize the gender roles as hidden desires may not present while revealing true self, as it is constant in flux.

Michael Warner and Lauren Berlant are the queer theorists who have challenged the idea of heteronormative. They view the structure of the society as something determined by the heterosexuality. They critique these dominant sexual practices as:

heteronormativity means the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent – that is, organized as a sexuality – but also privileged. Its coherence is always provisional, and its privilege can take several sometimes
contradictory forms: unmarked, as the basic idiom of the personal and the social; or marked as a natural state; or projected as an ideal or moral accomplishment. It consists less of norms that could be summarized as a body of doctrine than of a sense of rightness produced in contradictory manifestations – often unconscious, immanent to practice or to institutions. Contexts that have little visible relation to sex practice, such as life narrative and generational identity, can be heteronormative in this sense, while in other contexts sex between men and women might not be heteronormative. Heteronormativity is thus a concept distinct from heterosexuality. (113)

According to Berlant and Warner, the social setup is structured with the heterosexuality which decides and lays down the rules for the families. These rules are based on the accepted social behaviours which set the characteristics of good family and distinguish it from the family which does not accept those rules. Everyone accepts those social codes and practices them in their lives and therefore those rules have become the normative behavioural patterns of the society. Building home, saving money for vocations, enjoying weekends in the places like Disneyland, buying goods are some of the features of good family. If any family fails to satisfy these needs, then it may be in depression and badly needs, as heteronormative codes suggest, support and encouragement. It suggests that sex is not important at all to become heteronormative. Heteronormativity begins with the missionary sex between married couples; however, it is more related with the behavioural patterns in the society. On the other hand, homonormativity is used to describe activities of normative gay couples who are married and have raised kids like
heterosexual couples. In the social structure, a privilege is given to the heteronormativity, which has various affects, where it is almost difficult to challenge that social set up for the gay couples.

Lee Edelman is another queer theorist whose thoughts in his work *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* are provocative in the field. He finds queer as a force which drives to death to challenge the social structure that gives importance to the heterosexuality and accepted behavioural patterns. He assumes that heterosexuality only serves the function of breeding which guarantees the survival of human species. But thinking about the future of human beings is the outdated way and, as Edelman believes, belongs to the prehistoric era.

Pope John Paul II returned to this theme, condemning state–recognized same-sex unions as parodic versions of authentic families, ‘based on individual egoism’ rather than genuine love. Justifying that condemnation, he observed, such a ‘caricature’ has no future and cannot give future to any society. Queers must respond to the violent force of such constant provocations not only by insisting on our equal right to the social order’s prerogatives, not only by avowing our capacity to promote that order’s coherence and integrity, but also by saying explicitly what Law and the Pope and the whole of the Symbolic order for which they stand here anyway in each and every expression or manifestation of queer sexuality: Fuck the social order and the Child in whose name we’re collectively terrorized; fuck Annie; fuck the waif from Les Mis; fuck the poor, innocent kid on the Net; fuck Laws both with capital lust and small; fuck the whole network of Symbolic relations and the future that serves as
Edelman highlights the more serious problems like war, poverty, oppression of the minorities, etc. than breeding the species. The root cause for all those above mentioned problems and man’s grief is the child; when child does not remain at the man’s centre of interest to protect, educate, dress, promote, satisfy, show off, market, defend, then people have very little, in society’s eyes. Edelman questions to the idea of placing child in the centre and intends to restructure the present social order. If man forgets his everyday work in order to focus on his child, then he will automatically be driven to his end. It will place the human being at the same level to live heterosexiest, sexiest lifestyle without care of future.

Edelman believes that child has turn out to be a golden idol: a cult just about a complete prevailing social order revolves, from markets to vacations, music, education, defence, immigration, fashion, food, and transportation. So, the child is a means used by government, capitalism, and moral code-makers to organize people’s lives. But his strong attack reveals the fact that non-procreative people are almost always either ignored or discriminated against. He believes that it is wrong to codify the lives of the people because all people could not breed the child.

Another theorist is Judith Jack Halberstam whose ideas are associated with Edelman. Where Edelman sees queer as a death drive, Halberstam assesses queer as a failure. He searches substitutes for what is understood as a success in the traditional heteronormative society. According to him, the concept of success is delineated by the heterosexual people. Therefore, he wishes to do not remain in that category; instead, he wants to fail. He undermines the traditional thoughts
which give privilege to the existing cultural order, which is controlled by the rich white class. He writes:

Failing is something queers do and have always done exceptionally well; for queers failing can be a style, to cite Quentin Crisp, or a way of life, to cite Foucault, and it can stand in contrast to the grim scenarios of success that depend upon ‘trying and trying again.’ In fact if success requires so much effort, then maybe failure is easier in the long run and offers different rewards. And what kind of rewards can failure offer us? Perhaps most obviously, failure allows us to escape the punishing norms that discipline behaviour and manage human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to orderly and predictable adulthoods. Failure preserves some of the wonderful anarchy of childhood and disturbs the supposedly clean boundaries between adults and children, winners and losers. (123)

Halberstam believes that failure has so many rewards – it helps to get rid off from the punishments, there is no need to live with discipline, it preserves the childhood, or, in fact, there is no boundary between childhood and adulthood, etc. – which provides the meaning to the life of a queer. On the other hand, success is measured on the basis of physical behaviour of the human beings. For example, when infant takes a first step, then it is called as a successful move from the infant to the toddlers. Here Halberstam draws attention towards the process of thinking which is depended upon the postulation that all people are heterosexual. He states that punishing norms controls the human behaviour and leads the human being to behave in a disciplined manner. In a way, these punishing norms give direction to the human development. He points out everyday
situation to highlight many instances in the lives of the human beings which are out of order. These instances are nothing but the failure of human beings, where it is almost impossible to satisfy expected gender behaviour within the limited period of time that makes the situation more problematic.

Halberstam proposes the idea that each individual has his own timetable for maturity, which is separate from another person. The queer person does not follow this timetable. Instead of this, he follows his own decisions. It means that in a way he fails to follow expected timetable of the development. It is here, Halberstam argues, queer person finds happiness. There is no specific sexual category like man or woman of the queer. Thus, the philosophical perceptions of these thinkers bring to forth the fact that the heterosexual society exercises its control over the sexual activities by restricting gay sexual activities. Masculine and feminine, straight and gay are socially constructed categories, which forces the human being to suppress their desires; therefore, people should be allowed to any gender role suitable for them.

1.5 Reflections of Queer Culture in Literature: A Brief Review

In the light of the above theoretical framework of the queer culture, it is essential here to take a brief review of reflections of queer culture in literature. The survey of queer cultural articulations will help to understand the queer literary phenomenon in the midst of heteronormative socio-cultural conceptions. The history of gay literature reveals that it is applied collectively to the portrayal of homosexual behaviour by the LGBT community. It refers to the socio-political, historical, aesthetic literature that covers variety of themes and concepts in order to validate understand and beautify the same sex attraction.
Along with the homoerotic desires, it concentrates on the psychological issues such as alienation and depression faced by the characters, who experience discrimination due to the heterosexual prejudices that puts homosexuality in the category of abusive and offensive activities. The themes of homosexual love are further coupled with the fears of AIDS, religious condemnation, violence, suicidal impulses, questions of existence, etc. that mark the socio-cultural conflicts.

The history of reflecting homosexual relations dates back to the 5th century BC, where Aeschylus in his tragedy *The Myrmidons* depicts the pederastic love between Achilles and Patroclus. Since then homosexual love depicted in the tragedy remains in the critical discussions as an example of the brave people, who sacrifice themselves for the sake of love. Similarly, Virgil, in his *Eclogues*, presents the character of Corydon, a shepherd, who is in love with a boy called Alexis. In the early period during 1st century AD, Petronius in his *Satyricon* unfolds the homosexual relations between Encolpius and Giton, a sixteen years old handsome boy. During the period of Enlightenment, gay writers project the themes of homosexuality which alludes to the characters in Greek mythology that displays nudity between male.

The explicit homosexual relations appear in the German writer Augustus’ novel entitled as *A Year in Arcadia: Kyllenion*, published in the year 1805. The novel depicts gay love affair in ancient Greece that overcomes all obstacles in the life and live happily. Similarly, Bayard Taylor is the first American writer who gave voice to the homosexual urges in his novel *Joseph and His Friend: A Story of Pennsylvania* (1870), which presents “the story of a newly engaged young man who finds himself instead falling in love with another man” (Whitcomb, 186). The novel takes political stance in justifying homosexuality with the
argument that it speaks for those who are not able to take the gender role according to the norms of society. Edward Prime-Stevenson is another American writer who has explored homosexual relationships in his novel *Imre: A Memorandum* (1906). The two men Oswald and Imre meet by chance in a cafe in Budapest and become friends, but in the course of time, it is disclosed that they are in gay sex relationships.

Clarkson Crane’s novel *The Western Shore* (1925) presents story of a gay English professor at Berkeley in a period when the novels of the period were cantered on the themes of romance, sports and parties. Published in 1931, Blair Niles’ *Strange Brother* is another gay novel that demonstrates platonic love relationships between Mark Thornton and June Westbrook. Mark in the end of the novel commits suicide as he fails to reveal his true sexual attraction in the society. Robert Scully’s novel *The Scarlet Pansy* (1932) depicts vividly the American queer life of Fay Etrange who struggles because of same sex desires. The novel *Torment* (1933) written by Richard Meeker that unfolds the gay live of its protagonist Kurt Gray during the World War. Kurt realizes that the homosexual life is better than the heterosexual love relations. Published in 1950, James W. Fugaté’s novel *Quatrefoil: A Modern Novel* presents the story of its protagonist Phillip Froelich, who during his court-martial is drawn towards Tim, an officer who assists him. In his confusion, Philip has a sex with Tim’s wife who then takes divorce from Tim. However, Philip confesses his attraction towards Tim that reveals his homosexuality.

Gordon Merrick’s novel *The Lord Won’t Mind* (1970) is another gay novel that presents the homosexual desires of its protagonist Charlie Mills, who is obsessed with sex and intends to have sexual adventures with Peter Martin, who is going to stay with him. When Peter arrives, he
is instantly fall in love with Charlie and is eager to have sex with him as he has never done it before. However, later, Charlie is forced to marry with a woman, but he breaks away with his wife and returns to Peter for the homosexual desires. E. M. Forster’s novel *Maurice* (1971) explores the homosexuality of Maurice Hall, who is drawn towards gay sex through his reading of ancient Greece writings about same sex which is introduced to him by his friend Clive. However, Clive is heterosexual man who turns down his proposal that ultimately makes him desperate and turns to therapy which also fails in the course of time as he consumes sex with Alec. Hollinghurst also deals with the gay themes in his novels *The Swimming-Pool Library, The Folding Star, The Line of Beauty* and *The Stranger’s Child* which also reveal the issues of gay men in the society.

Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) is the striking novel in the Indian context that reveals the intersex life of its protagonist Aftab after he is transited into a woman and struggles to find identity both in terms of gender and community. The Crossword Award winning novel *A Life Apart* (2008) written by Neel Mukherjee is another groundbreaking work in the field of queer Indian literature that reveal the complexities in the society. The novel presents the tales of three different characters viz. Ritwik, Mrs. Gilby and Mrs. Cameron who face violent forces of the society. Ritwik spends much of his time cruising, especially in men’s toilets; Mrs. Gilby experience the transformation of India from colonized to independent; and Mrs. Cameron suffers with the death of her homosexual son. Thus, the novel focuses on the treatment given to homosexual men and the tribulations in gay sex work along with the issues emerged during the transition of India from the colonialism.

Kunal Mukherjee’s *My Magical Palace* is a thrilling novel about
the homosexuality of Rahul, who struggles to identify and accept his own sexual role in the formative years of his life. He has been spending his life with Andrew as a couple at San Francisco, but unexpectedly leaves the place and returns to his native place. Andrew then comes to know that Rahul’s parents are looking for a girl to marry with Rahul; so he asks Rahul to select the life either of homosexual or heterosexual. R. Raj Rao’s novels The Boyfriend and Hostel Room 131 also deal with the gay lives of its protagonists who overcome all the obstacles to happily reunite with their homosexual partners.

Thus, the brief review of the queer literary endeavours points out that same sex attraction is not a new sensibility, but it is a repressed desire that remain in the closet due to the fear of being marginalised and mistreated in the society. The literary works reveal that identification of the gender roles is not an easy thing for the homosexual characters; rather, they have to face psychological as well as social trauma. However, the homosexual men succeeds in the gay sex love relations as they feel homosexual world is better and more safe than the normal heteronormative society.
CHAPTER II
QUEER CULTURE IN ALAN HOLLINGHURST’S NOVELS

In the light of the theoretical frame developed in the earlier chapter, the present chapter analyzes Alan Holinghurst’s select novels i.e. The Swimming Pool Library and The Line of Beauty respectively. Holinghurst’s novels are always described as lavish, poised, and sinuously alert. All of his novels deal with the lives of the gay men, their passions and oppressions, who try to have secret affairs. His novel The Swimming Pool Library has created a sensation in the literary world with an enthralling, darkly erotic homosexuality. It is, as described in one of the book reviews, “an elegy possessed of chilling clarity, for ways of life that can no longer be lived with impunity” (www.goodreads.com). Hollinghurst observes everything about the lives of the two men – William Beckwith, a young gay aristocrat and Lord Nantwich, an old African – in an impeccable and meticulous style.

The novel opens with William Beckwith, the protagonist, who lives in London. He is twenty five years old and wealthy man as he has received a huge estate of his grandfather Viscount Beckwith who was a statesman of London. William is the perfect example and representative of sophisticated upper-class society, who need not think about the daily livelihood. He is well educated and handsome young man who always tries to maintain his body with regular exercise. However, he has an excessive drinking habit and being a gay man, he is always busy in casual but frequent sexual relationships. He continuously searches for the sexual pleasures and therefore the bodies of other men are the centre of his attention.

William has numbers of successful homosexual affairs with
various men including Arthur, a working class black teenage boy, and Phil, a waiter in the hotel. He always thinks about sex whenever he sees other men, especially the lower class men. It can be witnessed in the beginning of the novel, when he encounters a couple of London Transport maintenance men and is drawn towards the thirty-five years old severely handsome black man. He feels “more than respect, a kind of tenderness for him. I imagined his relief at getting home and taking his boots off and going to bed as the day brightened around the curtains and the nose of the streets built up outside” (The Swimming Pool Library 1-2). He is sexually attracted towards the black man and intends to have a sex with him. When he is thinking about the sexual relations, he notices the pale gold wedding ring band in the hands of the black man and then his thoughts of having sex with him disappear from his mind.

William’s sexual encounters with Arthur clearly show his preoccupations with physical attractions to other men. When he is going back to home, there are only the thoughts of sex with Arthur. It can be observed in the novel when he writes that “the idea of Arthur, too, which I had suppressed to make it all the more exciting when I recalled it,” reveals the way he tries to suppress his thoughts of sex with Arthur (2). In his excitements, he thinks of Arthur as:

\[\ldots\] before I found my beautiful, cocky, slutish Arthur – as Arthur it was impossible to imagine old. His smooth face, with its huge black eyes and sexily weak chin, was always crossed by the light and shade of uncertainty, and met your gaze with the rootless self-confidence of youth. (ibid)

The seventeen years old Arthur’s body seems to be very appealing to William. He imagines Arthur to be alone in his flat looking at his pictures
in the swimming costume, which would have created erotic feelings in him. In the thoughts of Arthur, William reaches to home and consumes sex with Arthur, which is thoroughly expressed here in the novel as:

I kissed him, my left hand sliding between his high, plump buttocks while with the other I stroked the back of his head. Oh, the ever-open softness of black lips; and the strange dryness of the knots of his pigtails, which crackled as I rolled them between my fingers, and seemed both dead and half erect. (3)

Sex with Arthur gives William a kind of satisfaction and he feels as if he is “riding high on sex and self-esteem – it was my time, my belle époque – but all the while with a faint flicker of calamity . . . something seen out of the corner of the eye” (4). Being a rich man, he need not to work or care for his livelihood. He has everything – education, upper class, physical beauty, sophisticated culture, etc. which further helps him to enjoy his life.

However, William has not only inherited the wealth of his grandfather, but he has also got the identity of straight white people who, as Foucault puts it, believe in heterosexuality. He is also aware about the fact that it is this world which provides him a character and prepares to live the life in the society. His fascination for the straight lines in the park, as he walks in the park, shows his attraction for the straight men’s world. However, the straight world is also full with cruelty, which is evidenced in the character of William as he is described by his friend James. According to James, William is a cruel man who behaves rashly with a kid who causes irritation to him. James writes that “Will becoming more and more brutal, more and more sentimental” (6). Yet William
secretly escapes from this brutal world and behaves gently when he enters in the gay world. In fact, the gay world is more dominant than the straight world. It is observed in the novel, when William states:

I was certainly sentimental with Arthur, deeply sentimental and lightly brutal, at one moment caressingly attentive, the next glutting him with sex, mindlessly – thoughtlessly. It was a most beautiful thing I could imagine – all the more so for our knowledge that we could never make a go of it together. Even among the straight lines of the Park I wasn’t thinking straight – all the time I looped back to Arthur, was almost burdened by my need for him, and by oppressive mildness of the day. The Park after all was only stilted countryside, its lake and trees inadequate reminders of those formative landscapes, the Yorkshire dales, the stream and watermeads of Winchester whose influence was lost in the sexed immediacy of London life. (7-8)

The way William thinks reveals that queer culture dominates his life and under its shadow every influence is lost. He lives physically in the straight world, but all the time, his mind wanders in the gay world. Thus, the formative years of shaping the cultures are represented by the Park and, on the other hand, William’s acknowledgement of importance of homosexuality in the life depicts the challenges to this existed straight world.

William strolls through the London Park in order to cruise a young man, where he spots a lone Arab boy and instantly attracts towards him. The strong urge to have a sex with the boy leads William to chase a boy. While pursuing the boy, he enters in the public toilet and decides to wait
for that boy to come there. Meanwhile, he comes across some older men who have lodged there. All of sudden one of the older men perchance received a minor heart attack and fall down on ground. William rushes to help the suffering man and in order to save his life attempts different ways including artificial respiration. He remembered the exercises in the school of using artificial respiration to save the life of casualty: “I gripped his nose with two fingers and inhaling deeply, sealed my lips over his. I saw with a turn of the head his chest swell” (11). He is aware that he has brought a man to life from his death.

After the incident William returns to home where he discovers Arthur in horrified condition. He is totally wet, therefore William invites him in. He also finds that there are some wounds on the cheeks and throat of Arthur as he takes off his clothes. Soon he comes to know that Arthur was involved in a quarrel with Harold, his big brother and his friend. The argument between them about the drugs leads Arthur to kill Harold’s friend accidently and consequently Arthur is wounded and bleeding. He further tells William that he cannot go back to his house as his brother will kill him. Therefore, William decides to protect Arthur and provides him shelter. William calls James to nurse the wounds of Arthur, who supposes that William and Arthur may be involved in the fight. After the treatment, William tries to get rid of James as early as possible. Hence, he avoided to tell everything to James so that he can leave them alone. The terrific condition of Arthur and the frightened William feel alienation in the house. In fact the feeling of loneliness leads them to involve in the homosexual relationships. It is clearly witnessed in the relationships between William and Arthur:

Sex took on an almost purgative quality, as if after hours of inertia and evasion we could burn off our unspoken fears in
vehement, wordless activity. Sex came to justify his presence there, to confirm that we were not just two strangers trapped together by a fateful mistake. (41)

Sex has become the only tool to get rid off from the alienation for the two men. It has also becomes a symbol of security as both feel protected, and especially Arthur. Sex with Arthur becomes a daily routine matter for William: “once these practical measures had been taken that the impractical day after day of Arthur and me in the flat began” (43). Arthur finds himself confined in the company of William, which leads him to live most of the time in loneliness. To avoid this loneliness and the tensions of being caught in the murder case, occasionally William and Arthur are involved in an abusive sex. It shows that homosexuality can provide the other world free from the tensions of the everyday world.

