Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

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THE CHANGING PORTRAYALS OF GAY AND QUEER IDENTITIES IN JULIAN MITCHELL'S *ANOTHER COUNTRY*, JONATHAN HARVEY'S *BEAUTIFUL THING* AND MARK RAVENHILL'S *MOTHER CLAP'S MOLLY HOUSE*

Hande DİRİM KILIÇ

Ph.D. Dissertation

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Hande Dirim Kılıç tarafından hazırlanan "The Changing of Portrayals of Gay and Queer Identities in Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House*" başlıklı bu çalışma, 26.12.2017 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Doktora Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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o **Serbest Seçenek/Yazarın Seçimi**

17 /01/2018

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ÖZET

DİRİM KILIÇ, Hande. The Changing Portrayals of Gay and Queer Identities in Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House*. Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2018.

Eşcinselliğin tiyatro oyunlarında ve sahne üzerinde temsilleri, en eski ve üstü kapalı eserlerde bile metnin ötesinde bir takım sosyal, siyasi ve kültürel görüşleri ve bakış açılarını yansıtmış ve bu görüşlerin kabulüne katkı sağlamıştır. Özellikle, 1970'lerin başından itibaren, eşcinselliğin suç olmaktan çıkmasını ve tiyatrolardaki sansürün son bulmasını takiben, Britanya tiyatrosunda eşcinselliğin temsilinde hızlı bir değişim yaşanmış, 1970'lerde alternatif tiyatrolarda sahnelenen ilk oyunların ardından, gay oyunlar ana akım tiyatrolarda sahnelenmeye başlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, bu tez Julian Mitchell'in *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey'in *Beautiful Thing* ve Mark Ravenhill'in *Mother Clap's Molly House* oyunlarında gay ve queer kimlikleri üzerine değişen bakış açılarını, oyunların yazıldıkları dönemlerdeki sosyal, siyasi ve kuramsal tartışmalarla ilişkilendirerek incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Birinci Bölüm'de Julian Mitchell'in *Another Country* oyunu, eşcinselliğin baskılanmış ve özgürleştirilmeye muhtaç bir durum olarak temsili bakımından analiz edilmektedir. İkinci Bölüm'de Jonathan Harvey'nin *Beautiful Thing* oyunu, gay kimliğini sınırları belli, toplum içinde tanınan bir cinsel kimlik olarak temsili açısından ele alınmaktadır. Üçüncü Bölüm'de Mark Ravenhill'in *Mother Clap's Molly House* oyunu gay kimliğinin yapıbozumu ve queer bir kültür yaratımı açısından incelenmektedir. Bu oyunlarda gay ve queer kimliklerinin değişen temsillerinin 20. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında Britanya'daki eşcinsellik ile ilgili sosyal, siyasi ve kuramsal gelişmelere ve tartışmalara ayna tuttuğu savunulmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler

Julian Mitchell, *Another Country,* Jonathan Harvey *Beautiful Thing*, Mark Ravenhill *Mother Clap's Molly House*, eşcinsellik, gay kimliği, queer kuram, gay tiyatro oyunları, toplumsal kimlik çalışmaları

ABSTRACT

DİRİM KILIÇ, Hande. The Changing Portrayals of Gay and Queer Identities in Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House.* Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara, 2018.

Even in the earliest and most coded forms, the representations of homosexuality in British drama reflected the social, political and cultural perceptions of homosexuality beyond the plays and contributed to their dissemination. From the early 1970s onwards, following the decriminalisation of homosexuality and the abolishment of the censorship, the representations of homosexuality in British drama changed swiftly, and after the first plays staged in the fringe theatres in the 1970s, gay plays started to be staged in the mainstream theatres in Britain. In this context, this dissertation aims at studying the changing portrayals of gay and queer identities in Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* by relating these plays to the social, political and theoretical discussions on gay and queer identities in the decades they were written in. In Chapter I, Julian Mitchell's *Another Country* is analysed in terms of its representation of homosexuality as a repressed state that needs to be liberated. In Chapter II, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* is discussed in relation to its presentation of gayness as a stable identity category which is recognized by the society. In Chapter III, Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* is examined in terms of its deconstruction of gay identity and the creation of a queer culture. It is argued that the changing ways gay and queer identities are presented in these plays hold a mirror to the social, political and theoretical developments and discussions concerning homosexuality in Britain in the second half of the 20th century.

Keywords

Julian Mitchell, *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey *Beautiful Thing,* Mark Ravenhill *Mother Clap's Molly House*, homosexuality, gay identity, queer theory, gay drama, gender studies

İÇİNDEKİLER

INTRODUCTION

Homosexuality is a commonly and widely used term to describe sexual attraction for those of one's own sex ("Homosexuality"). Although the definition of homosexuality seems neat and clear, the ways homosexual desires are experienced in individual lives and shape homosexual subjects' relationship to society are diverse and complicated. This diverse and complicated nature of homosexual acts and their multiple receptions within different historical and social contexts render the creation of a stable universal understanding of homosexual identity problematic. The aim of this dissertation is to study the changes in the perception of gay identity in British society and their representation in British mainstream drama from the 1980s to the 2000s through the analysis of Julian Mitchell's *Another Country* (1981), Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* (1993) and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* (2001) with the help of theoretical discussions on gay identity and queer theory.

The scope of this study is limited to the gay plays staged in mainstream theatres in the period between the early 1980s and the early 2000s. First of all, this period marks the creation of the first established and explicit gay plays. As it will be discussed in detail, before the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967 and the abolition of censorship in 1968, it was not possible to present a straightforward representation of homosexuality in British drama, and the first plays that were created following the gay liberation were mostly propaganda pieces that aimed to create consciousness among gay readers/audiences. Secondly, this period marks the transition of gay plays to the mainstream stage; therefore, the study of these plays allows us to observe the meaning of gayness not only for the gay community but also its reception by the mainstream society.

Also, it is important to state that this study is limited to gay plays and the representation of male-homosexuality in British history and drama. There are several reasons for that limitation. The primary purpose is to keep the study more focused on one specific field of homosexual identity. The developments after the liberation movements indicate that

the priorities and concerns of gay and lesbian groups are different from one another; therefore, the analysis of their dramatic representations also require the study of different cultural conditions (Seidman, "Identity and Politics" 116-17). Moreover, the representations of homosexuality in British drama has been predominantly male as a direct result of "male dominance and hegemony" in theatre (Wyllie 83; Wilcox 8). Therefore, the material available on the representation of gayness is more abundant than the representation of lesbianism. Besides, the lesbian plays that emerged and increased drastically in the 1980s mostly reflected a feminist point of view, and the discussion of homosexual lifestyles in these plays remained secondary (Wyllie 106-107). Thus, the changes in the development of the homosexual identity can be observed more visibly in a historical study of gay theatre. For these reasons, this dissertation focuses on the representations of gayness and queerness in the above-mentioned plays written between 1981 and 2001.

0.1. History of Homosexuality

As the aim of this research is to understand the creation of homosexual identity and its deconstruction through queer theory, giving some thought to same-sex intimacy before the emergence of a visible homosexual identity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries can be useful in observing the missing parts that obscured the creation of a visible homosexual culture. Before the discussion of the narratives of same-sex acts in history, an explanation should be made in relation to the labels used to define such historical relations. Although modern terms such as "male homosexual" and "gay" are used by some researchers to define male practitioners of same-sex acts in history, it should not be overlooked that such anachronistic ways of labelling may cause some conceptual confusion as modern labels do not remain only as labels, but turn into concepts loaded with newly-acquired cultural meanings. The contemporary term which is the newest but also closest to pre-industrialised norms of same-sex desires is "queer." Just like pre-modern concepts of same-sex activities that resist the "hetero/homo-binary" of "the modern period," queer also aims to trouble "frameworks that assume a neat divide between homosexual or heterosexual persons, or emotional or erotic bonds" (Mills, "Male-Male Love" 3). However, despite the possibility of establishing such a bridge

between the term "queer" and same-sex activities in pre-modern societies, the use of the term to denote these periods is also problematic. The deliberate and theoretical approach of contemporary queer theory to deconstruct homosexual identity should not be equated with the lack of a fixed homosexual identity in pre-modern narratives as this lack does not always promise the emancipatory ideals of queer theory. To prevent such conceptual confusions and any anachronistic expressions, in the historical discussion of this work, terms such as "same-sex desire," "love between men," "men-men love," "men-men sex" will be used to describe the homosexual tendencies of the pre-modern periods when the concept of homosexuality in the modern sense was not developed. To define the same-sex activities of the modern period, the homosexual community's changing ways of self-definition will be used. Besides, any form of sexual activity that cannot be covered with existing categories or beyond conventional and heterosexual sexuality, accepted as the norm by the traditional Western society, will be defined as "dissident," "transgressive" or "non-normative," using the terminology created by the researchers of cultural studies and later adopted by queer theoreticians (Sinfield 5).

Since the Renaissance, Ancient Greek and Roman societies have been regarded as the cradles of Western civilisation and accepted as the sources of most disciplines such as ethics, geometry, metaphysics and aesthetics in Western cultures for centuries (Garton 30). However, when sexuality was the issue, the most studied cultures of the ancient times were ignored by Western historians for a long time. Even the "classicists who were brave enough to address the subject . . . concluded that [the existence of same-sex desire] was not central" to their study of classical age (Davidson, "Dover, Foucault" 4). For instance, "no book on Greek homosexuality was circulated openly in English" till 1978, and only after the gay liberation movement of the 1970s "the rich tapestry of homosexual life and culture" in the "Greco-Roman world" came to the surface (Garton 31; Crompton 18). Since then, for most researchers of homosexuality, Classical Greek has become the first point of reference. However, it is not a coincidence that even during the years when same-sex activities were the overlooked topics of Greek culture, same-sex desire was still depicted as "the unspeakable vice of the Greeks" (Crompton 18).

The works of lyrical poetry, philosophy, theatre, mythology, sculpture and vase-painting of Ancient Greece are full of evidence of homosexual relations in almost all layers of society (Spencer 41-50). These rich narratives prove the frequency of such practices in all classes of society and provide modern researchers with a varied material, thus maintaining the popularity of the subject. However, it is not only the abundance of the material that keeps the interests of researchers awake. It is the distinctive way in which Greek attitudes towards same-sex love are separated from ideas towards same-sex love in the following centuries. While prohibitions, restrictions, trials and executions shaped the pre-modern history of same-sex love in the West, Greek accounts generously offer narratives of tolerance and freedom. Same-sex love in Greek society was a deed befitting gods. Boswell quotes *The Greek Anthology* to explain the multitude of human desire in classical civilisation: "Zeus came as an eagle to god-like Ganymede, as a swan came he to the fair-haired mother of Helen. So there is no comparison between the two things: one person likes one, another likes the other; I like both" ("Revolution" 24). Zeus has been only one of these examples of same-sex desire among Greek gods. "Mythology provides more than fifty examples of youths beloved of deities" as Crompton states (19). Same-sex love was also practised by heroes and warriors in Greek society as can be seen in the stories of The Sacred Band of Thebes. This undefeatable army took its power from the devotion the soldiers felt for each other, and if they were to die, they chose to die heroically and together (Greenberg and Bystryn 527; Spencer 44).

Same-sex love was also regarded as a necessity for a boy's formation and an edifying practice in Ancient Greece (Adam, *The Rise* 2). Such an impression was especially valid for a specific type of male-male sexuality: "paiderastia" or "pederasty," which can simply be defined as the sexual activity between an older and younger male ("Pederasty"). The age gap between the lover and the beloved was honoured in these practices (Boswell, "Revolution" 32). It was not only because "the subordination of the young" was "a 'natural'. . . feature of a patriarchal social structure" of Greek society, but also this relationship between young and old was regarded as an educational practice (Greenberg and Bystryn 518). "Ideally" the older lover had the duty of being "the boy's teacher and protector," and he was expected to "serve as a model of courage,

virtue, and wisdom to his beloved . . . whose attraction lay in his beauty, his youth, and his promise of future moral, intellectual, and physical excellence" (Crompton 20). These relationships played an important part in the young men's education, especially in the aristocratic circles, and in some of the Greek cities such an educational phase was regarded as a prerequisite for manhood and even arranged by the parents (Greenberg and Bystryn 517; Spencer 40; Stearns 33). As Crompton states, "the notion of the potential ennobling effect of such love remained common currency from almost the earliest days of recorded Greek history down to the triumph of Christianity" and it became one of the leading notions behind the Greek tolerance to same-sex desire (21).

It should be noted that Greek understanding of same-sex love was distinguished greatly from the modern idea of homosexuality in the 20th century. Different from the modern understanding of homosexuality, as a fixed identity, as "a key part of one's being," same-sex desire in Greek society was a sexual behaviour practised by a wide range of people in different ways, in different times and places (Wiesner 23). It was not associated with a specific group of people who could be defined with a specific term, such as "homosexual." Although there were few men who were known for their "exclusive interest in" men such as "Alexander the Great and the founder of Stoicism, Zeno of Citium," there was no concept of a homosexual person (Pickett 11; Greenberg and Bystryn 517). For most men, both male and female beauty could become the object of sexual desire, and the sexuality of the object of desire could easily change between men and women during one's lifetime. Halperin describes this change in the desires like a circle. In this circle, the young boys who did not gain their virile power sought the intimacy of the old men and when they themselves got old and this power was lost, once again they desired contact with the same sex and this time the target became young boys (43-44). Hence, even the same people could experience and exhibit changing sexual habits in different periods of their lives.