William has also joined the Corinthian Club in Great Russell Street, where he can have the erotic pleasures. Though the club is not formally declared as a gay club, it provides the perfect homoerotic environment to the gay men. He regularly goes there to swim and exercise, where while exercising he gets an opportunity to cruise men. He loves the place more dearly because it is “gloomy and functional underworld full of life, purpose and sexuality” (14). William has not gone to the club for the last three days since he has given a shelter to Arthur. The club is indeed a private place for William. Then he goes back to home, in the roasting environment where Arthur is waiting for him. At first, he avoids looking at Arthur, and even feels a hatred for a while. The feeling of insecurity once again leads him to have a sex with Arthur. He describes:

Then I hurled the stack of newspapers I was collecting
across the floor and went for him – pulled the trousers down over his narrow hips without undoing them, somehow tackled him into the carpet, and after a few seconds’ brutal fumbling fucked him cruelly. He let out little compacted shouts of pain, but I snarled at him to shut up and with fine submission he bit them back. (44)

The sex has become the means of communication between William and Arthur. After enjoying Arthur, William goes into the bathroom and observes his pink, excited and horrified face in the mirror. But the sexual activity makes him to be tender towards Arthur. He is the only person for Arthur who has feeling of tenderness for him. William becomes more sentimental with each intercourse, but homosexuality has become his “mindless randiness and helpless sentimentality” (45). His possession of the Arthur is not only his attempt to find security, but it is also an attempt of ruling class to dominate the lower class. He states:

I was eight years older than Arthur, and our affair had started as a crazy fling with all the beauty for me of his youngness and blackness. Now it became a murky business, a coupling in which we both exploited each other, my role as protector mined by the morbid emotion of protectiveness. I saw him becoming more and more my slave and my toy, in a barely conscious abasement which excited me even as it pulled me down. (ibid)

The master-slave relationships between William and Arthur are seen in the way they accept each other. Arthur’s awareness of being guilty for the murder of his brother’s friend Tony makes him submissive to his present master. On the other hand, William’s role of protector gives him an
authority to dominate Arthur. William knows that he is living with a man who is a murderer and can be dangerous for him any time. Besides this, there are chances of being arrested in the murder case. He expresses his feelings as:

> It did not take me long to fear the consequences to myself of any of these possible events. If it had not been for our week of love I would perhaps have been frightened of Arthur too; but I was never even critical of his crime. A rare, unjustified trust kept me on his side. (47)

It is the homosexual love that gives a security to both William and Arthur. His feeling of love overcomes his awareness about the possible consequences. He has not even tried to think critically over the crime of Arthur. The homosexual pleasures lead him to take the side of Arthur.

William once again meets the old man to whom he has survived from the heart attack at the Corinthian Club, where the old man introduced himself to William as Lord Charles Nantwich and invites him for lunch at his club called Wicks. When William visited Lord Nantwich at his club, he is amazed to see the old men who try to live fantastically. As he enters in the club, he is directed to go upstairs to the smoking room. Various portraits of the men with which he is familiar are hung above the stairways. When he enters the smoking room, he finds the room filled with number of old men, who have given up the hopes of life. He describes the entire scenario as:

> Entering the smoking room I felt like an intruder in a film, who has coshed an orderly and, disguised in his coat, enters a top-secret establishment, in this case a home for
people kept artificially alive. Sunk in leather armchair or taking almost imperceptible steps across the Turkey carpets, men of quite fantastic seniority were sleeping or preparing to sleep. The impression was of grey whiskers and very old fashioned cuts of suiting, watch-chains and heavy handmade shoes that would certainly see their wearers out. (49)

It is interesting to know that William and Lord Nantwich both are Oxford graduate and even Lord Nantwich is a socialite occasionally appearing in the diaries of Waugh. Besides this there are many similarities in the lives of the two men except an age gap of nearly sixty years. They both belong to the wealthy family and live self centred lives. They both are interested in the homosexuality and prefer sexual relationships especially with the black boys. They both enjoy their lives in the culturally intolerant and homophobic atmosphere. The only change in the lives of both men is that where Lord Nantwich tries to hide his homoerotic pleasure from the society, William openly acknowledges his homosexual relations in the society.

Another similarity in the lives of William and Lord Nantwich is that they both are the representatives of the ruling class society, who have in fact established their own colonies. They are totally attracted towards the person belongs to lower class category and ethnically minor. They try to retain some power over these minority classes in the form of sexual domination and even unknowingly sometimes disabuse them. Most of the time, they both feel alienation and sometimes the feeling of isolation is more powerful as they suffer a lot with the loneliness. Probably the effort to establish the sexual relations is the only way where all the characters of the novel try to find solutions to their loneliness.
William, in his attempt to escape from the loneliness, goes to the cinema based on the gay pornography where he involves in the anonymous sex. While he is watching a movie, a boy sat down next to him and begins to stare at him. The boy intends “to try and make out [his] face in the darkness, and [he] felt his breath on [his] cheek. Then there was the pressure of his shoulder against [him]” (73). He escapes himself from the boy and moves to the empty place on the other side. Then the boy tries to touch his thighs with his legs. After some time, he feels someone’s arm “along the back of the seat and a moment later a hand descends unfalteringly on [his] dick” (ibid). He screams loudly to get rid off from this activity:

‘If you come anywhere near me again I’ll break your neck.’
A couple of people looked round, there was an ‘Oooh’ from the other side of the room, spoken in a uniquely homosexual tone of bored outrage, the tentacles withdrew, and after a few moments, compatible perhaps with some fantastic notion of the preservation of dignity, the advancer retreated, earning a curse from the man at the end of the row, who was forced to get up again, attempting to conceal his erection as he did so. (74)

The activity of the boy and the outrage from the other side of the room points out that most of the persons in the theatre are gay and they come to cruise other homosexual partners so that they can enjoy gay sex. William’s denial to the boy is may be his rejection to accept passive role in the gay relations. Therefore, he manages to get away from the boy, who eventually goes to another boy. After some time a group of half dozen boys comes there; one of them sits beside him. He observed the boy and comes to the conclusion that the boy may be watching the porn
movie for the first time. Then he tries to establish sexual relations with the boy, who is now confused and remains passive in his response. Therefore, he forces the boy to have a sex:

I continued stroking the back of his neck, thinking it might relax him, but he kept on feeling my dick in a very polite sort of way, so I brought pressure to bear, and pushed his head firmly down my lap. He had to struggle around to get his stocky form into a new position, encumbered by the padded arm between our seats; but once there he took the crown of my cock into his mouth and with me moving his head puppet-like up and down, sucked it after a fashion. (75)

He feels something thrilling, an electric intensity. However, the boy’s apparent defiance leads him to stop his behaviour. Yet whatever he did with the boy gives him the feeling of satisfaction as if he has a random sex. Then the boy goes out and on the staircase, he recognises the boy as the light sheds on him. He comes to know that the boy is, in fact, Phil, one of the members from the Corry.

On the way back to home, William reads a novel entitled *Valmouth* written by Ronald Firbank which was given to him by his friend James. James is a frustrated gay man feeling insecurity. As William returns to the home, he comes to know that Rupert, his nephew of six years old, has run away from his house and comes there to see him. William is aware that Rupert loves him and is interested in homosexuality. Therefore, he informs about Rupert’s arrival to his place to his sister Philippa and her husband Gavin, who then decided to bring back to Rupert. They asked William to wait; hence William and Rupert decide to wait for them. Meanwhile they begin to see the family album leading William to
remember the past memories when William was a young. It is interesting to note that the boy of merely six years age is interested in the homosexuality and wishes to be a gay a man. Looking at the family album, he asks William about each one in the picture and their approach towards homosexuality. He reveals his intention to be a homosexual man. He expresses:

‘Am I one?’ Rupert asked intently.

‘It’s a bit early to say yet, old fellow. But you could be, you know.’

‘Goody!’ he squealed, banging his heels against the front of the sofa again. ‘Then I can come and live with you.’

‘Would you like that?’ I asked, my avuncular rather than my homosexual feelings deeply gratified by this. And really Rupert’s cult of the gay, his innocent, optimistic absorption in the subject, delighted me even while its origin and purpose were obscure. (87)

As they are involved in the talk about homosexuality, Gavin, Rupert’s father, comes there to take Rupert back to his home. William assures Gavin that he has not taught anything like taking a drug or other abusive work to Rupert. Afterwards, William and James go to the Corinthian Club and as they return find that Arthur has disappeared from the house.

William decided to meet Lord Charles Nantwich and goes to his home, in a street off Huggin Hill. There he meets Lewis, a servant of Lord Nantwich, who seems to be very aggressive, always trying to protect Lord Nantwich. William finds that the house of Lord Nantwich stuffed with the various objects which are associated with the memories of different places and people, as well as various books. There are also
various paintings hung on the walls of house which create homoerotic atmosphere and especially the picture of young African boy and his “determined, naked tottering around the changing-room” (103).

Lord Nantwich shows William the Roman mosaics in the basement of his house, where he asks William to write his biography for him. At first William feels that he is going to ask for something like physical pleasure. He feels that:

. . . I am sure for a moment that he had some physical demand in mind. Would I let him take my clothes off, or kiss me. A don at Winchester had asked a friend of mine to masturbate in front of him, and though he didn’t, such things harmlessly be done. (115)

However, Lord Nantwich asks him to write his biography. At first, William refuses to write as he thinks that it will come in his way of sexual life; but then he has realised that writing about someone will not be an obstacle in his consumption of the sex. Therefore, he accepts the proposal that, in the beginning, he will read journals that Lord Nantwich will send him. However, his research suffers because of his ignorance as the person like Lord Nantwich requires attention. He is the symbol of English homosexual people and their privileges and trials. He is also the representative of the sophisticated upper class society where the homosexual relations were considered as the illegal acts. On the other hand, William is the representative of the same society but in the altered situations where homosexual relations have got identity in the illegal way.

William decides to wander in order to cruise the boys and therefore
goes to the Holland Park. He has even thought that if the cruise is unsuccessful, he may find himself “marooned in a distant shrub, with boys mending their push-bike on the front paths . . . and beyond, the fields and woods of semi-country” (133). In his attempt, he spots a boy called Colin and has sex with him.

William goes to the Corinthian Club, where he spots Phil and instantly is attracted towards him. He has never felt such an attraction for any other boy in his life. He states:

Any uncertainty in a boy I wanted was usually overcome by the simple insistence of my look. But with Phil I had let something dangerous happen, a roundabout, slow insinuation into my feelings. Though I very much wanted to fuck his big, muscle bum – and several times dropped behind a step or two to see it working as he walked – my stronger feeling was more protective and caressing. It was growing so strong that it allowed doubts not entertained in the brief certainties of casual sex. (143)

Phil has well built body, but he is shy and new in the homosexuality. William intends to have sex with him and therefore convinces him to go to cinema. However, they failed to consume sex there. Then, Phil invites William in the hotel, where he works as a waiter. He introduces his colleague Pino to William and then moves to the upper room along with him. There is one television set and one single bed in the room. William realises there that Phil actually intends to establish homosexual relations but because of his bashful nature fails to communicate his feelings. Therefore, William tries to tempt Phil. As William advances towards Phil, he instructs him to go to the terrace, where the staffs of the hotel
take the sunbath during day time. William believes that the shy Phil will not take a step further; therefore, he decides to take a charge:

Nothing was going to get done unless I took command. Lifting my other hand I gripped his jaw, turned his head towards me and kissed him. Slowly, clumsily, as if being brought to life, he swivelled round, put his arm around me and then held me extremely tight. . . . He was powerless and amazed. . . . He had gone a deep, searching red. (149)

William ignites the passions in Phil and gives a way to his suppressed feelings of homosexuality. The powerless and amazed Phil responds to the erotic emotions. William, realising the response of Phil, has a sex with Phil:

I tugged out the bottom of his T-shirt and slid it up over his rhythmic stomach. . . . I twisted his nipples between my thumb and forefinger and then . . . at once felt almost cruel, I grabbed at his crotch, fumbled and tore pen his fly, and pulled down his trousers and underpants to his knees. Through all this he stood . . . like a child in a doctor’s surgery . . . He made no gesture towards me, except by a curious, serious facial expression: this was what he’d heard about, this was what he wanted us to do. (ibid)

Finally William succeeds in having sexual relations with Phil. James, who realised that William is killing his time, instructs him to do not waste his time and concentrate on the biography of Lord Nantwich. Hence, William goes to the house of Lord Nantwich, where he discovers that Lewis has locked his master in the bedroom. William decides to take the
The diaries of Lord Nantwich reveal that the early years of his life are dominated by the Labouchere Amendment, according to which practicing homosexual relations in the public life or the private life was supposed to be offensive and criminal activity. Lord Nantwich was born after fifteen years of the amendment; but he has become victim of homosexuality during his school days in the period of First World War. However, when he goes to Africa, he becomes the ruler as he exploited sexually other African men. It is revealed when Lord Nantwich has gone Sudan to work as a regional administrator in the Foreign Service, where the African men try to avoid him for being British. He convinces them that homosexuality and the devotion to the duty are two different things and should not be mixed up with one another.

Lord Nantwich lived the adventurous gay life in London during the Second World War and then become the victim of homosexuality in the subsequent period. On the other hand, the life of William is influenced by the Wolfenden Report that appeared after one year when William was born. The report recommended liberalizing the policies restricting homosexuality that provide an opportunity to practice homosexual relations freely and openly. Yet, both Lord Nantwich and William share some similarities as they love the socially inferior men. They always think about homosexuality and desire to have sex every time.

William along with James and his grandfather goes to the *Billy Budd* opera, where the homosexual appeal and emotional influence of the opera makes him to move deeply and he becomes sentimental. The scene
after Captain Vere’s monologue moves him to the passions. He feels, as the scene “Indomitable” opened up, with the men holy-stoning the deck and singing their oppressed, surging chorus,” as if he is covered with a goose-flesh (169). The appealing power of the opera leads him to feel the tragedy of Billy. He has even shed tears over the pathos of Billy. He writes:

When Billy, press-ganged from his old ship, sang his farewell to his former life and comrades – ‘Farewell, old Rights o’ Man, farewell’ – the tears streamed down my face. The young baritone, singing with the greatest beauty and freshness, brought an extraordinary quality of resisted pathos to Billy . . . made me believe it is his own tragedy. (ibid)

After the opera, they talk about the homosexual relations between the co-authors Benjamin Britten and E. M. Forster.

William wants to meet Lord Nantwich in order to discuss about his dairies and therefore calls him, who in response, asks William to come day after tomorrow. Hence, he once again lies back on his bed and begins to think about the many lively days of Lord Nantwich. He thinks about Lord Nantwich’s old days when he was a “schoolboy discovering black beauty, the frivolous undergraduate beagling, drinking and ragging, the dreaming District Commissioner in the Nuba Hills” (184). As Lord Nantwich asked him to meet another day, William goes to Phil and asks him to spend an evening with him in Limehouse, the proposal which is eventually turned down by Phil as it is a time to join his duty. He tries to convince Phil but he remained silent. Then he forces Phil to have a sex with him:
Phil stayed silent. It would soon be time for him to go to work, and I felt him already preparing to abstract himself. Tonight this distancing gave me a little qualm, and as he sat up to get dressed I pushed him back roughly and fucked him hard and fast, his asshole still tacky with spunk and grease from our slower, longer lovemaking just before. (185)

William is involved in Phil so much that he cannot live without him. Phil also assures him that he loves William so much and he really did not want to go to the Limehouse. To show his love for William, Phil comes back to his room under the cover of Room Service with some things to eat. William’s deep involvement can be seen when he wonder over his passionate feelings about Phil. He has even forgotten Arthur and has not felt his absence in his life since his disappearance. He expresses his feelings as: “It was only a few weeks since his disappearance and I had done nothing about him and already was so absorbed in someone else that I didn’t even think of him for days at a stretch” (186-187).

William resumes his reading of dairies of Lord Nantwich and therefore goes to the boxing club, which is supported financially by Lord Nantwich. On the way to the club, William meets to a boy and cruise him. He goes to the boy and puts his hand on the boy’s shoulder. He tries to take the advantage of the situation, but the boy immediately asks for money for having sexual relations with him. He said:

‘How much money ’ave you got, then?’

I nodded my head and chuckled ironically – the only way was to behave like him. ‘Just enough for myself,’ I said.

’sthat so? Well you’ll need a lot more than that if you want a nice bit of bum round ’ere’ – almost in a whisper, as
William turns down the proposal because of his fear and violence and moves to the club, where he meets Bill, a weightlifter and member of Corinthian Club. He works as a coach in the boxing club. William realizes there that though Bill has big muscles; but he is a fearful man and wants to remain loyal to his patron Lord Nantwich.

While reading the diaries, William comes across the section of Lord Nantwich’s life in the Egypt, when he has encountered with an alcoholic man Ronald Firbank. Hence, as William visits Lord Nantwich to know more about Ronald Firbank, he gives William Firbank’s novel. After leaving the house of Lord Nantwich, William goes in search of Arthur and calls for him in the suburbs of London; but his search ends fruitlessly. While returning from the working class society of Arthur, William is assaulted by a group of youths who have destroyed the novel of Firbank. In a dispute with them, William is wounded and therefore, James nurses his wounds.

William talks with Phil about the Swimming-Pool Library as he was one of the librarians of the Swimming-Pool Library. He tells Phil that in his school-days the perfect persons were called as the librarian. During the period he was called as the Swimming-Pool Librarian as he was perfect in the swimming. He tells Phil about the swimming and also shows his Swimming-Pool Librarian badge which he has kept in a round leather stud-box. Then they go to the roof of the hotel, where they spread towels, lay down naked and take the sun bath: “We were very happy on the roof, sometimes reading, sometimes stroking and exciting each other. . . Phil would rub my tits . . . or send his fingertips over me more gently
than tickling” (204). He is aware that he is obsessed with the body of Phil and every time intends to have sex with him. But he also notices a difference between the erotic pleasures of Phil and Arthur. He points out the difference between them as:

[Phil] lacked the illiterate, curling readiness of Arthur, his instinct for sex. Both of them were teenagers over whom I had many advantages; both of them watched me for the moves I would make. But where with Arthur, when I did move, there was an immediate transport, a falling-open of the mouth, a mood of necessity that was close to possession, with Phil there was a more self-conscious giving, callow at times and imitative. When I was rough with him it was to break through all that. (206-206)

William finds the absence of readiness in Phil which is present in Arthur. Phil is affectionate but his affections cannot be called as his readiness of sex. He believes that Phil’s shyness is responsible for his behaviour while having a sex.

In the home, William reads aloud the diaries of Lord Nantwich to Phil, and especially the section of his life, where the North African boy tries to sell him pornography consequently leading him to feel alienated in the foreign land. Then William and Phil go to The Shaft club, which is famous for homosexuality. They meet various gay men including a bodybuilder belonged to the Brazil. William finds there Arthur in the bathroom and tries to have sex, subsequently resulting in frustration as Arthur now works for Harold.

William, while reading the diaries of Lord Nantwich, comes to
know that Lord Nantwich has suffered a lot when he was arrested in his attempt of having a sex with a policeman. When the African boy with whom he has sexual relations, got married, he became frustrated and began to go to anonymous club for sex. While cruising in the bathroom, he was arrested for his indecency in the public place. His condition becomes worse when one politician tried to exploit the situation, who incidentally happens to be the grandfather of William. He also comes to know that Bill was also arrested for his homosexual relations with a three years younger boy. William, who has learnt the past of his grandfather, now decides to do not write the biography of Lord Nantwich because he has also homosexual relations and he has been brought up in the gay environment.