In Ancient Greece, male sexuality was at the heart of society[i]. The physical and mental training of boys were exquisitely conducted in the Gymnasia; and the "cult of male beauty" was celebrated in Greek art, mythology and marathons (Boswell, "Revolution" 30; Stearns 30-31; Crompton 27-33; Garton 34-35; Hubbard 3). Under the

circumstances, men seemed to be worthy only of love of men; however, there was also a power struggle governing same-sex intimacies. The power relations between couples and the positions taken during sex were regarded as indicative of one's place in society. It is pointed out by most researchers in the field that being “active” or “passive,” “penetrating” or “penetrated,” “superordinate” or “subordinate” was the main issue that defined one's sexuality, rather than being homosexual or heterosexual (Pickett xxxii; Garton 32; Greenberg and Bystryn 517-518; Halperin 49; Johansson and Percy 158). Garton argues that “[t]o be penetrated was to submit symbolically to the authority of another, something that shaped the whole fabric of citizenship and dominance in the ancient world” (33). This critical outlook to Greek sexuality, which emerged with the criticisms of Dover and Foucault in the 1950s, also changed “the modern view of Greek love . . . from essentially ‘pure’, to pure sex” (Davidson, “Dover, Foucault” 5).

The role of power in same-sex relations became especially visible during the Roman period due to changes in the social order. With the increase in the slave population in the Roman period, the power held in a sexual relationship was associated with the power of master-slave relations. As inequality among couples became more apparent in male-male sexuality, it became more difficult for Romans to idealise "male passion as the Greeks had” (Crompton 97). Being on the passive side was more and more associated with “persons excluded from the power structure” (Greenberg and Bystryn 518). Romans did not oppose same-sex love nor did they prohibit it. Same-sex relations were actively experienced in Roman society, maybe more commonly than the Greek society, but concepts of honour, courage - positive ideas that were evoked in the Greek mind with thoughts of same-sex love - were replaced by concepts of “effeminacy, coercion, the seduction of minors,” and that disturbed the Roman codes of honour (Greenberg and Bystryn 518-19; Boswell, “Revolution” 33). The idea of pederasty, which required boys to be passive, especially disturbed the Romans. It implied that “freeborn adolescent males who would one day be citizens” would take a “disgraceful” and “illicit” role in a relationship (Williams 62-63).

This change in attitude towards same-sex love in the Roman period also showed itself in the literary sphere. The illustrations of same-sex acts in Roman literature are both

limited and negative compared to their representations in the Greek tradition. In most cases same-sex desire belongs to the ludicrous characters or buffoons, as in *The Braggard Soldier* of Plautus. Few Roman writers who used the elevated diction of Greek writers (like Virgil in his description of love between Nisus and Euryalus in *Aeneid*) could create cultural icons of male love like Achilles and Patroclus. Even the elements of same-sex love in Roman myths were taken from Greek myths, as in the example of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Crompton 97-104). Romans also initiated the tradition of using same-sex love as a political weapon in Western politics. The famous figures of Roman political life, such as Sulla, Pompey, Cataline, Caesar, Claudius, Mark Antony, and Octavius, all became the targets of defamatory campaigns in which rumours of same-sex activities were used as political instruments. So, as Crompton states, the Roman period marked the start of a long, painful history in which "the post-classical West moved in the opposite direction of vilification, associating homosexuality with sin, crime, and sickness and, in the political sphere, with weakness and treason" (48, 97-104).

The acceptance of Jewish legislation by the Jews became another crucial point which would speed up the hostile turn towards same-sex desire in the Western culture. Hebrew attitudes towards same-sex relations were totally different from any other culture in Asia Minor or in the Mediterranean at the time (Spencer 53). However, like Greek and Roman approaches, Jewish perception was also shaped by the cultural and political conditions governing the society. Hebrew society's efforts to continue its existence among "mighty and hostile powers— Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia"— depended on its ability to increase its population and maintain an independent Jewish culture (Crompton 52). Along with their military strife, the Jewish community also conducted a war of culture and tried to prevent assimilation by developing a hostile attitude towards the earlier and neighbouring traditions. One of the first points of resistance to the neighbouring cultures was their rejection of Greek and Roman attitude towards same-sex practices. Same-sex desire was regarded as "man's greatest weakness," and Jews were seriously warned that if they committed this sin, they would be "dispossessed . . . like their predecessors" (Greenberg and Bystryn 521; Crompton 50).

As Newall argues, “it was important for a small Hebrew tribe to procreate if it was going to survive . . .. Thus the Mosaic Law, as set out in *Leviticus*, regarded sex as solely for procreation, in the interests of population” (124). Childbearing “was seen as a religious function, for this would keep Judaism alive” (Weisner 23). Sexual activities were pragmatically dealt with in Jewish law like “a modern sex manual in detail,” where sex in marriage and polygamy were highly promoted, while activities such as male-male sex or masturbation, which was believed to waste male seed, were strictly banned (Spencer 53). With these concerns, Jewish law constituted three most important texts that formed the basis of Christian prejudices towards same-sex love.

The first of them, the famous story of “Sodom and Gomorrah” in *Genesis*, takes place during the visit of God’s angels to Lot’s house. The wicked inhabitants of the town, who hear the news of two strangers, gather around Lot's house and demand Lot to surrender the strangers whom they would like to “know” (19.4, 19,5). Despite Lot’s attempts to persuade them otherwise, they continue their assault on the messengers of God, and in the end, they are punished with the destruction of the town. The reason behind this destruction has been a point debated for centuries. While the traditional view regards their will to “know” the angels as the reason (the word “to know” in Hebrew also means carnal knowledge [“Know, Knowledge”]), others focus on their inhospitality as the cause of punishment, and still others bring a more secular interpretation to the story and regard it as a reference to a natural disaster that occurred in that area (“Bible”). Whatever the real explanation is, the story became the source of terms such as “the sin of Sodom,” “sodomy,” “sodomize,” “sodomite,” and is frequently used by Christian authorities to condemn same-sex practices (Crompton 53-54; Boswell, *Christianity* 93; Spencer 62; Johansson and Percy 156-157).

There are two other direct references to same-sex relations in the Bible. In *Leviticus 18,* same-sex love between males is openly banned with the rule "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with woman: it is abomination" (18:22), and in *Leviticus* 20 this ban is also supported with the punishment: "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (20:13). While many of the other prohibitions in

Leviticus such as restrictions on diet, the sewing of crops, animal breeding, the weaving of garments were abandoned over the years, as they were not applicable to modern conditions of life, the prohibition imposed on same-sex love had a continuing effect on Western culture. It became the basis of the death penalty for same-sex practices in Europe till the middle of the 19th century ("Bible;" Spencer 65; Crompton 51).

Although Christianity inherited a lot from Judaism, and "Jewish writings on sex also influenced the development of Christian thinking," in the early centuries of Christianity, the issue of same-sex love was rarely dealt with (Wiesner 22). According to Boswell, Jesus's silence on same-sex sexuality and the focus of both Jesus and Paul on heterosexual matters such as widowers, orphanage, and birth control could be explained in terms of the historical conditions in early Christian societies. The troubled times required them to focus on the problematic issues of social life. Same-sex love, on the other hand, attracted less attention as a result of its less troublesome consequences, which did not necessitate urgent legal control (*Christianity* 116-119). There were still attempts made by the early Church to forbid and control homosexuality, but "the harsh repression, carried out consistently over an extended period, began only in the high Middle Ages . . . with the Gregorian reforms in the Church, the rise of a centralized monarchy, and the growth of class conflict in medieval city-states" (Greenberg and Bystryn 517).