William visits to the hotel in which Phil works, where he meets a rich Argentine man, who offers him sex. At first, he accepts the proposal, but as he discovers that the man is preoccupied with gay conventions, he rejects his proposal. He goes upstairs and finds that Phil is engaged with Bill in having sex. William is confused with the incident and leaves the place. He goes to the Corinthian Club where Lord Nantwich exposes his purpose of giving diaries to him. In the end of the novel, William goes to a film with James.

Holinghurst’s next novel under scrutiny is The Line of Beauty, which unfolds three different years in the life of Nicholas Guest, the protagonist of the novel. Set in the suburb areas of Britain, it covers incidents in the life of a young gay Nick, his middle-class background and his graduation from the college in Oxford. The first section of the novel is entitled as The Love-Chord which opens in the year of 1983 with Nick who is living in the attic room in the Fedden’s house at Notting Hill.
In the emerging years of his life, Nick finds tribulations in living a successful life in the money minded political world and searches another way in the form of Fedden family to deal with the difficulties of his life. Toby, one of the members of Fedden family, is the best university friend of Nick. He takes this opportunity to enter in the Fedden house at the West London. Toby’s father Gerald is a Member of Parliament in the government of Thatcher. Nick is fascinated with the glamorous world of romance, money and power when he moves to the house. However, his homosexuality creates problems in his relations with the family of Fedden, where he occasionally spends his holidays and engages in the parties. Fedden family can accept him only when he promises to do not expose his gay life to anyone else.

Toby’s parents give the responsibility of their daughter Catherine to Nick while they were going out as they are hesitant to leave her alone because she injures herself. During the period, Nick assists Catherine to come out from her crisis. When she tried to harm herself, insightfully, Nick controls the circumstance and helps her to overcome her cutlery drawer. He politely holds her hand until she comes out from her trauma. The incident leads her to be emotionally attached with Nick; hence, her parents suggest him to stay with her. However, he is engaged homosexually with two men, which has become dangerous for his relationships. The projection of this scene (Catherine as a responsibility of Nick) in the novel, allows the writer to differ this novel from his other works as almost all novels of Hollinghurst project erotic pleasures and especially homosexuality without women’s interference. But in this novel, Catherine becomes an obstacle in Nick’s relationships with the other men. It can be witnessed in the beginning of the novel, where he has a blind date at the eight o’clock in the evening, but he cannot go as he has
to take care of Catherine. He just wonders about his date as “the hot August day was a shimmer of nerves, with little busy interludes of lustful dreaming” (4).

Nick intends to have homoerotic pleasures before Gerald and Rachel return from the France at the end of month. As his room is up in the roof, he thinks that he will take someone to the house as if it were his own and show him everything there so that he can be very impressive. He has only company of Catherine in the house; therefore, he has lots of freedom to use the house. Sometimes, Toby comes back to the house who asks Nick about his sister. In fact, it was Toby, who has told Nick about the sickness of his sister when he was in the Oxford. He told him how “she used to . . . cut her arms, with a razor blade” (6). When Nick first visited the house, he observed that:

On one forearm there were neat parallel lines, a couple of inches long, and on the other a pattern of right-angled scars that you couldn’t help trying to read as letters; it might have been an attempt at the word ELLF. But they were long healed over, evidence of something that would otherwise be forgotten; sometimes she traced them abstractedly with a finger. (6-7)

The mental illness of Catherine gives an opportunity to Nick to live there. In fact, though Catherine is the owner of the house, he is an in-charge of house, and has a lot of space to use it in the absence of Catherine’s parents and brother. The class-conflict, which is another dominant theme in the novel, is also evidenced in the beginning of the novel as when Nick is attracted towards the luxuriousness of the house, Catherine points out his attachment towards the furniture and paintings as an instinct of the
lower class people:

She was puzzled by his love of its pompous spaces, and mocked his knowledgeable attachment to the paintings and furniture. ‘You’re such a snob,’ she said with a provoking laugh; coming from the family he was thought to be snobbish about, this was a bit of facer. (7)

Catherine’s comments over the views of Nick reveal the difference between two class viz. upper class and lower middle-class. Nick manages the situation and tells her that he attracts to every beautiful object.

Nick tells Catherine about his relationships with Leo Charles, twenty years old black boy from Willesden with whom he has homosexual relationships. However, he has been just waiting to consume his love relationships with Leo for a week. He cannot leave Catherine alone because of her insanity and he feels her safety as his own responsibility. Yet, the thoughts of Leo are constantly in his mind. It is clearly evidenced when he goes downstairs to call the parents of Catherine and suddenly remembers about Leo: “as he left the room, he thought suddenly of Leo, and felt sure he was losing his only chance with him” (13). Realising that he is losing an opportunity to have sex, he calls Leo first and postpones his intention to call the parents of Catherine. When he calls Leo, he was having his dinner with his mother, therefore, their conversation becomes very formal and in the code language in which he tells Nick that he is going to Carnival and cannot meet tonight. Nick feels that he is losing Leo, who further tells him that he will meet next week. Though, Nick pretends that “all this was positive but feeling abruptly miserable and stiff in the face” (14). He knows that he is totally involved in Leo and his conversation can decide the future of his
relationships.

Leo’s promise of meeting next week seems to be a conspiracy to Nick; but he feels even it is beautiful. He feels sudden relief from his depression and begins to think about Leo, “how nice-looking he was, small but solid, clear-skinned and curly-headed. He could see Leo falling for him” (15). With these thoughts he goes to the communal garden with Catherine, where he can listen to various voices including a man called Geoffrey who is making everyone laugh in the party nearby garden. There, once again, he is overpowered by the memories of Leo: “Nick yearned for Leo, away to the north, three miles up the long straight roads, but possibly anywhere” (19). His longing leads him to imagine that someone is taking his photograph while having sex with Leo in the garden.

Nick usually tells Catherine his various romantic stories at Oxford which are merely imaginary tales as he had not consumed sex there even for once in his life. It is observed in the novel when Gerald asks Nick to have a dinner with them and he refuses as he has a date. He becomes reserved to open his heart to them and when Catherine tells about this he feels embarrassment. Catherine has a realisation about his less experience in having affairs:

Nick had never been on a date with a man before, and was much less experienced that Catherine imagined. In the course of their long conversations about men he had let one or two of his fantasies assume the status of fact, had lied a little, and had left some of Catherine’s assumptions about him unchallenged. His confessed but entirely imaginary seductions took on – partly through the special effort
His imaginary tales have the quality of reality which confuses Catherine in her assumptions about him. Only in the last year at Oxford, he realised his interest in gay people and gay subjects. But as a novice, he fails to identify homosexual people as most of the time “he had used his new licence mainly to flirt with straight boys” (*ibid*). He is, in fact, attracted towards Toby during this period, but his efforts were useless as Toby is a straight man who believes in heterosexuality. His feelings are exposed as:

His heart was given to Toby, with whom flirting would have been inappropriate, almost sacrilegious. He wasn’t quite ready to accept the fact that if he was going to have a lover it wouldn’t be Toby, or any other drunk straight boy hoping the fence, it would be a gay lover – that compromised thing that he himself would then become. (*ibid*)

His initial attraction towards the heterosexual straight men shows his inability to judge and identify gay men. He is unable to establish sexual relations with the girls; hence he has created his own world of imaginary tales, “his inner theatre of sexual make-believe,” where he often escapes and the stories that now he tells to Catherine (*ibid*). After a long time, he finds his first successful date in the form of Leo which is very much important for him: “So meeting with Leo, pursued through all the obstacles of the system which alone made it possible, was momentous for Nick” (*ibid*). He goes out with the thoughts of all that he is doing is for the sake of pleasures. However, he intends to be loved rather than making love to someone else. It is evidenced when his feelings are expressed as: “Nick’s ambition was to be loved by a handsome black man in his late
twenties with a racing bike and a job in local government. This was the one thing he wasn’t going to be able to admit to Leo himself” (27).

Nick goes to meet Leo at a bar called Chepstow Castle, which he has chosen purposefully for its shadowy semi-privacy, where he can give results to his plans of homosexuality. As he enters the bar, he spots Leo and approaches him. Leo finds the atmosphere of the bar bad and perhaps dangerous for them. Therefore, Nick takes Coke for both of them. He needs some courage, so he adds rum to his Coke. After all it is the time for him to bring his fantasy in reality:

His mind held the floating image of the man he had longed to meet, whom he had touched for a moment and left outside in all his disconcerting reality. He was too sexy; he was too much what he wanted, in his falling-down jeans and this tight blue shirt. Nick was worried by his obvious intention to seduce, or at least to show his capacity for seduction. (28)

There is no space to sit down in the bar, therefore, they prefer to stand up and lean against the window. Nick could not open his mind completely to Leo, so they begin to talk about each other. At first, Leo thinks that Nick is the one of the members of Fedden family, but soon Nick clarifies that though Fedden’s is not his family, but it is like a second family to him. Leo tells that he is just kidding to him and squeezes his shoulder that makes him to feel some current passing in his body: “He saw absurdly relieved. A charge passed into him through Leo’s figures, and he saw the two of them kissing passionately, in a rush of imagination that was as palpable as this awkward pavement rendezvous” (31). It is the first experience of gayness for Nick; therefore he is very nervous about his date. They spend half an hour in the bar; and now Nick feels a kind of
excitement in the company of his new friend. He is sure with the turning of street lamps from the pink to gold that “it was going to work out. He felt nervous, slightly breathless, but at the same time buoyant, as if a lonely responsibility had been taken off him” (32). Meanwhile a couple of benches become free, so they sit on one of them leaning towards each other as if they are playing a game. Nick begins to wonder what will be the perceptions of the heterosexual people, who are sitting around them, about their relationships. He also thinks that Leo may have his dates with other men in the gay pub and begins to regret for his selection of this place. In fact, he imagines some freedom where he can “stroke Leo’s cheek and kiss him, with a sigh of surrender” (ibid).

Nick realises that it is almost difficult to entertain Leo with his own affairs. Besides he is reserved man who has no experience of sex as he himself admits: “‘I’m the sort of guy who likes Pope more than Wordsworth’, ‘I’m crazy about sex but I haven’t had it yet’” (33). On the other hand, Leo is very frank in his approach who openly admits that he loves to have a sex: “‘I’m the sort of guy who needs a lot of sex’, he said, and, ‘I’m like that, I always say what I think’” (ibid). Leo’s statements about his acknowledgement of being gay leads to remember Foucault’s assertion in his *The History of Sexuality* (1996) that “I am homosexual” (369). Nick’s modesty and natural fastidiousness confines him to respond Leo in the same style. However, Leo’s open mindedness adds more excitement and Nick begins to love the hard self-confidence of his date. With the third peg of rum, Nick’s feelings are half-aroused and he looks “undisguisedly at Leo’s lips and neck and imagined unbuttoning the shiny blue short-sleeved shirt that cut so tightly under his arm” (*The Line of Beauty*, 33-34). Leo does not want to go late to the home, hence, he asks Nick to go to his place where they can consume their love. But Nick was
aware that he cannot take Leo to the Fedden’s house, especially when Gerald and Rachel are present as it can spoil his relationships with them. His fear is expressed as:

Nick winced and waited – the truth was he didn’t dare, he just couldn’t do that to Rachel and Gerald, it was vulgar and unsafe, the consequences unspooled ahead of him, their happy routines of shortling agreement would wither for ever.

(34-35)

Nick has promised to the Fedden that he will not establish homosexual relationships as it is vulgar and unsafe act which does not fit in the heterosexual social codes. Instead of going to the Fedden house, Nick wants to go to the house of Leo, who obviously turns down the proposal as his mother is very religious minded. It is for the first time Nick observes some kind embarrassment in Leo’s face:

Nick saw that he was embarrassed. ‘My old lady’s at home.’ This first hint of shyness and shame, and the irony that tried to cover it, cockneyfied and West Indian too, made Nick want to jump on him and kiss him. ‘She is dead religious,’ Leo said, with a short defeated chuckle.

‘I know what you mean,’ said Nick. So there they were, two men on a summer night, with nowhere to call their own. (35)

Nick and Leo both are aware that they cannot go either to the place of Nick or to the house of Leo. Their realisation leads them to decide that they will have the homoerotic pleasures at the garden behind Fedden’s house. It is a private garden only giving access to the local residents.
Luckily, Nick has the keys of the garden. As they entered the garden, Nick wants “to hold Leo and kiss him at once; but he wasn’t quite certain. Bumshoving was unambiguous, and encouraging, but not romantic exactly” near the darkness of shrubbery (36). Then they go inside the garden, where the composts are kept. With the hotness of the composts, they begin to feel warmness of each other. Suddenly Leo takes the hand of Nick and begins to slide it round his waist. He puts his arm round Nick’s neck and pulls him close towards him:

... the unguessed softness of his lips touched his cheeks and neck, while Nick sighed violently and ran his hand up and down on Leo’s back. He pushed his mouth towards Leo’s, and they met, and hurried into a kiss. To Nick it felt simply like a helpless admission of need, and the shocking thing was the proof of Leo’s need, in the force and thoroughness with which he worked on him. ... He felt the coaxing caress of Leo’s hand on the back of his head, roaming through the curls there, and lifted his other hand to stroke Leo’s head, so beautifully alien in its hard stubbly angles and the dry dense firmness of his heir. (38)

Finally Nick consumed his love relationships with Leo. After finishing the activity, all of a sudden Nick realises that it is very dangerous to have homosexual relations in the open places. He is disturbed “for a moment at the thought of himself out here in the dark with a stranger, the risk of it, silly little fool, anything could happen” (39). With these thoughts, Nick leaves the garden along with Leo.

Nick becomes obsessive in having a sex with Leo and wanders to various places; however, he is also possessed by the visions in which he
finds himself in the garden, where he is exposed while having a sex. His involvement and his vision clearly show his state of mind as:

Nick was more and more seriously absorbed, but then just before he came he had a brief vision of himself, as if the trees and bushes had rolled away and all the lights of London shone in him: little Nick Guest from Barwick, Don and Dot Guest’s boy, fucking a stranger in a Notting Hill garden at night. Leo was right, it was so bad, and it was so much the best thing he’d ever done. (40)

His visions are, in fact, his attempts to escape into a private life from the public sphere. It is aptly revealed in one of his dreams where he finds two staircases separated by the wall in the country house. The public life of Nick is reflected in the form of service stairs which is narrow, “dangerously unrailed, under the bleak gleam of a skylight, each step worn down to a steep hollow, turned tightly in a deep grey shaft” (109). On the other hand the main staircase of the house is a way to the miracles of the life. He feels:

. . . the great main sweep, a miracle of cantilevers, dividing and joining again, was hung with the portraits of prince-bishops, and had ears of corn in its wrought-iron banisters that trembled to the tread. It was glory at last, an escalation of delight, from which small doors, flush with the panelling, moved by levers below the prince-bishops’ high-heeled and rosetted shoes, gave access, at every turn, to the back stairs, and their treacherous gloom. How quickly, without noticing, one ran from one to the other, after the proud White Rabbit, a well-known Old Harrovian porn star with a sphincter that
winked as bells rang, crowds murmured and pigeons flopped about the dormer window while Nick woke and turned in his own little room again, in the comfortable anticlimax of home. (110)

Thus, Nick finds a way to switch between two worlds of private and public life. His private world of homosexuality is, in a way, an escalation of delight that gives access to other various small doors.

The feeling of loneliness is also evident in the novel; but gay world provides an opportunity to escape from the alienation. It is observed in the novel when Nick listens to the voice of Geoffrey from the balcony “whose regular tireless laughter had heightened his loneliness” (42). The memories of being with Leo give him some kind of relief from this loneliness. However, he cannot think to live without Leo whose absence he feels every time. It can be seen in his thoughts:

It was his second night without Leo. He lay wide-eyed, dwelling on him in a state beyond mere thought, a kind of dazzled grief, in which everything they’d done together was vivid to him, and the strain of loss was as keen as the thrill of success. (44)

Nick feels more alienated as he finds himself confined to the household only and has not got any opportunity to move outside. To pass the time, he meets one of his friends from the Oxford called Wani Ouradi, a handsome young man and son of wealthy businessman. They begin to share the homosexual relations, but their relationships remain secrete as Wani is engaged with a woman called Martine. Despite being involved in the doctoral study over Henry James, Nick spends most of the time with
Wani – having drugs and sex. While writing his thesis, he sustains his interest in film adaptation. Once at the time of dinner a guest at dinner asks Nick the contribution of Henry James to the society. Nick answers him:

He’d have been very kind to us, he’d have said how wonderful and how beautiful we were, he’d have given us incredibly subtle things to say, and we wouldn’t have realized until just before the end that he’d seen right through us (194).

His answer reveals the importance of literary world in the life of human beings. Wani also financially supports Nick in his studies and gives different expensive gifts. To hide their sexual relationships, Wani tells everyone that he has hired Nick on the editorial board of his magazine called Ogee in the post of consultant. The magazine’s name is based on the Hogarth’s line of beauty. This line of beauty is symbol for the double way of living life which allows the characters to switch between the heterosexual world and homosexual world. Nick expresses this double curve of his life as: “The double curve was Hogarth’s ‘line of beauty’, the snakelike flicker of an instinct, of two compulsions held in one unfolding movement” (200). Wani is also helping Nick to write a screenplay of The Spoils of Poynton. Their friendship leads Nick to consume cocaine, another angle to that line of beauty which was introduced by Wani.

Meanwhile Nick comes to know that Gerald, the father of Catherine, has an affair with Penny, his assistant in the office. The realisation of Gerald’s affair leads Nick to be disturbed and his idealization about the family begins to shake. On the other hand, the diagnosis of Catherine’s harmful nature reveals that she has a bipolar
disorder. Therefore, she has been given lithium which can recover her from her mood swings.

Catherine discovers that Wani and Nick are in relation and consume their homosexual love in the French country house of Feddens. She warns Nick to be aware in his homosexual relations as her godfather has become victim of AIDS. At the celebration of 25th anniversary of Gerald and Rachel, Nick meets for the first time to Margaret Thatcher, the P.M. of the nation. When she enters in the party, she has become a centre of attraction and so many men tries to court her. The drunken Nick invites her for the dance, which she eventually accepts. Moved with coke, Nick comes forward from the crowd and sits beside the sofa half-kneeling as if someone proposes to a girlfriend in the play or movie. He looks at the face of P.M, “at her whole head, beaked and crowned, which he saw was a fine if improbable fusion of the Vorticist and the Baroque. She smiled back with a certain animal quickness, a bright blue challenge” (328). After a brief exchange of smiles, Nick gathered the courage and invited the P.M. to dance:

‘Prime Minister, would you like to dance?’ ‘You know, I’d like that very much,’ said the P.M., in her chest tones, the contralto of conviction. Around her the men sniggered and recoiled at an audacity that had been beyond them. (328)

At the time of elections in the year 1987, Nick votes to a member of Green party instead of Gerald. The results of the elections lead the confusion as Gerald claims the seat of the post of MP on which Nick’s friend Polly has been elected. He also notices the devastation of Catherine, who now works at the election viewing party, because of the medications.
Leo’s sister visits Nick in his office at Ogee and informs him about the death of Leo because of AIDS few days ago. She also warns him to be aware and further informs him that she is trying to establish a contact with all former lovers of Leo. Nick then goes to dinner with Wani, who is now AIDS victim. The symptoms are seen in him in the form of his decaying body. Therefore, he decides to give some of the part of his estate to Nick, so that he can support himself financially in the rest of his life. He even reports Nick that soon Gerald is going to trap in scam and will face trouble for his improper management of funds. However, Nick, when returns home, realises that Gerald is already trapped in the scam and the news of his scandal is broken out.