The earliest accounts of same-sex acts in British history go back to the Middle Ages. Compared with the narratives of later ages, those of the Middle Ages provide a rather blurred vision of same-sex activities. One of the reasons behind this comparatively unclear picture is the existence of limited sources. As a result of low rates of literacy, high costs of writing material and the tremendous clerical control over written material in monasteries, such a personal experience as same-sex activity found little chance of expression. Even if it was expressed, it was difficult for written materials to survive over a wide span of time. Moreover, trial records, which provide useful statistical surveys of homoerotic activities, are not available for the Middle Ages. Same-sex activities were subjected to secular law only after 1534, and most of the ecclesiastical records on same-sex activities were destroyed along with the practitioners of these

activities as a result of the religious ideology of the time which regarded this “crime against nature” as a threat to Christian mind (Mills, “Male-Male Love” 4; Bullough 353). Same-sex love in the Middle Ages “was blotted out of the annals of the past, unrecorded in the present, forbidden to exist in the future” (Johansson and Percy 176). So the Middle Ages is only one of the points in time where "[t]he history of minorities poses ferocious difficulties: censorship and distortion, absence or destruction of records, the difficulty of writing about essentially personal and private aspects of human feelings and behaviour, problems of definition, political dangers attendant on choosing certain subjects" (Boswell, “Revolution” 20).

According to Mills, the existing documentary sources and chronicles, including texts produced in religious contexts and literature written in courtly milieu, are also far from revealing a unified vision of the same sex activities in the Middle Ages (“Male-Male Love” 5) In fact, they present some contradictory accounts. Possibly the most tolerant of the conflicting discourses that shaped the idea of the same-sex intimacy in the Middle Ages was that of homosociality. The term denotes “intense emotional relationships between people of the same sex that have social, economic, or political consequences but that are not comparable with-and indeed structured by – expressions of sexual desire by men for women” (Mills, “Male-Male Love” 3). There are many examples of “male-bonding and fidelity” and “self-sacrificing friendship” in medieval literature (Johansson and Percy 170), including the tradition of “sworn brothryn” which goes so far as burying the members of the same-sex in the same tomb (Bray, “A Traditional Rite for Blessing Friendship”), and the sympathetic accounts of close but political relationship between Edmund Ironshide and Danish King Cnut and between Richard Lionheart of England and young king Philip of France (Mills, “Male-Male Love” 1-10). These are only some of the examples of the relationship between men which can be discussed under the concept of homosociality. Despite the evidence of physical intimacy in these accounts, same-sex intimacy is still celebrated without reproach.

What makes the existence of these examples confusing is the existence of another highly political discourse within the same courtly and religious circles. As can be seen in the accusations directed at the members of the Knights Templar, or in the accounts of

same-sex relations in “the reigns of the weak kings” such as Richard II or William Rufus, the acts and gestures of kissing and hugging, which were proposed as evidence of brotherly love in the earlier discourse, turned into strong political weapons to criticise the parties (Mills, “Male-Male Love” 18-29; Bullough 395-6).

In its “dominant framework,” which equated “sex, flesh and body with sin,” the church formed the most effective discourse on same-sex activities in medieval England and developed a “rich theological literature” to fight this temptation (Garton 64 -67). Penitentials, the “manuals or handbooks designed to guide confessors in the administration of private penance,” revealed a great deal about the way sexuality was regarded by the ecclesiastical circles, as they provided the necessary information to the public on what specific sins constituted and what their penance was (Brundage 26; Johansson and Percy 165). Apart from guiding the public towards private penance, penitentials also had a higher objective in keeping the clergy itself from sinning. In their enclosed communities and sex-segregated groups, clerics were believed to be apt to fall prey to temptation, and such a danger necessitated more severe policing and punishment in religious circles (Garton 67; Mills, “Male-Male Love” 34; Bullough 370; Johansson and Percy 169).

This serious concern of the religious authorities to control same-sex sexuality was shadowed by the vagueness of the labels used to define same-sex activities. For the fear of “corrupting innocent minds by disclosing the illicit, previously unheard practices” (Mills, “Male-Male Love” 16) in most of the medieval texts, both religious and literary, same-sex activities were referred to as “the sin not even to be mentioned among Christians” or mentioned ambiguously as “sin against the nature” (Crampton 18). With this ambiguous naming, same-sex acts became one among many other “unnatural” sexual activities that could not be found in nature and did not result in the production of offspring, as in the use of contraceptives, anal intercourse, masturbation, and bestiality (Garton 66; Bullough 355). Even the term sodomy, which more openly suggested same-sex acts, had much “vagueness and polyvalence” and was used to refer to different kinds of sexual excess (Dinshaw 5; Boswell, *Christianity* 29).

These indeterminacies around the topic of same-sex sexuality make it difficult for the modern researcher to arrive at a definite conclusion on the nature of same-sex love in the Middle Ages. However, the same vagueness and ambiguity surrounding the labels enabled the creation of few medieval accounts that exist on the topic. As Mills suggests, with the help of the "indeterminacies" around the sensitive topic of same-sex sexuality, "medieval commentators" could write about same-sex relations through implication "without putting themselves directly in the political firing line" ("Male-Male Love"). With limited evidence on the topic, the lack of a unified approach to same-sex love, and the absence of a defining label for same-sex activities, the Middle Ages can be regarded as a period when same-sex acts were accompanied by a resistance to be defined and categorised.

With the Renaissance, same-sex activities became "a widely observable and documented social phenomenon" within all layers of society throughout Europe (Saslow 90-94; Trumbach, "Homosexuality and Lesbianism" 101-103). The first reason behind this change was the increase in legal evidence. In 1533, Henry VIII "took jurisdiction over sodomy away from the ecclesiastical courts and gave it to the secular state," with The Act of Buggery; and till 1885 this act remained as the only legislation on same-sex activities in England (Trumbach, "Renaissance Sodomy;" Newall 125). With this legislative change the accounts of the trials of same-sex acts, which were previously suppressed by the censorship of the church, became more visible and well-documented.

Also, classical sources brought to light with the Renaissance familiarised their readers with same-sex tolerance and provided them with philosophical writings, which celebrated love between men (Saslow 97-101). "The stimuli of the classical revival and vernacular literature, coupled with the richness of biographical data inspired by the new cult of the creative individual" also led to an increase in the production of biographical and literary works which gave importance to the expression of personal feelings through classical homosexual imagery (Saslow 97-101). This way, first-hand accounts of same-sex activities started to be created.

Hence, the surviving evidence of same-sex activities in the Renaissance is far more than that in the Middle Ages; however, its reliability is questionable. The sources are mostly "incomplete and biased because of the gravity of the crime and the nature of the" subject, as James M. Saslow argues (91). Moreover, these sources were also far from presenting a general view of the public, as they reflected only the viewpoint of their writers, who were "the literate, the educated and the powerful" (Adam, *The Rise* 17). The limited number of sources which expressed personal experiences were also highly subjective and far from being reliable as in the example of the personal letters of James I to his favourite Buckingham, which were usually romanticised and sentimentalised (Trumbach, "Renaissance Sodomy" 53).

The literary works of the period, on the other hand, mostly created "stock figures, not identifiable individuals" (Bray, *Homosexuality* 35). Satires, which were one of the most popular genres of the age, dealt with the issue of same-sex love to a great extent. However, as a result of the classical influence on the age, most satires were based on those of Juvenal, and their criticisms reflected the Roman period more than Renaissance England. Moreover, same-sex love in the satires of the period was only another theme, used to criticise the court (Bray, *Homosexuality* 34-37). As Bray argues, "[i]t was the Court—the extravagant, overblown' parasitic Renaissance Court—not homosexuality which was the focus of their attention" (*Homosexuality* 35). Hence, literary documents can be misleading and subjective in their representations of same-sex relations.

Legal documents, which provide most of the evidence on same-sex intimacy in the Renaissance, are also questioned by critics in terms of their reliability. Garton argues that legal documents were limited and did not reflect the same-sex experience of the majority. They mentioned only the cases of the people that came before the courts; however, the experiences of those who escaped the law were not registered (83). The way the trials were recorded was another point that prevented information to be transmitted in detail. Writing down the trials was only a matter of technicality, as it is argued by Bray (*Homosexuality* 38-42). With the limited time and high number of the cases they had, clerks usually kept trial accounts as short as possible and used stock expressions in most accounts. They recorded the incidents, which were common

knowledge at the time. So they were not concerned with giving detailed accounts of the events. The details which were given were also far from the truth as the main intention of the records was to support the verdict, not to provide a sociological viewpoint to understand the nature of same-sex love (Bray, *Homosexuality* 38-42).

This unreliable nature of the sources also results from the political and religious atmosphere of the time. Discourses on sexuality were highly political, rather than just sexual (Murray 152-153). In most sources, the practice of same-sex acts was presented as a derogatory label given to 'the other.' Especially with attacks directed at Catholicism with the Reformation, terms "heresy," "sodomy" and "treason" were simultaneously used and blended into each other (Bray, *Homosexuality* 20-21; Hitchcock 61). Even Henry VIII's decision to transfer the jurisdiction of sodomy from ecclesiastical courts to the secular ones in 1533 was an attack on Catholicism, as it indirectly targeted the same-sex structured system of monasteries. Following Henry VIII's reign, sodomy continued to be a political and sectarian matter. Except Queen Mary, who repelled the act as a result of her papal allegiance, all Tudor monarchs regarded sodomy a crime punishable by death (Trumbach, "Renaissance Sodomy" 50; Bray, *Homosexuality* 62). In most cases, these political moves, however, did not reflect the actual attitudes of the monarchs towards the issue of same-sex love (Saslow 91; Trumbach, "Homosexuality and Lesbianism" 104; Trumbach, "Renaissance Sodomy" 53). Although James I condemned sodomy as one of the "horrible crimes that ye are bound in conscience never to forgive," his intimate relationships with his male favourites were known and well-documented (qtd. in Trumbach, "Renaissance Sodomy" 53).

Although same-sex activities in the Renaissance were better documented than in the Middle Ages, as a result of the fragmented and biased sources, contradictory political stances, most of the documents were unreliable. Furthermore, they also shared the characteristics of other pre-modern periods, as same-sex desire was still not regarded as a defining part of the personality. Most of the time, men who enjoyed male-male sexuality had relationships with women as well. Therefore, the way same-sex desire was conceived of was closer to bisexuality than homosexuality (Saslow 91). Also, most

same-sex "activity occurred mainly, although not exclusively, between adult men and boys or adolescents" (Saslow 91). Far from the modern understanding of homosexuality as an age-equal relationship, the same-sex activities of the Renaissance still carried the pederastic characteristic of pre-modern societies (Trumbach, "Homosexuality and Lesbianism" 101). Same-sex desire was still shaped around a patriarchal order in which men fancied "still-'feminine' physical characteristics of beardless, high voiced, smooth skinned adolescents," and it was still based on the subordination of the partner, especially the younger partner, as passive (Saslow 92-94). These age-differentiated relationships were, especially, visible in master-servant relationships, in the circles of apprenticeships, or between teachers and pupils in universities. Most court cases dealt with such intercourses, and "the major homosexual scandals of the 17th century: that of Francis Bacon and Mervyn Touchet, Second Earl of Castlehaven," for instance, fall into the pattern of the relationships between masters and the servants *(*Bray, *Homosexuality* 46-51; Adam, *The Rise* 4).

Despite these traditional characteristics, the Renaissance also showed developments that can be regarded as early signs of homosexual identity creation. The meeting places such as taverns, brothels and theatres became "common knowledge" and started to be associated specifically with same-sex activities, in a way like "subcultural meeting places of same-sex activities;" "homosexual prostitution" also became "an important part of the sexual life at least of London," (Saslow 95; Bray, *Homosexuality* 55). However, people who gathered in these places or took part in male prostitution did not share a unified identity. Activities were performed "under two different moralities, one that was Christian and disapproved" same-sex activities; the other was masculine "and patriarchal and promoted [them] . . .. These contradictory moralities existed together in the minds of the individuals; and at some moments and in some roles, one morality prevailed over another in the life of an individual" (Trumbach, "Homosexuality and Lesbianism" 101).

The creation and emergence of homosexual identity have been discussed in various ways by scholars. While Michel Foucault and Jeffery Weeks relate it to the scientific and medical discourses of the 19th century when various sexual activities were labelled

and then became identities, other scholars such as Randolph Trumbach, regard the molly houses as "the major social shift that produced dominant modern culture" of same-sex love ("Homosexuality and Lesbianism" 104; "Modern Sodomy" 77). This social shift, as Trumbach calls it, took place with the emergence of a specific type of public houses in the 18th-century London. Molly houses were places where the practitioners of same-sex acts came together and socialised. The molly house took its name from Greek word *malthakoi* which was used in Ancient Greek to define "'soft' or unmasculine men who depart from the cultural norm of manliness insofar as they actively desire to be subjected to other men to a 'feminine' (i.e. receptive) role in sexual intercourse" (Halperin 45-46). "Molly" differed from the labels, such as "bugger" and "sodomite," which referred to a number of sexual activities along with same-sex desire (Bray, *Homosexuality* 103). It defined a specific group of men, who different from the masculine and bisexual sodomite of the past, were effeminate, desired exclusively men and boys (though some married men also took part in the molly culture), enjoyed mimicking speeches and gestures of women and even wore female dresses and adopted female names (Trumbach, "Homosexuality and Lesbianism" 105).