Catherine recovers from her trauma because of her medication and feels energetic. Nick takes her to the office of Gerald where she discovers an affair of Gerald with his secretary Penny that leads a dispute between them. The story of affair begins to appear that compels Gerald to resign from his post of MP. However, the incident becomes the cause of Rachel’s bitterness to Nick. Rachel blames Nick for involving Catherine in the matter which is of course not his business as he is only permitted to take care of Catherine.

After the incident, the news of Nick’s affair with Wani appears that becomes a greater cause of scandal. The affair becomes another issue for the media, which have camped near the Fedden house. The issue forces to pollute Nick’s relationships with the Fedden family and he is thrown out. Gerald even accuses Nick for pretending his attachment with the family and then ruining them for the sake of his homosexuality.

Nick then moves to the place of Wani to see the publication of first issue of Ogee. Then he returns to Feddens house, where he comes to
know that the family has gone for the wedding ceremony. Therefore, he goes to Penny’s house, where she declares that she will not break up her affair with Gerald. Then he decides to leave Fedden house permanently and goes for check up with the hopes that his HIV test will be positive.

Thus, the novel ends with the devastating facts of AIDS – the homosexuality is also not an excuse – and the political upheavals leading the protagonist of the novel to suffer a lot in the course of time. The gay subculture reflected in both novels reveal vivid graphic sex scene in a lucid manner. Both novels fit perfectly to the concept of queer culture as they not only depict the gay sexuality, but also reveal the inner world of gay people with all the traumas and tensions that make their lives difficult.

The following chapter analyses the select novels of R. Raj Rao viz. The Boyfriend and Hostel Room 131 from the perspective of queer culture.
CHAPTER III
QUEER CULTURE IN R. RAJ RAO’S NOVELS

The present chapter interprets R. Raj Rao’s explorations of queer culture in the select novels viz. The Boyfriend and Hostel Room 131. Both novels portray the new trends of gay culture, which are emerging in the lives of human beings in the country like India, where it is almost difficult to establish homosexual relationships in a successful way.

Published in 2003, R. Raj Rao’s novel The Boyfriend unfolds the story of forty years old gay journalist Yudi and his relationships with nineteen years old young boy called Milind who belongs to the Dalit community. It opens in the year 1992, where Yudi is involved in a hurried sex in Churchgate loo; and immediately tries to escape from the scene as he is afraid of being caught while having a sex. Then he goes back to his flat, where he is involved in the sex with the strange men. However, he is obsessed with Milind and intends to have relationships with him forever. He even offers Milind the money so that he can take care of himself in the adverse situations of his life. Yudi’s fear of being caught in homosexuality is further coupled with the obsession of Gauri who is madly in love with him. After some days, a riot breaks out in the Mumbai leading Yudi to worry for lower caste Milind. Thus, presenting the characters from different social backgrounds, R. Raj Rao succeeds in pointing out “with unsparing irony the realities of caste, class, religion, masculinity and the gay subculture in India” (Goodreads, Web).

The novel opens at a Churchgate station on a Sunday morning, the only day in a week free from the crowd of people. Yudi, the protagonist of the novel, always comes there for different reasons and one of reasons is that there is a loo which provides “twenty-four-hour supply of men; the
amount of semen that went down the urine bowls was enough to start a sperm bank” (The Boyfriend 2). However, Yudi rarely succeeds there in his attempt to tempt men for having sex as he lives at Nalla Sopara, which is too distant from Churchgate and most of men refuses to go there with him for sex. But, today he has the keys of his mother’s flat, which is ten minutes away from the loo, as his mother has gone to attend the wedding of one of her relatives. Yudi strolls near the showcases besides the loo, where after some time, he sees a twenty years old boy scrutinizing the shirts on display. When he notices the boy, he feels that the boy has “all the characteristics that defined [his] type” (6). He goes closer to the boy and begins to touch the boy. When he notices that the boy is not moving his figures, he then tries to massage them gently; and finally moves to step three where “he brought his left hand towards the young man’s crotch and let his knuckles tap the soft part” (ibid). The boy has worn jeans; therefore it takes a few seconds to locate for him. Further, he touches him softly:

No sooner was he touched there, than the boy started in fear. How could anyone be so shameless! He gasped silently. Yudi, ignorant of the boy’s confusion, drew closer. The odour of sweat from the young working-class body made his head spin . . . Yuk, Yudi burped. The boy abruptly moved away. (6-7)

Yudi purposefully ignores the confused state of the boy and drags him closer so that he can realise his motive. Perhaps, he has taken the silent gasping of the boy as his consent for whatever he is doing. In his confusion, the boy moves away and enters in the loo; consequently Yudi enters following him. Yudi at first thinks that he might get a chance to persuade a boy for sex, but his attempts become fruitless as the
embarrassed boy moves out and goes once again to the showcase. Yudi takes this opportunity to ask the boy whether he would like to move with him; and as the boy approves, he takes the boy to his mother’s house.

While going the boy reveals his name as Kishore Mahadik to Yudi and further tells him that he is in search of a job. When he points out the fact that Yudi lives in posh area; Yudi diverts the subject so that he will not ask money for sex. He then asks Yudi which language he speaks in the house. Yudi replies: “‘English . . .’ then quickly added, ‘Hindi’” (10). His manner of adding Hindi quickly in the list of languages he speaks shows his fear of being treated as a superior and avoided by Kishore to establish sexual relations with him. Because English is spoken by upper-class educated people in India; and the middle and lower classes prefer to speak native languages. Alok Gupta, in his article entitled ‘Englishpur ki Kothi,’ has pointed out the way language emerges and creates sexual identities. He points out his alienation in the working class kothi because of his English speaking. He further writes: “I may also be a homosexual, but I was different. I was a cunning ambassador of the English-speaking people. Not just that, I was from an exclusive, inaccessible-to-all and English-speaking domain called ‘Englishpur’” (142). The socio-linguistic differences presented by Gupta helps to understand the relationships between Yudi and Kishore.

The fear of homosexual relationships is constantly evident in the novel as when Yudi reaches to the apartment of his mother, a Sindhi gentleman, who knows Yudi and his mother, asks him about Kishore; and Yudi replies him that Kishore is his servant and he has “[b]rought him to Bombay Hospital for cataract surgery” (The Boyfriend, 11). Yudi not only tells the gentleman that Kishore is his servant, but he also explains the reason why he has brought him there. When Kishore asks him why he
called him servant, he clarifies that it is only to shut up the man from the
next questions. His attempts of escaping from the further enquiry and
hiding Kishore’s identity show his fear of being caught in the
homosexuality. It also reveals that fact that the concept of homosexuality
and gay culture is not rooted in the country like India where there are
only conceptions and codes of heterosexual straight society.

Yudi adopts a cautious way while having a sex with his male
partners. He blindfolds them while taking to the house so that they cannot
see the way and reach second time there after intercourse for demanding
money. He even offers them to penetrate which can provide them the
sense of superiority. Avoiding humiliation of his male partner, Yudi tries
to create a perfect queer cultural world that gives an opportunity to each
one involved in gay sexuality. His ways of dealing with them are
described as:

Whenever Yudi picked up strangers and took them
home, he gladly offered them the active role in bed. He had a
theory based on years of experience. As long as men were
allowed to penetrate, there was no fear of their returning
afterwards to demand money or to beat you up. Some even
thought it beneath their dignity to accept cash from someone
they had buggered. For such a person, according to them,
was at best a hijra. And their heroism and sense of valour did
not permit them to assault a eunuch. It was only when these
men were penetrated that they became wounded tigers. They
felt emasculated. They could then even murder. Currency
notes, wristwatches, walkmans, sneakers, were not
compensation enough; these couldn’t restore their lost
masculinity. They accepted the presents with one hand and
Yudi has formulated his theory of gay sex on the basis of his years of experience of homosexual relations. He offers his opponents an active role in bed so that he can remain safe afterwards from their demands of money or later assaults, which can be the result of humiliation, they feel when they remain passive in the bed. The sense of lower dignity constructed because of the passive role cannot be overcame or replaced by the expensive gifts like wristwatches, walkmans, sneakers or money. The submissive role only gives them the feeling of being hijra and the masculine characteristics like heroism or bravery does not permit them to become hijra. The feeling of emasculation leads them to become violent and its results can be seen after the intercourse in the form of violent attacks or demand for money. Hence, Yudi offers them active roles in the bed which give the sense of dignity.

Yudi offers Kishore to penetrate first while having a sex, where he realises that Kishore has no experience at all who asks every few minutes whether he succeeds or not in his attempt which irritates Yudi. He expresses his feelings of first time sex with Kishore as:

Yudi was now on a coir mat that he had spread out on the carpeted floor, while the boy was over him, struggling to insert his chilli. He was clearly a novice in the art. ‘Has it gone in, has it gone in?’ he asked every few minutes, compelling Yudi to mutter a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’. Yudi hated it when his parteners spoke during sex. Their bad breath made him sick. This boy, however, was a gutkha addict; though the strong, sweet smell gave him a headache, it was preferable to the foul odour of fish or onions. The boy
pumped, groaning as he did. Suddenly he said: ‘Nirodh phat gaya, my condom’s torn.’ (13)

The inexperienced Kishore struggles while having sex; and the experienced Yudi hates his frequent questions as his breath makes him sick. Suddenly the condom is torn which shows the inexperience of Kishore, who does not “know how to use” it (ibid). He tells Yudi that he will continue the activity without condom which reminds Yudi the incident at Churchgate loo where a man swallows the semen of another leading Yudi to be reminiscent of AIDS. But now there is no fear of AIDS in his mind as he knows that Kishore will not succeed in his attempt; and, therefore, he permits Kishore to complete the act without condom. Then Yudi takes the charge and has a sex with Kishore. Afterwards, they go to the railway station where Yudi comes to know that there is a slight problem with railway’s signal failure causing it to run twenty to thirty minutes late. Hence, Yudi and Kishore walk to the far end of the platform, where a “group of kotis hovered outside the gent’s toilet. They blushed and giggled as they saw Yudi with the boy, whose hand he deliberately held, to make them jealous” (18). The toilet of the platform is another famous cruising spot.

When the train arrived Yudi and Kishore enter in the very first compartment which is of course a gay coach by convention. As more people enter at each station, the coach becomes overcrowded. Yudi likes this rush of coach as he gets an opportunity to rub “his body against someone’s,” which for him is “the best way to handle the tedium of the journey – it was much better than reading or signing bhajans or playing cards” (19). It highlights that the erotic pleasures Yudi feels in the overcrowded coach is his attempt to escape from the boredom of journey and consequently of life. As Kishore lands at Lower Parel, Yudi begins to
examine faces of different men at every station in his search for Mr. Right. But all his efforts become fruitless as he finds no one perfect for his expectations.

Yudi’s homosexual nights are different from the daily routine of his life. Whenever he takes someone home, it is past midnight that he takes the man to bed and then early at the morning asks him to leave. He never “want[s] to start a new day with last night’s face” (29). He also picks up his lovers from different places including loos – a place of chalu, street smart guys – and Azad Maidan – a place of straightforward men. He is so much addicted of the gay sex that he even involves with unusual people at unusual places. It is revealed in his ways of daily routine affairs as:

Yudi also looked for sex and solace in unusual places and among unusual men. Men who were physically disabled, for instance, turned him on. It could be any handicap: blindness, lameness, a hunched back; he was ready to give anything to sleep with them. Whenever Yudi spotted a blind man on the street, he ran up to him to ask if he needed help, say, to cross the road. The man was usually overwhelmed by the Good Samaritan’s kindness. He put away his white cane and gave his hand to Yudi. Yudi clasped the hand firmly. Even if he didn’t succeed in getting the poor soul into bed, he at least had a highly charged walk with him, as their hands had intercourse out there in open. (30)

The homoerotic behaviour of Yudi points out his tendency towards gay pleasures. He is ready to give up anything to sleep with the physically disabled men. He even seeks homosexual pleasure while helping a blind
man to cross the road. In fact, he helps the blind person only to have the sexual pleasure.

As Yudi steps down from the train, he instantly spots a man at a loo in the Nalla Sopara who asks him, “Are you a dhakka start?” (ibid). Yudi knows the meaning of ‘dhakka start’ as the gay. When Yudi tells the man that he is a gay, the man revealed that his name is Dnyaneshwar. He further tells Yudi that he is a police trainee and he has a lot of experience of homosexuality as he has had a sex with the famous men like Ajay Roy, the bus manufacturer from London. Then he demands for money, the thing for which Yudi has always taken a care in his life while dealing with gay men. The whole scene is described as:

[Dnyaneshwar] took out a penknife from his pocket and began to play with it. Next, he fished out a pen and noted down Yudi’s name, address, telephone number . . . A thousand rupees. He wasn’t going to leave until he was paid. Yudi realized he was conned. But one thousand rupees was way beyond his budget. He started with hundred, then doubled and trebled it. But Dnyaneshwar was adamant. He spelt out his options. He could shove his penknife into Yudi’s belly. He could telephone the cops. He could set hoodlums on his patron. He could find out where he worked, and spill the beans. Finally, Yudi bargained for eight hundred. The saint-policeman didn’t leave even after that. He wanted a peg of whisky. (31)

Not only Dnyaneshwar has asked for money, but he has also threatened Yudi. After the settlement on eight hundred rupees, he asks for drink. Therefore, Yudi offers him that they could go to the gay bar called
Testosterone at Colaba where they can have a drink and enjoy homosexuality. But he refused as it is too late and further promised Yudi that they are going to meet tomorrow at 8 p.m. in the same gay bar.

Yudi has realised that he has made a mistake by introducing himself to Dnyaneshwar. He realises that Dnyaneshwar is going to extract money from him. He has not even blindfolded Dnyaneshwar while taking him to his home. More than that Dnyaneshwar has taken down the name and address of Yudi. It does not take more time to Yudi to understand that he is trapped. Next evening, he meets Dnyaneshwar at the Testosterone bar, where while having a drink a call girl approaches them. Yudi neglects the girl, but Dnyaneshwar pays attention and then follows to her. As he moves away Yudi meets his hijra friend Gulab and tells him the entire story. As the bar closes, Yudi invites Dnyaneshwar to the Gateway of India, where the gang of his hijra friend Gulab threatens Dnyaneshwar, who then returns money to Yudi and runs away.

Yudi stops cruising for a while after this incident. He constantly fears that Dnyaneshwar will return to his house and take the revenge for whatever is done by him. In the course of time this fear, up course, fades away, which is further replaced by the feelings of solitude. At the age of forty two, he feels the need of someone who will love him and take care of him. He sees his life as a failure and compares it with the lives of normal men who have wives and children to love and take care of them. They have the sense that they are meant for their family and their lives are directed by the purpose of looking after their family. On the other hand, he looks at his unsuccessful life as:

. . . a failure. He had plenty of sex, yes, but he couldn’t bring himself to love any of the men he went to bed with, although
he carried this great reservoir of love around in his heart. A
doomed romance twenty years ago, and the pain that he
suffered in its aftermaths, had crippled him permanently. No
one was worth it, he had taught himself. Moreover, there
were no young men who genuinely desire relationship with
other men. (38)

The loneliness that Yudi feels at the middle of his age shows that
homosexuality cannot provide solutions to cope up with the solitude of
the life. There cannot be also a genuine feeling of love between the men.
Furthermore, the philosophical foundations and ideal rules of Indian
society do not accept the homosexual love relationships. The novel raises
the question that “how could an affair that was based on the deceit
blossom into a thing of beauty? Lies where what thieves spoke; gay love
in India thrived on lies” (ibid). The question points out the status of gay
love in India which is based on the unreal foundations of the
relationships. Gay sexuality can only provide erotic pleasures, but it
cannot suggest a solution to the alienation that man feels without any
company of other human being, especially a woman who fills up the life
with love and compassions.

The feeling of isolation leads Yudi to introspect over the past years
of his life which he spent in casual sex without worrying for the future.
His desire for mate is described in the novel as:

And yet, as he grew older Yudi felt a need for a mate.
Perhaps it was a feature of middle age: one wanted stability.
Ten years ago, he was at peace having casual sex. Any sort
of commitment would have at that time seemed a bother.
Now he wanted someone to care and share his life with.
Trouble was, where would he find such a person? There were no swayamwars for homos, where one could choose the man with the toughest muscles, who broke a bow with a soldier’s ease! Nor could one issue a classified ad in the matrimonial columns of *The Times of India*. (38-39)

The novel shows craving of a gay man for the male life partner in the normal or so called straight heterosexual society, which do not allow gay love relationships. At this stage, the perfect picture of homosexual society, which is created in the beginning of the novel, where Yudi offers an active role to his male partners in the bed, is also shatters into the pieces. The efforts that Yudi takes while having a sex by offering to penetrate his male partners – in a way giving dignity to the masculine characteristics in another man – are now limited only to the intercourse.

As the thoughts of his past life and isolated future come in Yudi’s mind, he becomes very much sentimental; and, he even weeps in his mood of solitude. He feels that there is no one who can be called as his own. Soon he remembers Kishore and realises that he is about to fall in love with him. The eight months have been passed since their intercourse, but during the period, Yudi has remembered Kishore for so many times, especially when he enters in bathroom. He thinks to establish relationships with Kishore forever; and he “would pamper Kishore like a son by day, lover by night” (40). He decides to go to Mahim next day, search for Kishore’s address there, and put down his proposal. He even determines to convince Kishore if he turns down the proposal by taking him to the shopping mall and asking him to purchase necessary things he wants. However, when Yudi reaches to Mahim next day, to his surprise, there is no Kishore Mahadik living in the Transit Camp at Mahim.
After some days, on Friday afternoon, Bhatnagar, the editor of *Metropolis on Saturday*, calls Yudi, where Yudi is introduced to an upcoming painter Gauri. Bhatnagar asks Yudi to write a review over her paintings that she is going to exhibit on Monday. Yudi realises that Gauri is fallen in love with him instantly in the first meeting and is kissing him with her eyes. When Yudi reaches to the exhibition, he is fallen in love with the waiter who is serving there. He finds more interest in him than Gauri or the painting in exhibition as the “fellow exuded sex from every pore. He was more beautiful than all the paintings on the wall (that he glanced at curiously)” (45). He ignores Gauri who is lost in her admirers and when she tries to attend him, he attempts to get rid of her and tells her that he likes to respond the paintings intuitively. Gauri call the waiter to serve Yudi, where he tries to caress the fingers of waiter which shows the different ways Yudi employs to seek homoerotic pleasures. He finishes his review with positive remarks which satisfies Bhatnagar, leading him to invite Yudi for cocktail party.

At the cocktail party, Gauri meets Yudi and exposes him that she knows truth that he is attracted towards the same sex. Yudi is very much drunk there, so she helps him to reach his house; and then takes the advantage of it and reaches one night to his house to spend the night with him. However, as he is afraid of women and their tricks, refuses her and sends back to her houses. After she leaves, he feels that his behaviour is like a schizophrenic man and begins to feel sorry for her. He also senses some kind of scheme in her help which leads him once again to raise a question about true love relationships: “Was there no one in the world who could love him without exploiting him? Or was love by its very nature exploitative? Wasn’t he too an exploiter of all the young men he slept with . . .?” (59). Next day when Gauri calls him, he promises to
meet her at The Wayside Inn, where she tries to convince him that she desires to have platonic relations with him and further invites him to her house on her birthday to prove what she really means the idea of platonic love.

On the next day, Yudi goes to the office of Times to collect his lost cheques, where while returning, he finds Kishore in a long queue of people. Kishore tells him that he now works as an office boy in Medium Advertising, Bora Bazaar and promises to meet at six o’clock next day outside his office. When he meets Kishore next day, he becomes very much sentimental and asks Kishore: “Where have you been all this while? I’ve been waiting for you. How long you have taken to come!” (73). Kishore reveals that his real name is Milind Mahadik and he belongs to the lower caste community. However, Milind’s untouchable caste does not matter for Yudi. He expresses: “‘May I kiss you on the mouth?’ . . . It was his way of demonstrating that he cared two fucks if Milind was a Brahman or a Bhangi, whose ancestors cleaned the shit of others” (74). He tries to show Milind that for the homosexual man like him, caste is not very much important as the “more down-and-out Milind was, the more they would click. Outcastes, after all, can only expect to be friends with outcastes” (74-75). He attempts to reinforce the spirit that there is no caste of the gay men. While going back to home, they decide to meet every Friday in a week. Milind further warns him to wait for him few buildings away from his office so that no one can see him in Yudi’s company as it may become dangerous for his job. Milind’s warning to Yudi shows his fear of losing job which again underlines the status of gay love relationships in India.

Milind tells Yudi how he survives in the riots after the demolition of Babari Masji where his life was almost in trouble because of his lower
caste. He further asks Yudi to eat his half eaten wafers in order to check, being a Brahmin, whether Yudi has any problem with his untouchable status. Yudi replies:

‘Homos are no different from Bhangis. Both are Untouchables. So why should I have a problem with eating your jootha?’

‘But you are a Brahman, aren’t you?’

‘No, I am a homosexual. Gay by caste. Gay by religion.’

‘I don’t understand what you are saying.’

‘What I am saying is that homosexuals have no caste or religion. They have only their homosexuality.’

‘How can that be?’

‘That’s how it is. Straight people are Brahmans, gays Shudras. So you see, both you and I are Shudras. That’s why we are best friends.’ (81-82)

Yudi clarifies to Milind that there is no difference between the people belonged to lower category and homosexuals as both are untouchable in the heterosexual society. Therefore, there is no difference between Yudi and Milind, even though they belong to the category of Brahmin and Dalit respectively. In fact, Yudi wants to create the ideal homosexual society where each male can be given a chance to show his heroic or masculine characteristics of making a love. Yudi explains that there is no caste or religion of gay people; but homosexuality itself is a caste and religion for them. However, the real world is too different from the idealism of Yudi as he is not aware about the sufferings of lower class people who live in marginal position. This marginality of Dalit caste people is reflected in the fear of Milind when the issue of Babri Masjid
was on its verge, where he was trying to keep himself safe from the communal riots emerged between Hindus and Muslims. Being a lower caste person he always fears for his existence; the fear which has not been experienced by Yudi because of his Brahman caste. When Milind fails to understand the logic of Yudi, he clarifies to Milind that he belongs to the same caste of Milind as the straight people are Brahmans – always superior in the society and live according to the social codes – and gay people are Shudras – continuously living at the marginal position in the society dominated by the straight people and their standards of living. The reason behind their cordial relations is that they both are homosexuals. Yet, the illiterate Milind is unable to understand the intricate arguments of Yudi and suspects Yudi’s sense. Meanwhile the students of St. Xavier, who were sitting on the next table near them, finished their drink and left the bar. Yudi grabs this opportunity and kisses Milind; and then unzips his pant. The whole scene is described as:

The Xavierites abruptly got up and left. Yudi lost no time. First he brought his mouth to Milind’s and kissed him till the boy pulled away; then he ducked under the table, unzipped Milind and blew him to finish. A new set of customers arrived just as Milind fastened his trousers and Yudi went to the sink at the far end. (82)

Yudi is so much possessed with the homosexuality that he cannot afford to waste the time and he cannot resist his passions. He is involved so much in the homoerotic pleasures that he starts to enjoy it in the bar without being afraid of the intervention of people. On the other hand, Milind is aware about the ways of the Indian society and therefore refuses to respond to the demands of Yudi in the bar. When Yudi asks him if he does not love him; he answers: “I do, but I don’t take in the mouth. I
don’t take it in the arse either. I don’t mind fucking you, but not here. Let’s go to your mother’s house” (82-83). Yudi not only wants to love Milind, but he also wants to have the possession of him forever. He does not want to share Milind with anyone else. His possessive behaviour is visible when Milind reports that he would like to respond the advertisement given in the Gay magazine called *Bombay Dost* for the same sex partners so that he can check the reality of it. When Milind says that:

... in his opinion, all those ads in *Bombay Dost* were fake.

‘In that case, respond to one of them and see for yourself, Yudi told him.

Milind suddenly felt inclined to take up the challenge.

‘You won’t mind?’ he asked his lover.

‘Not as long as you don’t get serious about it.’

‘Why, are you jealous?’ Milind giggled.

‘I’d swallow rat poison,’ said Yudi dramatically ... (86).

Though Yudi dramatically says that he will swallow rat poison if Milind thinks of a homosexual affair with other men, he really reveals his inner feelings and his passions for Milind. He gives more privilege to Milind than anyone else in his life including his relatives. It is seen in the novel when his mother asks him to meet her cousin, who is settled in US and is now in India; and at the same time, he promised Milind to receive, who is moving to his house. He is trapped in the dilemma and even tries to avoid meeting his mother’s cousin. Then he decides that he will take Milind and, on the way to home, he will meet the old uncle. When he reaches to the hotel, he tries to escape as early as possible. While meeting, he keeps “looking at his watch and farting. Milind was the only thing on his mind; he wished he could smuggle out a few sandwiches for his hungry mate to
eat on the train” (97). His way of dealing with the situations and every time thinking about Milind shows his strong passions for him.

Yudi and Milind enjoy their stay together in Yudi’s house, which is now for them a ‘mate house’. Yudi feels a week’s period as a delightful holiday in the company of Milind. They both become very much familiar with one another and even get married. It has become a historic moment for Yudi as both of them promise one another “to be . . . humsafar . . . till death do us apart” (107). However, the promise that Milind made shatters into the pieces within a very short period as his family chooses to marry him with a girl belonged to his own category; the event that leads Yudi to crave for Milind. The separation with Milind makes Yudi to lead the life in distress. He becomes ill and with each passing day his situation begins to worsen. He remembers the happy moments that he shared with Milind, which again makes him sick and he begins to cry. His craving is depicted as:

The thought depressed Yudi, and tears began to roll down his cheeks, first one, then another, then a third. His mother approached him with a glass of milk at precisely that moment. It alarmed her to see a middle-aged man weep like a boy of four. . . . His tears now came down in a torrent. He buried his head in his mom’s lap, indeed like a boy of four, and sobbed. (194)

After few weeks of separation, Yudi gives up the hopes of Milinds return. He searches Milind everywhere, but it becomes of no use for him. He even asks Milind’s brother to call him whenever Milind returns to the house; but there is no reply from him. All these things together makes him hopeless person. Unexpectedly, he gets a call from Milind, who
informs Yudi that he intends to return and also wants money in exchange of sex. At the end of the novel, Yudi finds his days of happiness as his boyfriend returns to him. Thus, the novel depicts “an unsentimental Mumbai – a crazy, cruel, layered and labyrinthine city, both physically and psychologically, full of cultural chaos and class conflict, where people . . . pushing their luck, looking for love in all the wrong places” (Sahgal, Web).

R. Raj Rao’s next novel *Hostel Room 131* is another artefact dealing with the gay subculture in India with an irreverent tone. Narrated in an unusual style, the novel is divided into the four parts which covers the time from 1978 to 1985; the period of gay love and effusive affections coupled with different obstacles which makes the events too much complicated and difficult for Siddharth, the protagonist of the novel. The first part of the novel opens on 18th May, 1982 and deals with the cravings of Siddharth, who is separated from Sudhir, the object of his lust, and, in his attempt to get Sudhir back, tries to seek the help of police. He registers an FIR against the parents of Sudhir as he believes that they have locked Sudhir in the house and are probably beating him. Siddharth further tells the police that Sudhir wants to live with him but his parents are against the decision as they come to know that there are homosexual relationships between Siddharth and Sudhir.

Siddharth is deeply in love with Sudhir and has forgotten to take care of himself. He always hates the stench of sweat and now he senses his own underarm’s whiff. He likes to trim his hair regularly in fifteen days, but now he has not trimmed his beard even. He is sure that he will resemble to a scarecrow when he will look his face in the mirror. He has also not satisfied his appetite since his separation. It is observed in the novel, when he visits police station and feels that he is hungry. He
narrates:

My belly growls. It’s like an animal that needs to be quietened from time to time. If I were at home, I would’ve spanked it to silence it. Even a little slap would do. But if I do that here, I’ll be taken for a madman. I can’t remember when I had my last full meal. It was probably in Su’s house. My stomach is empty, yet I fart – it’s the uncertainty of it all.

(8)

It shows that he cares more about love than anything else in his life. But his feelings of love are not heterosexual which can be accepted by the straight society; rather, he feels for a boy which is the identification of being gay and which cannot be tolerated or accepted into the society where he lives. However, at the present moment, finding out Sudhir is more important to him, and, therefore, he convinces the inspector to help him to find out Sudhir. Inspector Padukone advises him to go along with his havildars’ so that he can witness the search. However, all his efforts become fruitless as the havildars fail to discover Sudhir either in his room or in the whole house. Siddharth suspects that probably Sudhir’s father has managed the cops by offering them bribe as he saw them while taking money. The cops, while returning, even advised him to go home and do not take tension about his friend. As he steps in the police van, the pains of his heart transform in the physical pains, which continue to grow with the thoughts of Sudhir. He expresses:

I think of him, my soulmate. Where is he at this moment? Will I ever have him in my grasp again, as I did throughout this past year? Intense emotional pain has a way of becoming physical. I feel an ache in my heart as if it were
being sliced into two with a penknife. I shut my eyes and doze off within seconds. There is no anaesthetic as effective as sleep. For the rest of the journey, I slumber and dream. Sudeep beckons to me. I bring my face close to his and we kiss. (16-17)

In order to escape from the pains, Siddharth determines to sleep in the police van. But the thought of Sudhir continues to follow in his sleep and he dreams of Sudhir’s face which is very close to him. He even feels that they are kissing each other. His reverie breaks when the jeep stops at the police station, where he is asked to wait for a while and taken to the waiting room – a place which is not suitable for the person like him who is well educated and doing a job of lecturer in the college. After some time, he notices Sudhir and his two uncles – perhaps convincing something to the inspector. He can clearly see the distressing condition of Sudhir, who “looks devastating, even in his devastation. Those are the very lips I had kissed till yesterday. I want them again, as I do his whole body. Desire engulfs me as I observe him from an unbridgeable distance” (20). Though he is at some distance, he understands the devastation of Sudhir which can be, according to him, the result of their separation from one another. The desire to possess Sudhir again bursts in his mind along with the fear of discussion between them which begins to make him very nervous.

When Sudhir and his uncles left the police station, inspector Padukone calls Siddharth and asks him to leave the place at the very moment. He convinces Siddharth that it is for the well being of both of them – Siddharth and Sudhir. He also threatens that he will put Siddharth in the prison under the crime of lodging a false complaint if he refuses to leave. It is now very clear for Siddharth that rescuing his “darling from
his tyrannical folks and uniting him” is almost difficult (23). He assures the inspector that he will leave the place as per the instructions. While returning, he again dreams where he finds himself in the company of Sudhir at the garden experiencing a very happy moment of his life.

The second part of the novel begins on December 1978 and covers the period up to May 1982 – a period of essential events in the life of Siddharth that unfolds the homosexual desires and homoerotic pleasures in his life. Siddharth is a tall, unmarried young man and the son of medico-based parents living in Mumbai, who has completed his post graduation in English. His parent asks him to join them on their tour to Khandala with the permission to withdraw himself at anytime during the journey period. During the journey, he feels embarrassed in the company of his parent and their friends who are singing and frolicking, and decides to go to Pune, where he can meet his friends while his parent are out. As the train arrives to the Shivajinagar railway station in Pune, Siddharth determines to go to the Engineering College Hostel which is very near, where his friend Ram’s Iraqi friend Farouq is living along with his roommate from Belgaum in the Hostel Room No. 131 which is in the E Block. When he knocks, Sudhir opens the door, where, for the first time, he encounters with his soul mate. He is so much fascinated with the charming beauty of Sudhir. His feelings are expressed as: “Subhan Allah, Siddharth exclaimed to himself as he set eyes on Sudhir for the first time. He had never seen a guy so slender and youthful in all his twenty-three years. It was as if his fantasies had suddenly come true” (32). He is instantly attracted towards Sudhir in the very first encounter and initiates sex while conversing with him.

During the introduction, Siddharth “let his hand sit in Sudhir’s. His heart palpitated. Sudhir didn’t disengage himself from Siddharth’s grip,
making the later confident” (34). As Sudhir has not taken any objection to his different tricks, he begins to knead Sudhir’s hand. Though Sudhir is unaware about his intentions, he is deeply moved with the homoerotic desires. His condition is depicted as: “The coupling of hands made Siddharth hard. As his shirt was tucked in, the bulge was there for the world to see. Siddharth glanced at it from time to time and hoped that Sudhir would observe it too” (ibid). However, the unintentional Sudhir does not lower his eyes for once.

After a while, Siddharth convinces Sudhir to move along with him for a Bollywood film, where while going, he grabs Sudhir’s hand, and then gradually put his arm around Sudhir’s shoulder which automatically brought their cheeks very close. Siddharth takes the advantage of crowd and begins to touch the cheeks of Sudhir. In the next moment, he unbuttons Sudhir’s shirt and tries to squeeze his nipples. Sudhir, who is aware of the crowd, does not permit him to do so. As soon as they reached in the theatre at Deccan Gymkhana, Siddharth occupies two seats in a place devoid of patrons, which is perfect to do sex. The homoerotic pleasures in which they involve are thoroughly described in the novel as:

The conditions were right. It was dark and there was no one in close proximity. Siddharth undid Sudhir’s fly and shoved his hand into his trousers. For the first time since they’d met, exactly four hours ago, he was sure that Sudhir was stiff. This gladdened him. He continued to fondle his sweetheart, in no hurry yet to get past the underpants. But then, to his astonishment, it was Sudhir who took charge of his hand and guided it, stopping only when his dick popped out of his trousers. Even in the dark, Siddharth could see that it was beautiful. It was coffee-coloured, on the larger side,
and the foreskin had rolled back. Siddharth bent down to kiss the moist dick-head. He ran it along his lips, the way ladies apply lipstick, smacking them every now and then. (37)

Siddharth finds enough privacy in the auditorium where a few men were scattered of their own accord in order to be comfortable. He convinces Sudhir to occupy the seats devoid of patrons where they involve in sexual activities soon after the lights in theatre are switched off. They are absorbed so much in the activity that they do not know when the movie began; it is only in the interval, when the lights in auditorium turned on, Siddharth is disappointed and further remained still in the next part of the movie even when Sudhir showed his interest in it. Instead, seized with the intense desire to fuck, Siddharth looks for the honeymoon night in the hostel room, where Sudhir would be his wife. After the movie, they return to hostel, where they find Farouq to be asleep, which is an opportunity to consume the sex. They switched off the lights and hugged one another in the bed:

. . . Siddharth pulled Sudhir’s pyjamas down and lubricated his backside with vanaspati oil. He felt the pink flesh at the borders of his arsehole throb. Rubbing his own dick-head with oil, he turned Sudhir on his stomach and mounted him. His dick became a piston fitted closely inside the shaft that was Sudhir’s arse and moved up and down, forwards and backwards. Chuk chuk gaadi, chuk chuk gaadi. It was excruciating. . . . And then the meek Sudhir inherited Siddharth’s semen, which he pleasantly felt spilling into his inmost recesses in short squirts. (41)

Like husband and wife, Siddharth and Sudhir consumed sex in the hostel
room. Siddharth observes that it is very painful for Sudhir in these conditions but the only thing that stopped Sudhir from weeping is the fear of waking Farouq; so during the sex, he periodically raises his head to ensure that Farouq is sleeping. It points out the consistent fear in the mind of both the men while having a sex in the Indian society where homosexual activities are not permitted.

In the next morning, Sudhir goes to college without waking Siddharth, so he finds Farouq when he opened his eyes. Farouq greeted him and informed that Sudhir has left for college. After a while, Farouq also leaves to college handing the keys to Siddharth and asking him to leave it on the ventilator when he will go out. When Sudhir returned from the classes, they go for a long walk to Sambhaji Park, a hot cruising spot in the city, where Sudhir tells about his family history. He tells that his family is very small and lives in Belgaum. He is not very clever boy but he got admission to the engineering only because of reserved seats to the candidates belonged to the disputed area of Maharashtra and Karnataka. After a long walk they returned to the hostel room, where Siddharth falls asleep within a short period of time. When he wakes up, it was already past midnight and he feels hungry, but instead of looking for biscuit or slice of bread, he satisfied his sexual hunger by mounting Sudhir, who is slept besides him. His preference for sexual hunger over physical shows the way he is engrossed with the homosexual desires. Next morning, he becomes very much sentimental when he leaves for Bombay and even sheds tears in the train. He even could not control the grief of departure at home and cries in the washroom. Next day he searches for the book of Engineering Thermodynamics which Sudhir asked him and parcelled it so that he could please his soul mate and spends that whole night imagining what would be the reactions of Sudhir to him. His cravings for Sudhir
which are witnessed in his weeping for and thoughts of Sudhir show his emotional attachment and deep bonding with him.

Siddharth goes to his scheduled trip with his friends Antony and Dhanajay to Khajuraho where on the way both Antony and Dhanajay tried to evoke joke but Siddharth could not come out of his thoughts of Sudhir. When he returns, he sends another postcard to Sudhir to know whether he has received the book; but Sudhir’s response could not satisfy him. He gets another opportunity to meet his soul mate when his father sends him to check out their property at Khandala. When he reached to the hostel room 131 of engineering college, he expected that Sudhir will open the door; but to his surprise Farouq opened the door, who informs him that Sudhir has gone to college and if he intends to meet him he can come to Mangala Theatre at 3.00 o’clock. In the theatre, he finds that Sudhir has become very cold in his response and does not show any interest. He thinks that it would be because of the presence of Farouq which keeps Sudhir preventing from him. However, in the hostel room also, Sudhir and Farouq sleep in one bed and offered another to Siddharth. It becomes very irritating for Siddharth, who even suspects about the relations between Sudhir and Farouq. He feels the night as cruellest of all as he becomes helpless to see his ruining plans of spending night with Sudhir. In the next morning, he leaves the hostel with a note to Sudhir: “It was good knowing you,” which he keeps at the study table (57).

The differences between Siddharth and his father begin to grow as his father finds him jobless; so, he starts to respond to the newspaper advertisements for teaching job. Soon he got an appointment in Azad College; however his parents are dissatisfied with his job as the college is located at 12th Lane in Bombay’s red-light district, where students of
average grade usually take admission. Within a few days, he finds that some of the girls flirt with him, but he does not take any interest; rather he decides to do anything which will prove his ineligibility. After some days, he gets a letter from Sudhir informing him that his roommate Farouq has gone to Iraq and he has decided to live in the hostel to complete his project. He has also confessed that he behaved rudely with Siddharth last time for which he is very sorry and still he loves him very much. He further notes that if he could come to Pune, they would consume sex once again. Siddharth feels ecstasy which continued next day in the college.