Molly houses did not only give their customers the label of "molly," but they also played an important role in the formation of homosexual subculture and group identity. Coming together in molly houses created a feeling of belonging in most men and eased the anxieties they felt when they faced their desires. Molly houses provided them with a roof under which they felt 'normal.' However, these specific meeting places also made it easier for same-sex activities to be noticed. With their distinctive characteristics, molly houses soon became targets of a group called "the Societies for the Reformation of Manners," which dedicated itself to correcting the morals of society, especially, the sins of the flesh including prostitution and sodomy. Starting from 1698, the Societies for the Reformation of Manners conducted many raids against the molly houses in 1707, 1726, 1760, 1776 and 1798. These elaborately organised and planned attacks were also the first mass attacks on the practitioners of same-sex love. Same-sex desire which was regarded as an individual sin in the previous centuries now became a communal crime (Bray, *Homosexuality* 81; Hitchcock 67-71). The members of this community who were exposed to the raids of the Societies of Reformation together felt a stronger group

identity than ever before. For the first time in British history, men with same-sex desire had an enemy they needed to fight together; they came together under a common threat (Adam, *The Rise* 9).

For suspects who were arrested as a result of these attacks, being convicted of sodomy meant being punished with the death penalty, while an attempt of sodomy meant being sent to prison or pillory. In many cases, the second option could also be deadly, as attacks on pillory caused serious, even lethal injuries most of the time. If one survived both the death penalty and pillory, he had to face great public humiliation which also brought an end to one's previous life (Bray, *Homosexuality* 99-100). With these trials and public prosecutions, mollies gradually became visible to the public eye. Apart from exposing them through the raids, the Societies for the Reformation of Manners also publicised molly culture through the printed medium by publishing trial reports, pamphlets and accounts of mollies' sexual activities (Hitchcock 72; Trumbach, "Modern Sodomy" 79-80).

As a result of these events, mollies became an easily identifiable group in 18th-century London, with their specific clothes, language, gestures and meeting places (Garton 97; Bray, *Homosexuality* 92). With these characteristics mollies did not remain behind the closed doors of molly houses, but made themselves visible in a number of outdoor meeting places, such as streets and specific parks in London. The language, the codes of behaviour and cross-dressing, developed in molly houses, also helped mollies to recognise each other outside and arrange meetings outdoors (Hitchcock 67-69). Bray points out that cross-dressing was common among the male prostitutes in Elizabethan London as well as in the 18th century, but the cross-dressing in these different periods served different purposes. While it was a means of disguise in the Elizabethan period, in the 18th century, it was an element of effeminacy, a self-expression and a crucial part of one's identity (Garton 93; Bray, *Homosexuality* 88).

In the 18th century, same-sex activity also turned into a distinguishing characteristic which defined the personality of the individual engaged in the activity. Earlier, it was regarded as an act experienced by many, and as a result of this prevalence, it was

tolerated more. From the 18th century onwards, people who could be named as "modern sodomites" became "a numerical minority" which experienced same-sex desire, not only at a specific point in life, but in a continuous way (Trumbach, "Modern Sodomy" 77). With mollies, same-sex affairs became "more than a mere sexual act," but an identity, and that made mollies the "'other' separated from the rest of the society by 'nature,'" as "effeminate, cowardly and the weak" (Hitchcock 66-69; Bray, *Homosexuality* 88). Previously, same-sex activities associated with penetration of young boys had been overlooked as a reflection of masculine dominance in the patriarchal society; however, now such activities were disconnected from masculinity with an over-emphasis on the effeminate nature of mollies (Trumbach, "Modern Sodomy" 77). It seems that the defiance of masculine identity by mollies created an even stronger reaction in public, and same-sex activities started to be regarded as shameful unmanly acts (Halperin 45-46).

Although most men engaged in the molly culture tried to maintain their masculine image by "living double lives" with their wives, (Bray, *Homosexuality* 86; Hitchcock 69) the emerging taboo of effeminacy made it impossible for same-sex desire to exist along with a masculine ideal. For the first time, men with same-sex desire had to make a choice between effeminacy and masculinity. So with the molly culture, not only effeminacy but also masculinity became a viable concept (Garton 99). The anxiety of being named as a molly and being arrested was worse than the shame of whore-mongering and the threat of contracting venereal diseases. The fear of being associated with mollies was so intense that same-sex acts became a reason for blackmailing. Courts were filled with complaints by male prostitutes or idle soldiers occupying London streets who thought blackmailing as a better source of income than prostitution (Trumbach, "Homosexuality and Lesbianism" 106-113; Trumbach, "Modern Sodomy" 101-103).

This newly-emerging molly culture and the same-sex identity it represented, however, was not pervasive in the whole of Britain. It was visible in London and a few big cities where molly houses existed. The traditional forms of same-sex sexuality continued to be experienced with its characteristic of age-differentiated relations and bisexuality

especially in rural areas. (Bray, *Homosexuality* 88). Also, in the army, navy and universities, where men were away from female contact, male-male sexuality was preserved unaffected by the molly culture (Hitchcock 84). Trumbach regards these places as the relics of an old culture which would gradually be replaced in the next three centuries by a system "that structured same-sex relations by gender differences and divided the world into a homosexual minority and a heterosexual majority" ("Homosexuality and Lesbianism" 104).

The complex and multi-layered nature of same-sex sexuality was more evident in the 19th century. On the one hand, same-sex desire became more visible and definitive as an emerging identity; on the other hand, it continued to be hidden and undefined as a reflection of momentary desires. At one level, it was denounced as unnameable even non-existent; at another level, it started to find a voice through a rich group of legal, political and medical accounts. In the end, as a result of these conflicting discourses, the 19th century emerged as a crucial period in the cultivation of the modern concept of homosexual identity. The two leading factors that made the practice of same-sex activities easier for a larger group of individuals and contributed to the visibility of the same-sex desire in the cities were industrialisation and urbanisation. In the 19th century, with the changes in the economic structure of the country, one's survival depended more on his own labour than the collaborative work in village communities or the work of the whole family. This way, many individuals became economically independent. Forming a family, leading a traditional village life stopped being an economic prerequisite; the creation of a more individualistic society became possible. The workforce moved to big cities from villages; hence, the control of small communities and families on individual lives decreased considerably. Working and living spaces shared my many labourers also made considerable changes in the idea of mateship (Adam, *The Rise* 3, 10). Many people found it easier to become a part of the circles of same-sex love and experienced their desires more freely away from their traditional lives.

Despite those new morals and lifestyles, same-sex love in the 19th century was still experienced in different ways by different people. Jeffery Weeks points to the difficulty of arriving at a unified homosexual identity in the period and lists various things that

involvement in a same-sex act might have meant in 19th-century Britain: a "casual encounter, which rarely touches the self-concept," followed by denial and guilt, a "situational experience" that only occurs at different stages in life as a result of the conditions, such as same-sex experience in public schools, or the working-class youths who prostitute themselves for financial reasons, and a rare case of full involvement in molly subculture and its requirements (*Against Nature* 33-35).