Siddharth becomes restless during the railway journey to Pune which seems to be very longer because of his impatience. He is even irritated by his parent who comes to say good bye to him at the railway station. When the train reached to Shivajinagar, he finds Sudhir on the platform waiting for his arrival. As soon as he meets Sudhir, he hugged him and even kissed in the dark of the railway station. Then they go to Bamboo House Restaurant for the dinner. After the meal, Siddharth takes Sudhir to the movie with the intention to repeat what they did last time in the theatre, but his plan is frustrated because of the packed house for the movie Mr. Natwarlal. After the show they walk back to the Engineering College Hostel, where they consume sex:

When they reached the hostel, Siddharth dragged Sudhir into bed without changing. It was all right as long as they were making love but, after they were done, Sudhir wondered why they had to sleep on the same narrow bed all night when the other one was vacant. Siddharth responded to that by copulating with him again, causing the other to exclaim, ‘what stamina!’ Sudhir climbed on top of his lover.
immediately afterwards, feeling Siddharth’s backside with his long fingers before inserting his own penis into it. ‘Didn’t know you could also be active,’ Siddharth remarked as he was being fucked. ‘Shh,’ Sudhir said. ‘No talking during sex.’ (63)

Siddharth is very impatient to have a sex with Sudhir so he dragged Sudhir immediately in the bed without changing clothes as soon as they reach the hostel. When Sudhir proposed the idea that Siddharth can sleep on the bed of Farouq in his absence, he once again has sex in his response. However, a noticeable change can be seen in the behaviour of Sudhir here who has taken active role and does sex in their third intercourse. It is for the first time Sudhir becomes active and performed the role of male in the intercourse.

Siddharth views Sudhir similar to his students who are educated in Marathi medium and do not have a cosmopolitan outlook; but a thing that distinguishes Sudhir from his students is the privilege that he gives to Sudhir. As Sudhir is privileged person in the life of Siddharth, he invites Sudhir to Bambay shortly after his return from Pune; however, he does not take his friend to his house, instead, he managed Sudhir’s stay in the cheapest lodge – Library Guest House – with the help of his friend Deepak. Deepak probably does have the insights that Siddharth is queer, but now he witnessed Siddharth’s fiery passion for Sudhir, which he feels disgusting. On the other hand, Sudhir feels very offended because of his stay in the lodge instead of his friend’s house. He also feels indecency to do sex with Siddharth there as there is only a thin wall that separates his room from the reception area. Next day, Siddharth takes him to the tour of Bambay and on the eve of thirty first December, they roamed whole night. Nearly at the close of dawn, they stroll back to Library Guest
House, where while returning Siddharth kissed Sudhir. On the first January, Sudhir returned to Pune, which is up course an unpleasant day For Siddharth to see off his love.

Siddharth’s schedule is now divided between Pune and Bambay, who has began virtually to live in the Engineering College Hostel and going to Bambay for lectures only. In Pune, he has “restricted his romancing and lovemaking to the night” (69). He fancied himself to be a responsible man with the intention to settle in the life so that he can live with his love peacefully. He has even taken a first step in the form of seeking vacancies in Pune so that he can work and live there forever. His dedication and single mindedness is noticeable which has touched Sudhir who thinks of him a man who could put himself in trouble for the sake of love. Sudhir feels his “brief was to reward his yaar for his efforts by giving him top-quality sex. There wasn’t a night when they didn’t copulate, spending a warm two hours in each other’s arms, before turning him” (70). They continue love making every night when they are together which results in lack of sleep consequently leading both of them to perform poorly in their respective areas. Sudhir scores very low marks in his next internals, whereas Siddharth receives memo from his principal, who once praised him as an ideal teacher, for not giving sufficient time to the students and being absent in the staff room in the mandatory hours.

Sudhir suggests that he would sometimes come to Bambay so that Siddharth may not suffer daily journey of Bambay to Pune. He also makes it clear that he will not stay in the guest house; instead, Siddharth should take him to his house. Siddharth ponders over the idea and accepts the proposal. However, Siddharth’s father begins to suspect about their relationships as Siddharth, who usually does not close the door of his room and keeps the fan on at full speed in order to be comfortable in
Bambay’s heat, begins to close the door for the sake of privacy. The argument between them begins to grow which Sudhir overhears once and stops his journey to Siddharth’s house.

In the Engineering College Hostel, one of the town mates of Sudhir called Ravi Humbe begins to lecture Sudhir as he finds frequent visits of Siddharth which disturbs the study of Sudhir resulting in securing lower marks in the examinations. Sudhir becomes much tensed and asks Siddharth for the solution so that he can answer satisfactorily to Ravi Humbe. Siddharth suggests Sudhir to tell Ravi that he comes there to teach English to Sudhir so that it will be helpful in his studies. However, it does not satisfy Ravi, who states that he will remain present during the coaching so that he can observe how Siddharth teaches and whether it will really be helpful in Sudhir’s studies. Hence, Siddharth prepares a course of spoken English, which Ravi witnesses during lecturing Sudhir consequently resulting in enrolling more than twenty students to the classes and ruining the pleasure of both Siddharth and Sudhir as he does not get “a paisa by way of remuneration” (73). He feels that he has become a slave for the sake of love.

Ravi Humbe again comes to Sudhir and convinces him to allow two of his friends – Kishore and Gajanan – to be parasite in his room during the absence of Farouq. He induces Sudhir that it is his responsibility to serve to his town mates, who are living in very expensive private rooms. As Sudhir continuously begins to deny, he promises that he will manage another accommodation for them within three days and requests to manage three days parasites which Sudhir eventually accepts. When Siddharth comes to the hostel next day, he finds Kishore and Gajanan there who are also his students of spoken English coaching class and becomes very upset. After the class Ravi,
Kishore and Gajanan plans for the late night movie and asks Sudhir and Siddharth to join them, but both Sudhir and Siddharth turned down the proposal. When Ravi, Kishore and Gajanan returned late night to the hostel, they entered the room with spare key only to find Sudhir and Siddharth in one another’s arms, who are slept after the sex. Ravi instructs Kishore and Gajanan to do not make noise or wake them and then quickly clicked some photos of them in his camera. Ravi thinks to write to Sudhir’s parent, but he finds it difficult to tell them that their “son has a homosexual friend from Bombay who regularly comes to his hostel room to fuck him” (76). Though he feels too embarrassing, he decides to write about it to them.

In his next visit to Pune, Siddharth is stalked by Gaurav, who invites him to his Room 83 in C Block. When Siddharth goes to his room in his next visit to Pune, he finds that Gaurav and his roommate Vivek are gay. Gaurav invites Siddharth and Sudhir to a gay party which they are going to host nearly a month later. On the day of party, Siddharth and Sudhir reach to Gaurav’s room, where party is already going on. When the door is opened for them, they find that the room is full of cigarette smoke. All the furniture of the room is removed and the guys are dancing in pairs without a single girl there which is up course not a strange in men’s hostel. Siddharth and Sudhir realize that the boys belong to different colleges from the city and most of them do not know each other. Meanwhile they find an orgy in progress:

As their eyes further adjusted to the dark, they found there was an orgy in progress by the window at the far end of the room. . . . . A guy screwed another, who sucked a third’s dick, who milked a fourth’s tits, who had his tongue rolled in a fifth’s mouth, whom a sixth masturbated, even as a seventh
attempted to fuck him. (81)

Anyone can join this orgy, but Siddharth and Sudhir remained away from it. When Gaurav noticed it, he invited them to join the party, who then danced with other gay boys in the party. Meanwhile Sudhir’s father, who probably has not taken seriously the letter of Ravi, writes to Sudhir and instructs him to concentrate on his studies ignoring other un-academic matters. After a while Siddharth travels to Belgaum, where he receives very warm welcome and spends few days with Sudhir’s family, but soon feds up with the hospitality of the family and Sudhir’s absence, and returns to Bombay.

Siddharth resumes his tri-weekly trips to Pune where his days are filled with the spoken English classes for the students of Engineering. However, he has devised another way to teach English to Sudhir. They begin to translate Bollywood film songs into English as Siddharth feels it is the best way to learn English. While translating the song ‘Yeh dosti’ from the film ‘Sholay,’ Siddharth argues that Dharmendra and Amitabh Bacchan are probably gay as they sing to live for each other and die for each other. He also points out Amitabh’s will to be fucked by Dharmendra. The unconvinced Sudhir remarks that Amitabh and Dharamendra are good friends; but Siddharth states that what he will call if Dharmendra had sung the song with Hema Malini, which confuses Sudhir. Then they translate the whole song in English, in which Sudhir become the source of Hindi and Siddharth translate the lines in English.

One day, Siddharth receives a letter from Sudhir’s father Dr. Raikar asking him to help Sudhir in his studies so that he may secure first class as they think of him getting a job in America where English is very necessary to live and do a job. He also seeks excuses if he had
experienced any inhospitality during his stay in Belgaum and reminds him to feel free to come to Belgaum whenever he wishes, as not only Sudhir but his family also loves him. He compares his family, who continuously asks him to find a job in better college and contribute to the household expenses, with Sudhir’s family, who are affectionate.

Siddharth gets another opportunity to go to Belgaum with Sudhir a months later during the Christmas holidays, when his college is closed for ten days and Sudhir has fifteen days break after the end of examinations and before the second half of semester. Though Dr. Raikar is happy to see Siddharth again, he realizes that Siddharth spends all his time with Sudhir and barely gives a time to discuss on ‘Bhagavad Gita.’ When Dr. Raikar tries to engage him, he makes excuses to slip away. In the night, Sudhir’s mother lays two separate mattresses in a distance of more than three feet on the first-floor which dismays Siddharth, but Sudhir managed the situation and then they begin doing sex which is described as:

Bolting the door from within, the moment his parents downstairs switched off the lights, he ruffled the sheets of his own bed to make it look slept in, before sneaking into Siddharth’s, where they had a night of torrid fucking and sucking, kissing and pissing – they savoured each other’s urine . . . Siddharth managed to get the tip of his tongue deep into Sudhir’s arsehole, which he licked clean, loving the smell, Sudhir, as he was being rimmed . . . (100)

It is very essential here to note that the homosexual activity has become ritual for Siddharth which continues for the next seven nights until their stay in Belgaum. On the second last day of their stay at Sudhir’s house, Siddharth observes that Dr. Raikar is desperately searching for the letter
which makes Siddharth to be tensed. As Dr. Raiker fails to find the letter, he retires to dining table where he tells Siddharth that the letter is actually sent to him by Ravi Humbe informing how badly Sudhir is doing his studies in the company of Siddharth. Ravi also advised him to make a surprise visit to the hostel to see what the two men actually do. It makes Siddharth to feel anxious; however after summarizing the letter, Dr. Raiker bursts in laughing and tells Siddharth that he has not taken seriously the letter. He also advises Siddharth to keep on visiting hostel so that he may continue his spoken English classes and Sudhir may study more in his company. However, the reference to the dirty photo makes Siddharth uneasy in the Raiker family.

In the Engineering College Hostel, Ravi Humbe establishes a group of Belgaum boys called ‘Siddharth Virudh Sanghatana (SVS)’ in order “to impose a blanket ban on Professor Siddharth . . . and rescue their bechara friend Sudhir from his clutches” (111). The Belgaum boys decide to discontinue Siddharth’s spoken English class and ban his entries in and near the rooms of Belgaum boys. If Siddharth rebels to their ban, they think of reporting him in police. Gaurav and Vivek, who closely monitor the activities of Belgaum boys, conclude that homophobia is the top of their prejudices which needs to be tackled. They even think of beating Ravi Humbe up to the bleeding so that all Belgaum boys could disperse from the group. It is now impossible for Siddharth to stay in Sudhir’s room, who suggests him to move out of hostel and look for a private room, the charges of which are now exorbitant at this time. Finally it is Gaurav and Vivek who allow Siddharth to be parasite in their room as long as he intends. The room of Gaurav and Vivek is filled with gay literature and gay porn more than before; and Gaurav always speaks of a gay revolution.
In his next visit to Pune, Siddharth finds the sealed door of Gaurav and Vivek’s room, who are arrested by the police for their activities. They have handed a letter asking for their rescue to the boy in another room which he gives to Siddharth. Siddharth pays for the bail and rescues Gaurav and Vivek from the clutches of police. While leaving the police station, PSI Kelkar warns the three of them that if he finds the dirty sexy magazines in the room ever again, he will issue a non-bailable warrant against all three of them. On the other hand, Gaurav and Vivek feel proud of their gay activities as the police got them. For them, “it means that the world is taking notice of [their] revolution” (117). Now they suspect the activities of Belgaum boys behind their being arrested by police. The corollaries of it are soon found in the form of the news that appears in the newspaper resulting finally in expulsion of Gaurav and Vivek from the hostel. Once again, it becomes difficult for Siddharth to find a shelter in the hostel; but this time Farouq helped him by adjusting him in one of the junior’s room who is Iraqi. As he could not remain separate from Sudhir too long, he sneaks into Sudhir’s room through window and has a sex in the absence of Farouq.

Ravi informed Dr. Raiker that Sudhir has failed in his first year examinations and has to repeat the whole year once again. He also sent him the news paper cuttings disclosing the homosexuality in Engineering College Hostel:

‘ENGINNERS OR HOMOS?’ asked one of them.
‘CLANDESTINE HOMOSEXUAL ORGIES IN ENGINEERING COLLEGE HOSTEL,’ declared another.
‘MEN DOING IT WITH MEN IN ENGINEERING COLLEGE HOSTEL,’ announced a third.
Then came the text. The story of two boys, Gaurav and Vivek . . . who were gay lovers . . . had gay orgies in their hostel room and imported gay porn from America. (123)

He further informs Dr. Raikar that Gauvar and Vivek are Siddharth’s best friend and Siddharth is like them. Dr. Raikar becomes restless and decides to write to Sudhir but drops the ideas as he could not determine how to write it.

Siddharth comes to Sudhir’s room to console him for the failure and asks whether he really is responsible for it. Sudhir replies that Siddharth is not the reason, but whenever he opens the book, he sees the face of Siddharth in them. Siddharth suggests him to join a private coaching class for which he will pay; so Sudhir becomes grateful to him: “He gave him a plethora of sexual favours that evening, for his body was all he had to offer” (125-126). Dr. Raikar becomes restless since he received letter from Ravi and decides to visit him, where they discretely meet the principal and talked about the issue indirectly. They also informed the principal of unwanted and outside persons who parasite in the hostel. The principal is ashamed of issue and reports of the dismissal of Gavrav and Vivek from the hostel; he further asks Ravi to report him about the activities in the hostel.

Siddharth and company approached Professor Kulkarni for the private tuitions for Sudhir, who then continues coaching rigorously. In the end of summer exams, Sudhir feels that he would pass in first class. However, as he hugs and kisses Siddharth for aiding in his studies with private tuition, a telegram comes from his father Dr. Raiker, who asks him to immediately return to Belgaum as the examinations are over now.
Siddharth also wishes to go with him as he has remained away from Sudhir for a whole month during his examinations and he cannot wait for love-making now. He devises to live in a lodge so that Dr. Raiker will not suspect about them. However, the plan fails within a day as Dr. Raiker discovers Siddharth’s presence in the city.

Dr. Raikar invites Siddharth to the house, where two brothers-in-law and one distant relative of Dr. Raikar ask Siddharth to end his friendship with Sudhir. Siddharth tries to convince them that he cannot live without Sudhir, but one of them grabs Siddharth by the caller and throws him out of house with his rucksack. As he gets on his own, Sudhir’s words – “Go with him” – echoes in his ears and he decides to rescue him from the clutches of his family (144). He then takes shelter at the cycle-shop of Lakshman, who serviced Sudhir’s cycle. On the other hand, the members of Sudhir’s family feel that Siddharth has some occult power with which he has influenced Sudhir; so they take him to the ashram of Shri Shri Sant Pitamber Maharaj Baba at Khanapur, who gives Sudhir electro-shock therapy to come out from the evil influences.

The third part of the novel covers the events from May 1982 to May 1983 – the period in which Siddharth is separated from Sudhir due to the impositions by Sudhir’s family and Siddharth’s continuous and cautious step by step efforts to win back the favour of Sudhir without whom he feels life no more than a death. Siddharth, who finds shelter in Lakshman’s cycle-shop, is tempted to touch the thighs of the workers in the cycle shop who are slept next to him. He intends “to run [his] hand over their claves or squeeze their nipples” but controls himself (150). In the next morning, he goes to Sudhir’s best friend Peter and after narrating the events asks him to bring Sudhir to the Sai Baba temple so that he can talk with him. However Peter returns without Sudhir and further tells
Siddharth that he does not want to be the part of his plans next time. When Siddharth returns to the cycle-shop, he comes to know that the uncles of Sudhir has already sensed about his wandering in Belgaum and has left to catch him. The workers in cycle shop also advised him run away before they appear; but as he tries to escape from the place, they get him and hand over the letter of Sudhir informing him that it is now Sudhir who does not intends to meet Siddharth until he finishes his studies. Hence, there is no any other option left for Siddharth except to leave the place.

Siddharth accidently meets Sudhir at the Shivajinagar station on 13th July, which is, as he calls, unlucky reunion for him as Sudhir quickly catches a bus and moves to Chinchwad saying that he will meet Siddharth after four years. Siddharth goes to the room of Kishore and Gajanan to sort out the things, where he comes to know that Sudhir’s family has given him electro-therapy which has changed Sudhire entirely, who now rarely speaks with anyone. Siddharth now decides to meet Sudhir at the railway track back to the college gate which is the way for Sudhir to go home. As Sudhir arrives, Siddharth tries to convince him and begins sobbing; but Sudhir is not convinced, instead he assaults Siddharth with a rusty blade he found on the road side and runs away. Next day, again Siddharth tries to speak with Sudhir:

I plead with him to take me back into his life. ‘I promise to be a good boy and do exactly as you please,’ I say with folded hands. ‘No sex till your exams are over, till you get your degree. I promise to be a brahmachari.’ Predictably, it doesn’t work. He’s still hostile. (177)

Siddharth finds that there is no way to bring back Sudhir into his life. All
his efforts seem to be in vain. He now resolves to work on a leave vacancy at Dinshaw College, Pune so that he can live there for some reason and find an opportunity to meet Sudhir. He even takes a room on rent near Engineering College Hostel, although his college is far away from the place. In order to make Sudhir jealous, he pretends to be having an affair with Ganapati, his room-partner. However, the early joining of the professor ends his appointment in the Dinshaw College which results in his abandoning the city and returning to Bombay.

The fourth part of the novel, which covers the events from May 1983 to January 1985, unfolds the significant developments in the lives of both Siddharth and Sudhir. After a gap of whole year, Siddharth gets a telegram from Gaurav and Vivek asking him to come to Pune immediately. When Siddharth reaches to Pune, they inform him that Sudhir intends to reunite with him. When Sudhir meets them next day, he states that he will reunite with Siddharth only on the condition that he “will become a woman . . . so that [they] can get married” (200). He further states that they should migrate to another country where no one knows them and where they can start their lives afresh. However, Siddharth declares that he is “homo, not a breeder like the rest of the civilization. If a cunt was what [he] wanted, [he] would go for real thing, not for a fake” (201). Siddharth makes his stance clear that he intends the homosexual relations and not heterosexual one; otherwise he would have turned to a girl for the sexual relations. Guarav now tries to compromise between them. He states that if Sudhir feels trapped inside male body then he has the right to release himself. However, he further remarks, if Sudhir becomes a woman, then Siddharth may not be attracted towards him. He explains that:

. . . Siddharth . . . may not be drawn to you minus your male
Gaurav points out that sex reassignment surgery will not only change Sudhir from a male to female, but it will also change Siddharth from homosexual to heterosexual which he does not wish. Moreover, he will lose his interest in Sudhir after he becomes a woman and may not continue sexual relations with him.

In the soliloquy, Sudhir ponders over his life and reveals his intense desires. He has spent all his life doing what other expects to do him. He expects to study Arts, but his father forced him to do engineering. He does his best to pass the examinations in first attempt despite he finds the subjects uninteresting. Then Siddharth comes in his life, and started making love without asking him whether he enjoys it or not. Initially he tries to avoid Siddharth, but then he gets hooked and they begin to do sex. Then Ravi exposed their homosexual relations to Sudhir’s family which worsened their life. No one including Siddharth, Dr. Raikar or Ravi Humbe asked him what he expects in his life. Rather all of them take him granted and manipulated his life. He expresses his desire that:
I have always felt like a girl, not a boy. As a child, I longed to wear my mother’s saris. My sexual attraction is towards boys, not girls. But if Siddharth hadn’t seduced me, maybe I would never have known this . . . Now I have made up my mind to do as I please . . . I have decided to be my natural self. For that, however, I have to change my sex. If I feel like a lady from the inside, what’s the use of being a man on the outside? (204)

Sudhir has decided to be what he wishes and live his life according to his own self. He does not want homosexual relations as it is against the norms of society who will abuse him of chhakka or homo. But if he becomes a woman, then the society will accept his relations with the man. Hence, he is ready to go for painful sex reassignment surgery. He is so determined that if Siddharth does not wants to continue his relations with him after he becomes a woman, then he will find another man to love him.

Gaurav meets Siddharth after a month and tells that he has managed a fund from abroad for the surgery and also talked with Dr. Doctor who is willing to perform the sex reassignment surgery on Sudhir and will shortly inform them about the dates of operation. On the day of surgery Siddharth, Gaurav and Vivek accompany Sudhir to the operation theatre of Emerald Hall Clinic, where it takes a whole day to Dr. Doctor to make the surgery successful. Dr. Doctor informs them that it will take six months to Sudhir to recover from the surgery and during this period, he will also give hormone change therapy. After the discharge from the hospital, Siddharth and Sudhir settled down in a flat which was previously taken on rent by Gaurav and Vivek, where the residents in the area welcomed Siddharth and Sudhir like a newly married couple. Sudhir
now has not only changed clothes but also his name to Sumati. After the six months, she takes the shape of fully grown woman.

Siddharth finally managed the visa to America for them, where Gaurav has already made arrangements for their settlement with the help of his gay friends Brain and David. On the day of their departure, Gaurav comes with the news that the family members of Siddharth and Sudhir are on their way to airport, so they should make early boarding before their arrival. The queue on the airport seems to be moving at snail’s pace and as they are travelling through the economy class, there are no chances to get through the business class queue. However, finally Siddharth and Sumati check out their boarding passes and find their seats in the plane. As the plane takes off, they feel relaxed, but soon the Captain announces their names and invites them to the cockpit where they receive call from both of their families who urge them to return to India as early as possible as they have realized and accepted their love, and they have no problem for their relationships. Thus, the novel ends with the striking alterations where the homosexual protagonist finally accepts the heterosexual relations with the woman. The following chapter throws light on the comparative perspective in order to bring out the similarities and differences between the thematic representations, characteristic features and writing styles of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao.
CHAPTER IV
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The present chapter compares the works of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao in order to bring forth the similarities and differences in thematic representations, characters developments and writing styles from the perspective of queer articulation. Both Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao contribute significantly to the queer cultural perception in the heterosexual society, where there are fewer opportunities for the homosexual concerns that raise out of intense desire repressed due to the norms of straight society. The select novels of both the writers are filled with graphic homosexual scenes which are delineated with sensuousness and freedom of writing style that enables the writers to not only create well knitted plot but also to reveal another side germinating in the social life. The superfluous homoerotic intercourses in all the novels under study project the celebration of gay sub-culture under the powerful surge of socio-scientific metanarratives rather than making the novels over-sexed.

The select novels of both writers present the theme of queer culture which is rooted or taking its roots in the society and which do not allow, at least, at the outset, such a blow to the straight cultural traditions. The select novels share similar views in foregrounding gay sub-culture through the erotic homosexuality, where the protagonists are continuously eager to take the object of their love in the bed and have intercourse. William, the protagonist of The Swimming Pool Library, pays attention to the bodies of other men and constantly looks for the sexual pleasures, which results of him having numbers of homosexual affairs. He is always preoccupied with the sex and has homoerotic pleasures with Arthur, Colin, Phil and other men including a boy at porn
cinema and a young man, who meets him on his way back to home from Lord Nantwich. William and Lord Nantwich are similar in their way of living life except the difference of sixty years of age gap and altered socio-cultural situations. They both are gay men and prefer homosexual relations with men belonged to ethnically lower classes. However, Lord Nantwich lived gay life in the era, when establishing homosexual affairs was supposed to be very offensive and illegal; whereas William enjoys homosexual life in the period when homosexual relations have got identity legally. One of the reviews rightly points out that the novel The Swimming Pool Library is exclusively filled with “promiscuous, homosexual men. This creates an incredibly insular atmosphere, which, whilst realistic, is somewhat limited. Ultimately, the novel is too preoccupied with drawing a hedonistic gay lifestyle, and forsakes a more rounded and interesting” sections of the life (Selwyn, Web). William fails to go beyond the promiscuous lifestyle which is very easy than the brutality of the world.

Hollinghurst’s The Line of Beauty presents queer theme in a slight different way as the protagonist of the novel Nick is novice in the gay field who finds troubles in establishing homoerotic relations with the men. Initially, he flirts with the straight men like Toby, but immediately realizes that his efforts of having relations with straight men are in vain. However, he soon spots the object of his homosexual lust in the form of Leo. His yearnings for Leo turn him to Wani, one of his Oxford friends, with whom he shares the homosexual relations. In order to keep secrete their homosexuality, Wani tells everyone that he has hired Nick on the editorial board of his magazine called Ogee, which is named after Hogarth’s line of beauty that symbolically allows a double way of living life enabling them to switch between the heterosexual world and
homosexual world.

R. Raj Rao’s *The Boyfriend* is much more similar to Hollinghurst’s *The Swimming Pool Library* in the representation of queerness as Yudi, the protagonist of the novel, is preoccupied with homoerotic pleasures which is evident in his various sexual encounters with different men at diverse places including his flat and a Churchgate loo. He picks up his lovers from different places such as loos – a place of chalu, streetsmart guys – and Azad Maidan – a place of straightforward men. He is so much addicted of the gay sex that he even involves with unusual people at unusual places. The gay world has influenced Yudi so much that when he speculates over his past life and feels the need of lovable and compassionate partner to care and share his life with, even then he does not turn to the woman but looks for his lost gay love, his boyfriend Milind.

Rao’s *Hostel Room 131* shares similarities with *The Boyfriend* and Hollinghurst’s *The Swimming Pool Library* and *The Line of Beauty* in the articulation of queer cultural theme. The protagonist Siddharth is obsessed with gay sex for his soul mate Sudhir. The obsession is so much as it is depicted in the case of Yudi – who yearns for Milind, William – who thinks of Arthur and Phil, and Nick – who desires for Leo and Wani. There are neither references of Siddharth having number of sexual relations with different men before he met Sudhir nor he does sex with other men after he establishes homosexual relations with Sudhir, except in two cases where he penetrates Ravi as a part of ragging and enjoys sex with Vivek before he leaves country forever with Sudhir, now turned into Sumati. Siddharth is so much hungry for the gay love that he even ignores his physical hunger and gives preference for sexual hunger which shows the way he is engrossed with the homosexual desires. When he returns to
Bambay, he becomes too much sentimental and even sheds his tears as he could not control his grief of being separated that exhibits his emotional attachment and deep bonding with Sudhir. His gay love keeps him on the scheduled trips dividing his time between Pune and Bombay and as a result, “there wasn’t a night when they didn’t copulate, spending a warm two hours in each other’s arms” (Hostel Room 131, 70). The gay party organized by Gaurav and Vivek further enlarges the scope of queer culture in the novel, where an orgy seems to be a kind of thrill in the Indian society. However, the novel ends with a surprising episode where a sex reassignment surgery changes Sudhir into Sumati, consequently changing Siddhath from homosexual to heterosexual.

Another similarity between the novels of these writers is that all the select novels focus on the class-conflict as the protagonists of these novels, who represent the upper class society, turn to the lower class men for having homosexual relations. William is attracted towards the black men, who belong to the lower class category, which can be witnessed in the beginning of the novel when he is drawn towards the thirty five years old handsome black man who works for London Transport. There are also master-slave relationships between William and Arthur, a young black boy, with whom he is engaged in homosexual relations. Arthur becomes very submissive to William as he is guilty of doing murder whereas William dominates Arthur as he plays the role of protector by providing shelter to Arthur.

The class-conflict is more evident in the novel The Line of Beauty which projects the middle-class protagonist Nick, who finds tribulations in his formative years in the money minded political world and takes shelter in Fedden family. He is fascinated with the glamorous world of romance, money and power when he moves to the house. Catherine
notices his attraction to the luxuriousness of the house and points out his attachment towards the furniture and paintings as an instinct of the lower class people. She calls him a snob that differentiates him from the upper-lass elite society.

The class-conflict is also witnessed in R. Raj Rao’s *The Boyfriend* as the protagonist of the novel Yudi belongs to upper class whereas Milind, with whom he is obsessed for homosexual intercourse, belongs to lower class Dalit community. This class-conflict is not only demonstrated through the caste to which they belong, but it is also reflected in the languages they speak. When Kishore (which is the initial identity of Milind) asks about the language Yudi speaks in the house, Yudi initially points out that he speaks English and then quickly adds Hindi. His manner of adding Hindi quickly in the list of languages he speaks shows his fear of being treated as a superior and avoided by Kishore to establish sexual relations with him. Because English is spoken by upper-class educated people in India; and the middle and lower classes prefer to speak native languages. However, Yudi is the only character, who opposes the class-conflict and supposes that all are equal. He knows that it is not possible in the heterosexual society which is based on the caste and class system; and as far as he is concerned, homosexual world is the only way to escape from this class struggle. His acts of giving active role in the bed to the lower class men indicate his opposing manner to the class-conflict. He believes that the sense of lower dignity constructed because of the passive role cannot be overcame or replaced by the expensive gifts like wristwatches, walkmans, sneakers or money. He, at another instance, tries to show Milind that for the homosexual man like him, caste is not very much important as “outcastes, after all, can only expect to be friends with outcastes” (74-75). He attempts to reinforce the
spirit that there is no caste of the gay men.

Though there is no class-conflict depicted in the novel *Hostel Room 131*, as neither Siddharth nor Sudhir belong to the lower caste or ethnically or racially lower community, the struggle between two different backgrounds – urban and rural – is evident that differentiates the characters. Siddharth belongs to the urban background with the sophisticated manners and education which is privileged over the rural class livelihood of Sudhir, who despite being admitted to Engineering College at Pune, as Siddharth supposes, does not have cosmopolitan look. Again language plays a very prominent role in differentiating Siddharth and Sudhir and dividing them in two classes – one is sophisticated and the other is rustic, native class of people. Siddharth speaks fluent English that places him in the category of upper class people, in spite of his middle-class background, and Sudhir, who also belongs to the middle-class family, is placed at the lower category because of his education in Marathi medium.

The select novels also project the conflict between gay and straight people, between homosexual and heterosexual persons besides the ethnic, racial and upper-lower class conflict. The conflict between Lord Nantwich and the grandfather of William in *The Swimming Pool Library* reflect the struggle of homosexual man with straight white politician who tries to exploit the situation. In the same way, the conflict, in the novel *The Line of Beauty*, between Nick and Fedden family and vice-versa reveal the struggle of homoerotic desires over heterosexual white identity. The struggle of Yudi, in *The Boyfriend*, to find out his boyfriend and live forever with him till death apart them represents the conflict of homosexual man in the heterosexual society. The conflict between Siddharth Versus Sanghatana, and especially Ravi Humbe, and Siddharth,
and his gay group – Gaurav and Vivek – is again the reflection of the conflict between heterosexual and homosexual society.

All protagonists of the select novels have got the identity of straight dominant society, which believe in heterosexuality. William, in *The Swimming Pool Library*, belongs to the wealthy reputed family with well education and sophisticated culture, which provides him a character and prepares to live a life in the society. He becomes more and more brutal “by the oppressive mildness of the day” that makes him cruel man leading him to behave rashly, as his friend James observes, with a kid who irritates him (7). The protagonist of *The Line of Beauty* also lives with the straight white family who can accept him only when he promises to do not expose his gay life to anyone else. The heterosexual society is so dominant that Leo talks in code language with Nick on phone in the presence of his mother informing him further that he will not meet as he is going for the carnival. Nick thinks of Leo away from him “to the north, three miles up the long straight roads, but possibly anywhere” (19). The long straight road symbolically represents the socio-cultural codes of straight white society which seems to be present anywhere. The domination of the society is so much that he imagines of someone taking his photograph while having sex with Leo in the garden. He wonders, when he is seated with Leo on the bench, what will be the perceptions of the heterosexual people sitting around them about their relationships. Further, he fears to take Leo to the Fedden house as it is vulgar according to the norms of straight society; and he does not intend to spoil his relations with the Fedden family. On the other hand, Leo, who openly accepts his gayness, does not dare to go against the codes of heterosexual society and refuses to go at his place for sex as his mother is very religious.
The identity of straight dominant society that influences the homosexual cravings is vividly presented in R. Raj Rao’s novels. Yudi, in *The Boyfriend*, fears of his homosexual relationships when he takes Kishore to his mother’s apartment. He introduces Kishore as his servant to a Sindhi gentleman and further states the reason that points out his desire to hide his gayness, which is, in fact, unconsciously his acceptance of heterosexual cultural codes in the society. He thinks that the sociocultural codes of Indian society does not permit homosexual love relations, and therefore, there are “no young men who genuinely desire relationship with other men” which leads him to assume that “gay love in India thrived on lies” (38). Furthermore, Kishore hides his real name from Yudi which points out his creating another identity to act in the homosexual world indicating the domination of straight society. Yudi perfectly knows that Indian society is against the homosexuality and considers it as untouchable.

The domination of straight Indian society is clearly witnessed in the novel *Hostel Room 131*, where Siddharth and Sudhir are forced to set their way apart and live like the normal, everyday man. Right from the beginning of the novel, this domination of straight society is seen as Siddharth’s father continuously asks Siddharth to do a job; and when he grabs the job of lecturer in Azad College, he provokes him to do a job in better college as Azad college is located in the red-light area which does not fits into the codes of straight people. He cannot expose his homosexual affair to his family so when Sudhir comes to Bombay, he manages his stay at the lodge instead of taking him to his house as a friend. In the next visit to Bambay, when Sudhir stays in Siddharth’s house, Siddharth’s father suspects about their relationships as Siddharth closes the door for the sake of privacy which leads to the argument
between them. The establishment of a group called Siddharth Virudh Sanghatana (SVS) at the Engineering College Hostel is another way of straight heterosexual society to oppose and dominate the homosexual love relations. The Belgaum Boys, under the leadership of Ravi, intend to free their friend Sudhir and impose a blanket ban on Siddharth, which is, in fact, their attempt to ban homosexuality from the heterosexual world. When Sudhir’s family discovers the homosexual relations between Sudhir and Siddharth, they separate them showing the clutches of heterosexual society over the homosexual one. Consequently Sudhir opts for the sex reassignment surgery as he feels himself woman trapped inside man’s body, finally changing his gender so that society can accept his (her) relations with Siddharth that points to the victory of heterosexual society.

Sex with Arthur gives William a kind of satisfaction and he feels as if he is “riding high on sex and self-esteem” (The Swimming Pool Library 4). Homosexual encounters also provide a kind of security to William. He also tries to escape from the loneliness through gay sex. It is only sex that makes him very emotional and sentimental man as initially he is deeply in love with and attached emotionally to Arthur, but when he finds Phil as the object of his homosexual lust, he forgets Arthur, who has left him without informing. Similarly in the absence of sexual intercourse with Leo, Nick also feels loneliness that makes him desperate. So many times he is overpowered by the memories of Leo which leads him to give privilege to the homosexual yearnings over his responsibility of Catherine. However, the gay world, in which he has made private escapes, provides an opportunity to escape from the alienation. The memories of being with Leo give him some kind of relief from this loneliness.

The homosexual encounters, though, provide a sense of satisfaction
to Yudi; he feels alienated and does not find any security in his life. He sees his life as a failure and compares it with the lives of normal men who have wives and children to love and take care of them. On the other hand, Yudi finds at the age of forty two that homosexuality cannot provide solutions to cope up with the solitude of the life. There cannot be a genuine feeling of love between the men. However, the reversal takes place in the novel when Yudi discovers his lost boyfriend and begins to enjoy his stay with him in his house which becomes a mate house for them. Unlike Yudi, Siddharth feels alienation when he is separated from the Sudhir and his sentimentality leads him to be very desperate and wander from place to place including Kolhapur so that he can find his love. He takes many efforts to bring Sudhir back in his life which only provide him a sense of satisfaction.

The normal, everyday world seems to be very cruel for the protagonists of the select novels. William secretly escapes from the brutality of the world and behaves gently when he enters in the gay world which seems to be more dominating in his case. He does not think straight “even among the straight lines of the Park” where “its lake and trees inadequate reminders of those formative landscapes, the Yorkshire dales, the stream and watermeads of Winchester whose influence was lost in the sexed immediacy of London life” (6-7). The formative landscapes which William describes here is the reference to the hetero-normative socio-cultural traditions, the influence of which seems to be lost with the development of gay sub-culture. Similarly Nick also comes across the brutality in the socio-political, economical world which causes him to suffer. However, this brutal everyday political world seems to be hypocritical and corrupt and, in the end of the novel, looks like evading as Nick finds the corruptions and extramarital affair of Gerald which
shakes his idealization about the Fedden family. In a way, it is the failure of everyday straight world that leads Nick to the line of beauty which provides him a double way of living a life.

Yudi, being a gay man, does not feel that he belongs to the upper class Brahmin community, instead he considers himself as “no different from Bhangis” (*The Boyfriend*, 81). He considers himself as shudras which is the class of lower caste people that brings him to the equal place where Milind supposes himself. According to him, there is no difference between him and Milind, even though they belong to the category of Brahmin and Dalit respectively. In fact, he wants to create the ideal homosexual society where each male can be given a chance to show his heroic or masculine characteristics of making a love. Yudi explains that there is no caste or religion of gay people; but homosexuality itself is a caste and religion for them. Similarly, this normal, everyday world fails to attract Siddharth, who craves for homosexual life. It is evidenced in the novel when some girls at Azad College try to flirt with Siddharth, but he does not take any interest; rather he decides to do anything which will prove his ineligibility. Furthermore, he seems to be more happy and satisfied in the gay world that helps him to live happily in the heterosexual society.

Pastiche is another dominant theme represented in the select novels of the select authors. Alan Hollinghurst refers to the novels of Ronald Firbank or cinemas in order to delineate the feelings of the protagonist William in the novel *The Swimming Pool Library*. William reads Ronald Firbank’s novel *Valmouth* which was given to him by his friend James. The cinema also contributes greatly to the gay life of William, where during the gay pornography he is involved in anonymous sex. The cinema, as Letissier observes in the article entitled “Queer, Quaint and
Camp: Alan Hollinghurst's own return to the English tradition,” “is used as an ambiguous line of continuity by Hollinghurst, because it both contributes to trivialise scenes of intimacy, whilst it is also the means to pay homage to the past” (206). The gay porn movies influence the relationships between William and Phil by providing subtle atmosphere for the development of homosexuality. The homosexual appeal and emotional influence of the Billy Budd opera makes him to move deeply and he becomes sentimental. Though the novel The Line of Beauty does not cuts and pastes from other sources, it refers to the various literary texts including Henry James’ novels that Nick studies for his doctoral thesis. Nick’s friend Wani is addicted to porn movies and cocaine that helps him to reach at the sexual gratification. R. Raj Rao’s Hostel Room 131 presents numbers of intertextual references, where, in order to teach English to Sudhir, Siddharth uses various songs from Bollywood and translates them into English. The lines such as “Jaane kahan mera jigar gaya ji/ Abhi abhi yahin tha kidhar gaya ji” (68) and “Khana peena saath hai, marana jeena saath hai, sari zindagi” (93) or “Logon ko aate hai do nazar hum, magar dekho do nahn” (ibid) are simply taken out from the film songs and pasted as it is in order to show homosexual feelings of Siddharth.