In spite of these different models, with developments in city life and with the spread of subcultural characteristics of same-sex acts, same-sex love turned into an identity in the 19th century. With its more habitualised ways and customs, it started to be observed on a wider scale, "at the heart of the common life," rather than only in the limited circles of molly houses (Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 92-93, 22). Under these new conditions, this new identity was most freely experienced "amongst men of the middle and upper classes and because these men had a greater opportunity, through money and mobility, to make frequent homosexual contacts" (Weeks, "Inverts, Perverts" 202-203). In an age, when the policing of same-sex acts increased to a great extent, upper-class men could, at least, provide themselves and their partners with private rooms and they could even afford same-sex pornography despite its high costs (Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 30-33). However, even for the men who had economic and social means, turning their same-sex activities into a way of life was not possible. As a result of the frequent same-sex scandals circulating in the press, there was already an image of the aristocratic usurper in society and newspapers, and the members of upper and middle classes suffered from a greater fear of scandal (Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 93). Also, the members of upper and middle classes were subjected to the Victorian ideals such as respectability, morality and self-control to a greater extent. The obligation of keeping a respectable appearance rendered sex between men a part-time activity, conducted along with family lives and aristocratic lifestyles (Weeks, *Against Nature* 35-41).

On the other hand, leading a double life was only possible by keeping the two lifestyles as distant as possible, and such a necessity prevented upper-class men from forming sexual relationships with their male friends or with the members of their class. Also, as a result of their upper-class upbringing, these men were used to canalising their sexual

desires towards the lower classes whom they could easily abuse (as in the relationships with domestic servants); hence, they directed their same-sex inclinations at working-class men and to the market for male prostitution (Herzog 17). Male prostitution enabled upper-class and middle-class men to have hidden relationships and also provided them with folksy partners. Such cross-class relationships had a paradoxical nature: on the one hand, it was "a form of sexual colonialism, a view of lower classes as a source of 'trade;'" on the other hand, it gave upper-class men a feeling of "sentimental rejection of one's own class values and a belief in reconciliation" among classes through sex (Weeks, *Coming Out* 203-206). However, it would take another century for the relationships between men from the same social class to become a common thing (David 71-73; Cook, "From Gay Reform" 150-52).

Male prostitutes experienced same-sex sexuality more visibly than their customers as they needed to be visible to be picked; they also lived their sexualities on a full-time scale, but they did not necessarily define themselves primarily with their sexual identity. The main drives of the trade for these men were money, goods and benefits. While some of them had exclusively same-sex desire, some also had sexual interest in women; some dressed and acted effeminately, while others looked masculine. They did not necessarily lead a "homosexual lifestyle" in the modern understanding of the term or perceived themselves as "sodomites;" however, in all cases, their practice helped the same-sex sexual culture to become more evident in the London streets (Weeks, *Coming Out* 206-210; Herzog 33; Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 26-7).

In the 19th century, to be able to continue their same-sex activities, their casual pick-ups and meetings, men with same-sex desire had to adjust their looks, manners and language. These codes of behaviour which had been used as means of disguise in the previous centuries became an essential part of the 19th-century homosexual culture (Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 99). In addition to these elements that make up the homosexual culture, the creation of homosexual slang plays an important role. Through the end of the 19th century, a homosexual argot called Polari, Parale or Parlace was developed among the practitioners of same-sex activities (Jivani 14). As a language, it was a blend of criminal argot, the slangs of circus people and gipsies. It was widely

used among men belonging to this subculture in the 19th century to conduct meetings, to evaluate appearances and to gossip[ii] (Cook, "Queer Conflicts" 108, 157; Jivani 14; Weeks, *Against Nature* 41-42).

The increasing public visibility of same-sex acts in the 19th century was also accompanied by an increase in the regulation of same-sex activities, which reached a level that had never been witnessed before (Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 16). In 1885, the Criminal Law Amendment Act was passed by Henry Labouchere. Until this date, same-sex activities were still regulated by the statute enacted by Henry VIII in 1533 and the only change was in 1861 when the death penalty for sodomy was turned into life imprisonment (Newall 125; Hall, "Sexual Cultures" 39). With the Labouchere Amendment, it was stated that "any male person, who, in public or private, commits . . . any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a 'misdemeanour' and punishable up to two years in prison" (Weeks, *Coming Out* 199). With the erasure of the line between public and private, the Labouchere Amendment made any kind of same-sex activity fall within the scope of law. Along with this legal regulation, the "gender panic" resulting from increasing visibility, as well as the changes in the English legal system which made the regulation of the law more efficient and more accessible to individuals, led to a great increase in the cases of same-sex acts brought to courts (Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 18-20; Cocks, "Secrets Crimes" 110).

A considerable number of same-sex trials were presented as public scandals by the "obsessed penny press" (Herzog 36-7). Some of the trials, such as the trial of Oscar Wilde, the Dublin Castle scandal of 1884, the Cleveland Street scandal of 1889-90 (involving members of the aristocracy, even the son of the Prince of Wales)[iii], especially, became major events and attracted a lot of attention to the issue of same-sex activities in society (Newall 125; Hall, "Sexual Cultures" 38, 41). The way these scandals were handled by the press contributed to the creation of a homosexual identity to some extent. Especially, the trial of Oscar Wilde and his sensational and sentimental speech on the nature of same-sex love was considerably effective in raising consciousness in many people (Weeks, *Against Nature* 21). As Lesley Hall states, "[w]hen Maurice, in E.M. Forster's posthumously published homosexual novel,

described himself as ‘an unspeakable of the Oscar Wilde sort’, he did not mean he was witty, politically radical, intellectually subversive, or a dandified aesthete: he meant he desired other men" (*Sex, Gender and Social Change* 49). Therefore, Oscar Wilde became a representative figure for men with same-sex desire at the time.

On a different level, these scandals provided venues for the expression of excessive homophobia. For repressive minds, Oscar Wilde’s story became a moral example, proving “legitimacy for the suppression of any public mention of same-sex love and served as a warning to its adherents” (Adam, *The Rise* 35). After his trial, many “Puritan, middle class Britishers” felt content to see that another “parasite of the aristocracy” could not escape justice, and this sentiment was not only directed at Wilde himself but also at the Aesthetes movement and all the liberal ideas it represented (David 14, 25-26).

All these legal precautions, laws and trials made same-sex activities a visible part of urban life in the 19th century Britain. However, Victorian concerns for morality prevented homosexuality from being acknowledged openly. As Cocks argues, this attitude created a “paradoxical need to both name and erase” same-sex crime and led to the creation of a discourse of secrecy. In legal documents and in the press, same-sex activities were referred to in euphemistic terms as ‘revolting’, ‘infamous’ or ‘unnatural’ vice or sometimes by the use of an asterisk or ellipsis (“Secrets Crimes” 113, Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 2-7, 81). In time, the euphemistic language of same-sex acts became an acknowledged part of homosexual discourse. As can be seen in the famous phrases such as “love that dare not speak its name” as Lord Alfred Douglas put it in a sentimental way, or “the crime *inter Christianos non nomiandum*” (the crime not to be named among Christians) as uttered by Sir Robert Peel, as he forbade the mentioning sodomy in the Parliament, not naming same-sex desire became another way of naming it and this discourse of secrecy became a part of the nature of 19th-century same-sex sexuality (qtd. in Weeks, *Against Nature* 14). In spite of their concern for securing poor and young minds from being corrupted, these legal circles became sources of the most of the public knowledge on same-sex acts. The courts turned into public theatres with crowds gathering on the streets outside on the days of trials; and newspapers published

detailed accounts of scandals, though, by using a ‘secure’ diction. In a way, these regulatory authorities became the main advertisers of the subculture they wished to erase (Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 78-90).