The novel The Line of Beauty differs from the novel The Swimming Pool Library in terms of the interference of woman as Nick, the protagonist of The Line of Beauty feels Catherine as the obstacle in establishing homosexual relations. Catherine is emotionally attached with Nick who helps her cure from her trauma, but as she is responsibility of Nick in the absence of her parents, he cannot leave her alone to have gay pleasures. Similarly, though Gauri in The Boyfriend intends the platonic love relations with Yudi, he does not find her as the obstacle in his
homosexual relations, neither has she intended to stop him from his gay pleasures as she informs Yudi that she knows that he is gay. However, he rejects her proposal as he suspects that she will rob him for money. Thus, in the case of Nick, the presence of woman in the life seems to be an obstacle in homosexual relations, whereas, in the case of Yudi, Gauri does not stop him from the gay pleasures.

The paintings in the novels of Hollinghurst are used in two different ways. In *The Swimming Pool Library* when William goes to the Wicks club of Lord Charles Nantwich, the painting hung on the stairways leads him to feel homoerotic atmosphere; whereas when Nick, in *The Line of Beauty*, goes to the house of Lord Kessler, the brother of Rachel, in order to celebrate the birthday party of Toby, the paintings of two naked girls reminds him his belonging to the lower class who cannot afford such things. R. Raj Rao also uses paintings in his novels in order to reveal different angles that may expose the feelings of his protagonists. In *The Boyfriend*, Yudi goes to the exhibition of paintings, as a part of his duties, in order to write a review, where he is fascinated more towards the waiter for the homoerotic pleasures and thinks that the waiter is more beautiful than the paintings of Gauri. On the other hand, the porn pictures of Hollywood stars hung on the walls of hostel in the Engineering College, in *Hostel Room 131*, not only creates the homosexual desires but also symbolically represent the gay revolution which Gaurav and Vivek intend.

Another difference between Nick and William is that William is an experienced man in the homosexuality. There is not even a single instance in the novel where he is shown as a shy man. But on the other hand, Nick is a shy person in his early years. He even tells imaginary tales of his affairs to Catherine; and being a novice, he tries to “flirt with
straight boys” (The Line of Beauty, 26). On the other hand, Yudi and Siddharth both are experienced gay men as they are neither shy nor fears to establish homosexual relations. Rather Yudi is much more experienced man than Siddharth who knows how to manage his homosexual relations.

William is a perfect man who can easily recognise the gay men and then pursue them for the sex. There are so many instances in the novel where he is engaged in the anonymous sex with different boys. Whereas, Nick, as his life at Oxford is revealed, is shown as the emerging man in the gay field, who has no experience at all. He tries to flirt with the straight men including Toby and intends their transformation like him. It is also evident that William is interested in homosexuality since his childhood; but Nick is transformed from the straight to another line of beauty that is the gay world. Like William, Yudi is also a perfect gay person who spots exactly the other gay persons and persuades them to have sex. However, Siddharth is more similar to Nick, who is, though, not novice, does not have various sexual encounter and his homosexual relations are limited to Sudhir like Nick, whose sexual relations are limited to Leo and Wani.

Another similarity between William, Nick and Yudi is that they all love black men. They find certain charm in the objects of their love and all of them praise these black men. William loves Arthur, a black man younger than him; Nick loves Leo, who is black and younger than him; and Yudi loves Milind, who is also black and younger than him. The more surprising thing about Nick is that he wants to be loved by a handsome black man. On the other hand, William wants to love the black boys every time. Similarly, though Yudi offers the active role to his gay partner, he never desires to be loved by the other man. Rather he gives active role to them in order to avoid further consequences. However, all
these three protagonists prefer black boys in their twenties, whereas Siddharth does not reveal his desire to do sex with black boys, neither he shows his intensity to be passive in the bed. Only once Sudhir take active male role in the intercourse, otherwise, throughout the novel, it is he who takes the role of husband and Sudhir takes the role of his wife.

Nick is afraid while having homoerotic pleasures with Leo. His fear is evident when he is disturbed “for a moment at the thought of himself out here in the dark with a stranger, the risk of it, silly little fool, anything could happen” (39). It is surprising to note that Nick is living in the period when homosexuality was not considered as a social offence. It was the Labouchere Amendment, according to which practicing homosexual relations in the public life or the private life was supposed to be offensive and criminal activity; the phase of this law was already passed and homosexuality is not considered as a punishable act according to the Wolfenden Report. On the other hand, William feels no fear while consuming sex. Coming to the Indian social setup, both Yudi and Siddharth fears of homosexual relations as such type of gay sexual relations are supposed to be offensive in the Indian society.

Hollinghurst’s protagonists are aware about the social imbalance and class conflict, but where William in The Swimming Pool Library enjoys his privilege of being rich, Nick, the protagonist of The Line of Beauty, is trapped in his own social displacement. Similarly the protagonists of R. Raj Rao are aware about the class conflict, but Yudi in The Boyfriend accepts the marginal position and considers himself belonged to lower caste of untouchables rather than Brahmin. On the other hand, Siddharth points out the difference between urban and rural people who are not cosmopolitan, but gives privilege to rural category Sudhir because of his homosexual relations over other people belonged to
R. Raj Rao is also concerned with the effects of homosexuality like Hollinghurst. In the select novels of Hollinghurst, it is observed that the characters are aware about the HIV and at so many instances they seem to be the victim of this disease. The threat of HIV is more evident in *The Line of Beauty* where Nick learns from the sister of Leo that Leo dies with AIDS and she also warns him to be aware as he has sexual relations with Leo. Though initially Nick tries to reject his possibility of being affected by Leo, the fact is that he has broken up with Leo only when he finds Leo ill and his body decaying. As his object of lust is the line of beauty which is the body of other gay men, he turns from the decaying body of Leo to Wani. However, later Wani is also affected of AIDS, which leads him to face the fact, in the end of the novel, when Nick lives Fedden’s house and goes to check up with the hope that his HIV test might be positive. Similarly R. Raj Rao’s characters are aware of the consequences of gay sex. It is prominently observed in *The Boyfriend*, where Yudi notices the sex between two unknown men in the loo at Churchgate station, where one of them after the sex swallowed the semen and another warned him of HIV.

It is also interesting to note that Yudi is aware about the psychological traits of human personality as his thoughts or experiences of gay sex teach him to offer another person an active role in the bed. He knows that the masculine characteristics of human being like heroism or brevity does not permit the man to be passive during the intercourse. On the other hand, Siddharth, William and Nick do not probe into the human psychology. They have not thought about the feelings of another man who is involved in the sex. They have just imagined that their male partners may be waiting for them to take them into the bed.
In the novels of Hollinghurst, the protagonists are never afraid of homosexuality. There is no fear in their mind about their reputation in the society. They never thought about the consequences that will happen when they are caught while having a sex with another man. Though Nick of *The Line of Beauty* is afraid while having a sex in the corners of the streets, it is not the society for which he fears, but he fears for the Fedden’s family. On the other hand, the protagonists of R. Raj Rao are afraid of gay sex and always try to hide their sexual relationships in the social scene. Yudi in *The Boyfriend* fears of being exposed to be gay while taking Milind to the house of his mother and when he comes across to the man who knows him, he introduces Milind as his servant. Similarly Siddharth in *Hostel room 131* is afraid of gay relations and in order to remain safe in the heterosexual society, consumes sex privately. He does not want to be exposed of being gay to Farouq, the room partner of Sudhir or he always try to hide his homosexual relations with Sudhir from the Belgaum boys. So, when Ravi tries to convince Sudhir to do not let Siddharth spoil his studies, he suggests Sudhir to tell Ravi that he is teaching him English which will help in his studies.

Another thing that should be noted is that the protagonists of Hollinghurst are never afraid of their male partners. In fact, it is sex that gives the feeling of security to them as it is witnessed in *The Swimming Pool Library* where William feels secure in the company of murderer Leo. On the other hand, the protagonists of R. Raj Rao fear about their male partners as it is witnessed in *The Boyfriend*, where Yudi offers an active role to his opponents so that he can remain safe from the consequences that may emerge after the intercourse. The feelings of sex even disappear when Yudi and Milind see the Hindi movie Baazigar, where in one scene, the hero of the film pushes off the heroin from the
terrace; and after that, both Yudi and Milind fear to go on terrace of the mate house. So in the novels of Hollinghurst, the sexual pleasures diminish the feelings of fear; whereas in the novels of R. Raj Rao, fear reduces the feelings of security.

The superior class characters of Hollinghurst take active role in every situation which shows their dominance on their subordinates. In *The Swimming Pool Library*, William dominates Arthur and Phil so much and there is no single instance where William is placed at the marginal position. Rather he takes active role in the intercourse and has the total control over the lives of other two men when they are in his company. His opponent remains passive during the activity. There is even no feeling of giving active role to another person involved in the sex or to be loved by another in the mind of William. Similarly Nick in *The Line of Beauty*, even though he wishes to be loved, has not played subordinate role either while having sex with Leo or driving him to do intended action. On the other hand, the upper class characters of R. Raj Rao accept marginal position so many times. In *The Boyfriend*, Yudi accepts subordinate role and gives Milind to dominate him. It can be observed in the wedding ceremony they have organized and in the ceremonial way do the ritual where Milind takes the role of husband and Yudi becomes his wife. Yudi purposefully offers the dominant role to Milind as he is aware that for the old man like him it is difficult to have sexual partner at this stage. However, Rao reverses the situation in *Hostel Room 131* where Siddharth dominates the life of Sudhir and pushes him at the marginal position. It is revealed in the soliloquy of Sudhir, who states that other men in his life forced him to do what they expect. His submissive role becomes subordinate when Siddharth started making love without asking him whether he enjoys it or not. Thus, the select novels of the select
writers’ present queer culture with a prime focus on the gay sub-culture which unfold homoerotic sexual pleasures that dominates the lives of the characters. The select novels of both writers are full of graphic sexual scenes, but it does not make the novels over-sexed; rather it gives way to homosexual emotions.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

The present chapter attempts to make a comprehensive statement in the light of the analysis made in the previous chapters. The project begins with the introduction to the present study and the life and works of both the select writers, Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao. It also makes clear the significance, objectives, scope, limitations and methodology of the study. The select writers have created number of artefacts, but the present project work is limited only to the select novels, i.e. Alan Hollinghurst’s *The Swimming Pool Library* and *The Line of Beauty*, and R. Raj Rao’s *The Boyfriend* and *Hostel Room 131*. They have also focused on the number of issues in the select novels, but the study is bound to the articulation of queer culture and associated issues represented in these novels. The research work documented significantly the queer cultural perceptions in the wake of technological advancement and socio-political, economical upheavals.

The first chapter provides theoretical framework by reviewing brief history of the origin and development of queer theory in the socio-political, philosophical and literary premises. It puts forth the definitions of queer theory in the light of thoughts and debates developed so far in the field. It points out that the term queer theory is resulted out of the proliferation of the sexual discourses raised in the conference. In order to understand the philosophical perceptions of the queer theory, it takes a brief review of Michel Foucault’s arguments about sexual acts and its perception in the society. It then surveys the intellectual discussions of Judith Butler, who has extended the philosophical conceptions of Foucault to the categories of gender and sexual orientation in order to bring forth gender as merely performance which should allow the people
to take any gender role suitable for them. It discusses the perceptions of Eve Sedgwick about the hidden layers of human mind which keeps desires secret. It also focuses on the theoretical conceptions of Michael Warner and Lauren Berlant, who have challenged the idea of heteronormative. Finally it throws light on the ideas of Lee Edelman, who sees queer as a death drive, and Judith Jack Halberstam, who assesses queer as a failure. The philosophical arguments of these theorists place homosexuality at the centre of society commenting on the gender as only assigned role to the people. The chapter also takes a brief survey of the queer literature in order to place the select writers in the queer literary tradition.

The second chapter deals with the analysis of the select novels of Alan Hollinghurst in order to shed light on the reflection of queer culture articulated in elegantly poised language that adds emotional and sentimental tone to the explicitly represented homosexual scenes. The chapter points out the sexual attraction between men, who have learned to escape secretly in the homosexual world despite their having of heterosexual identity. The novel *The Swimming Pool Library* puts forth the gay sex relations of wealthy, handsome and twenty five years old person William Beckwith who represents sophisticated upper class society. He establishes number of homosexual relations with different men which reveal his attraction towards the physique of other men. He is deeply in love with Arthur, a seventeen years old black boy, who seems to be very appealing for him and who always dominates his thoughts for sex. Sex with Arthur gives him a kind of satisfaction and self-esteem as it is a most beautiful thing for him, which relieve him from the oppressive mildness of the day. However, when Arthur leaves him without informing, he feels alienation for some time and then is instantly attracted
towards Phil, who becomes his intimate gay friend. He tells Phil that in his school days, the prefect men were called as librarians; and as he was perfect in swimming, he was called as swimming-pool librarian, which further points out the suitability of the title to the life of William, who is perfect man in the gay field.

The second chapter also throws light on revelation of queer culture in Hollinghurst’s novel *The Line of Beauty*. The novel points out the development of homosexual life of its protagonist Nick, who finds tribulations in his gay as well as straight life because of the money minded political world. In fact, these tribulations in his emerging years shape his homosexual life. In order to cope up with the situations, he takes shelter in Fedden family, one of the influential political families in London, which seems to be so much fascinating to Nick due to its romance, money and power. However, Fedden family accepts him only when he promises to do not expose his gay life to anyone else as it will spoil the reputation of the family. Yet, in spite of his promise, he establishes homosexual relations with Leo, which seems to be momentous for him as he becomes successful after he has pursued Leo through all the obstacles of system, which are established by heterosexual society. The formative years of Nick’s life are confined by his modesty and natural fastidiousness, which are shed off in the course of time as he meets Wani and has learned to live a double way of life which allows him to switch between the heterosexual world and homosexual world.

The third chapter deals with the analysis of the select novels of R. Raj Rao in the premises of queer culture. R. Raj Rao gracefully depicts the homosexual world of its protagonists in an Indian society where it is almost difficult to grapple with the issues of gay culture. The graphic homosexual orientation projected in the novels, however, helps the writer
to bring to notice the changing scenario and altered situations where traditional cultural codes become futile. In the novel *The Boyfriend*, homosexual relations of its protagonist Yudi are projected, who is involved in gay sex with varied persons at different places. However, soon he finds his boyfriend Milind and intends to have life-long homosexual relations with him. He accepts marginal position for the sake of love and even offers money to Milind, which he usually does not in his gay relations with other men. In fact, he always avoids the persons who ask for money in exchange of sex. When he feels alienation and thinks for the compassionate partner in his life, he does not think of woman, but looks for his lost boyfriend which shows his queerness.

The third chapter then presents the analysis of R. Raj Rao’s *Hostel Room 131* on the basis of queer cultural conceptions. The novel unfolds homosexual desires of its gay protagonist Siddharth who is madly in love with Sudhir, his soul mate. The course of their gay love overcomes numbers of obstacles that creates the scene of conflict between to opposite forces: homosexual versus heterosexual. Siddharth meets Sudhir in the room number 131 of Engineering College Hostel, where the charming beauty of Sudhir fascinates him; and as a result, they continue to ride high on the gay sex. However, their homosexual sex lives are exposed that lead them to set apart and find their own way of living. As the tendency of heterosexual society does not allow relations between men, Sudhir opts for the sex reassignment surgery so that he can unite forever with his lover Siddharth.

The fourth chapter compares the thematic articulations, characters representation and writing styles of both Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao on the basis of queer cultural conceptions. The select novels of both writers are filled with graphic homosexual scenes which are delineated
with sensuousness and freedom of writing style. Both writers have presented the theme of queer culture through cruising of men and the erotic gay sex. Along with homosexuality, the theme of class conflict is also evidenced in the novel as the protagonists of the select novels of select authors belong to upper class community and prefer gay sexual relations with persons belonged to lower class community. The class conflict is further coupled with the conflict between homosexual and heterosexual categories presenting the power exercised by the straight society over sexual discourses. The chapter also points out that the homosexual encounters provide a sense of satisfaction and security to the gay characters represented in the select novels.

The select novels of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao successfully demonstrate the queer cultural perceptions of its characters, who intend to choose the gender role of their own choice rather than it is assigned by the social codes. William in *The Swimming Pool Library* openly accepts his gayness despite of his straight white influential background, Nick in *The Line of Beauty* rejects the lavish and fascinating straight world for the sake of homosexuality, Yudi in *The Boyfriend* prefers to spend his whole life with his boyfriend, and Siddharth in *Hostel Room 131* chooses Sudhir, his soul mate even after his sex reassignment surgery, which is, in fact, according to him, not a real thing. The characters of the select novels step beyond the bare outlines of homosexual and heterosexual social constructs in order to expose their hidden desires. However, the characters of Hollinghurst openly accept and disclose that they are gay; on the other hand, the characters of R. Raj Rao try to hide their gayness and keep secret their homosexual affairs.

The class conflict observed in the select novels of both writers divides the characters in two roles viz. active and passive roles. The
characters belonged to sophisticated upper class community always take an active role in cruising gay men or in the homosexual pleasures and the characters belonged to the lower class become submissive and always take passive role during the sexual intercourse. The character of Yudi, however, can be seen as only exception who offers active role first to his gay partners, yet, it is also evident that his act is not the sign of his submission or intentions to remain passive, but it is aroused out of his fear that his counterpart may become violent because of the indignity he may feel to his masculine traits or ask for money in exchange of sex. Otherwise the class conflict helps the superior class characters to dominate and control the lives of lower class characters who are ultimately pushed to the marginal position in the gay relationships. Furthermore, the class conflict depicts the struggle between heterosexual and homosexual categories. The heterosexual society tries to control the homosexual desires and love relations. The upper class straight white society gives identity to William, provides shelter to Nick, helps Yudi and Siddharth to find meaningful existence. However, the influence of straight white cultural, social codes seem to be evading in the wake of queer culture.

The characters of the select novels find homosexuality as a way to escape from the loneliness of life. William feels alienation when Arthur leaves him, Nick finds isolation in the absence of Leo, Yudi experiences loneliness when he lost Milind, and Siddharth suffers with alienation when he is separated from his soul mate Sudhir. On the other hand, all the characters experience a kind of satisfaction and security in the homoerotic lives. However, the geographical boundaries play great role in the perceptions of characters about the homosexual desires. William and Nick are aware about the fact that, though homosexuality can cause
indignity to heterosexual straight social identity, there are no social
constrains over the gay sex in the society where they live; whereas Yudi
and Siddharth are aware that homosexuality is against the social codes of
the Indian society which leads them to hide their gay relations before
straight people.

Thus, the select novels of Alan Hollinghurst and R. Raj Rao
succeed in demonstrating queer culture with the emotional complexities
of the homosexual characters in the premises of heterosexual society.
They fuse together the socio-political issues such as AIDS, social identity
with homosexuality in order to reveal the tendencies of people about
sexual orientation. They drive their characters, in the select novels, to
probe into the past and re-evaluate their lives in the context of family and
society. They effectively unfold the passions and oppressions of gay men
with a lavishness of homoerotic scenes in a graceful and effectively
balanced writing style.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:


Secondary Sources:

Books:


Articles:


Web References:


http://www.goodreads.com