The increase in the discourses on same-sex desire, as a result of the trials and newspaper articles, was also complemented by the emergence of a scientific discourse on the topic at the end of the 19th century. Doctors and scientists, who were astonished by the increased visibility of the same-sex sexual subcultures in big European cities such as Berlin, London, Brussels and Paris and by the increased number of prosecutions, started to study the practitioners of same-sex acts as medical cases and challenged the idea that men with same-sex desires should be legally responsible for their physical desires (Adam, *The Rise* 13). With the scientific interest and reform movements, for the first time in history, men with same-sex desire started to be studied as a type of person with certain characteristics, rather than a random practitioner (Jagose 22-23; Weeks, *Against Nature* 25-24; Garton 102).

Accordingly, many sexual activities, which had been referred to broadly as sodomy or buggery and had been regarded as sin or moral defect, started to be separated from each other with new classifications and came to be studied as perversions and deviations (Weeks, *Against Nature* 25). In 1869, as a result of these studies, the word “homosexual” was coined by K.M. Kertbeny in Germany as a combination of Latin and Greek words, *homos* and *sexus* (Adam, *The Rise* 16). It was first used in English by Chaddock in his translation of Kraft-Ebbing's *Pychopathia sexualis* in 1892, as well as by J. A. Symonds in a letter he wrote the same year (Halperin 38). The words "[p]aedophilia, exhibitionism, sadism and even sexual perversion itself were all coined between 1877 and 1890,” as a result of this scientific interest in classifying sexual identities (Cocks, “Secrets Crimes” 135).

Along with the scientific discourse it initiated, the introduction of the word and the concept of homosexuality was also crucial in distancing same-sex activities from ambiguous concepts of sodomy, buggery and turning same-sex intimacy into an identity. While those older tags were used to denote a number of non-reproductive and

non-conformative sexual acts, homosexuality became a term, specifically for same-sex sexuality (Herzog 31). Moreover, while the earlier conceptions regarded same-sex activity as a temptation that could affect every living soul, homosexuality was regarded as the behaviour of "a particular type of person, a type whose specific characteristics (inability to whistle, penchant for the colour green, adoration of mother or father, age of sexual maturation 'promiscuity', etc.)" would be "exhaustively and inconclusively" discussed in the textbooks of the next century (Weeks, *Against Nature* 17).

In the earlier years of scientific studies of homosexuality, these studies were also associated with the initiatives for the decriminalisation of homosexuality, and Germany had been the centre of reform movements until it became one of the most violent countries for homosexual oppression under the Nazi regime during the Second World War (Adam, "From Liberation;" 16, Herzog 66-75). One of the early reformers who played an influential role in initiating the scientific study of homosexuality, was also a German lawyer called Karl Ulrichs. Like many of the forerunners who originated the first homosexual rights movements in Germany, Ulrichs attempted to prevent recriminalisation of homosexuality in Germany in 1897 under the Prussian rule (Weeks, *Against Nature* 25; Adam *The Rise* 16). Initiating a line of thought which would be influential in the next century, Ulrichs regarded homosexual desire as a sign of a congenital anomaly. He named the homosexual male as "Urning" borrowing the term from Plato's *Symposium* and defined this as "a feminine soul confined to a masculine body" (qtd. in Adam, *The Rise* 16; Weeks, *Against Nature* 25; Halperin 39; Sullivan 4). Ulrichs also coined the term "Dioning" to describe people who desire the opposite sex (Sullivan 5). This way, his theories created the first scientific division between homosexual and heterosexual, and in this division, same-sex desire was not regarded as a moral corruption, but a natural feeling beyond human control.

In the following decades, the works of sexologists, such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis, Carl Westphal, Magnus Hirschfeld, Sigmund Freud, affected both the medical and legal fields and helped the perception of homosexuality not as a sin but as a result of an inner impulse (Sullivan 7-12). With the translations of the works of these European writers into English, the nature of the homosexual individual became a

debated topic in Britain as well. Although British medical circles approached these ideas in a cautious way, the medical discourses of the time, combined with the Victorian ideas on morality and control, led to further victimisation of homosexual people. Doctors, psychiatrists, medical companies looked for ways to cure or at least control this 'physical disorder'. The methods of treatment ranged from to comparatively milder methods such as talk therapies and prescribing meditation to radical surgeries, electroshock therapies and castration (Adam, *The Rise* 17). Scientific discourse, which was initiated in Europe as a means for law reform, turned into another mechanism of control, and it became a part of the collective memory of Western society and the source of common misconceptions about homosexuality in the following decades. As Weeks states, just like "law and its associated penalties made homosexual outsiders, and religion gave them a high sense of guilt, medicine and science gave them a deep sense of inferiority and inadequacy" and led homosexual people to conceive their desires "as a disability, a sickness, a personal disaster" (*Coming Out* 32).

This newly-emerging understanding of homosexuality, as a suffering, a source of torment, was not only projected through the medical discourse of the time, but also found its reflections in the first-hand accounts of homosexual people (Sullivan 19). As Adam argues, the first generation of writers of homosexual experience in Britain, both had to face the homophobic ideologies of their times, and also, had to create a new language, a new voice to express this new reality (*The Rise* 14). The three major names who shaped the discussions around homosexuality in Britain at the time were John Addington Symonds, Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter[iv]. These forerunners helped the introduction of European thought on sexuality to the British scene. Like most of their contemporaries, their discussions of homosexuality regarded it as a disease, an abnormality, but in their writings, which mostly suffered censorship, they put an emphasis on the necessity of law reform and sought to liberate homosexuality from Victorian morality with an emphasis on its harmless nature (Weeks, *Against Nature* 48-49).

As a result of their efforts, the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology (BSSP) was established in July 1914, with Edward Carpenter as its first president. Although the

society in general aimed to create an awareness in public in the field of sexology, its particular focus was on the decriminalisation of homosexuality and homosexual reform. However, because the public opinion on homosexual freedom was regarded as immature and the World-War era was an ill-conditioned period for the homosexual law reform, the priority of the society shifted to the public education in matters of sexuality, and creating a more tolerant viewpoint on homosexuality (Porter and Hall 193-4; Weeks, *Coming Out* 128-136).

The outbreak of the First World War did not only change the borders of the world, but also changed the dynamics of sexuality. First of all, the war separated men and women for long periods of time. Secondly, it caused mobility; many young men were taken away from their communities that by condemning same-sex desire regulated their sexualities. Additionally, life in trenches imposed an intimate way of life on the soldiers; and under the stressful conditions of war, many soldiers found comfort in each other's company and formed new sexual bonds (Herzog 57). However, sexual activities in the trenches were not represented in war literature (with the exception of a few texts such as *Journey's End* by R. C. Sherriff); the letters and diaries of soldiers did not mention homosexual relations often (David 58). David relates this silence to the absence of the notion of homosexuality among the soldiers, who were mostly from working class or non-urban background and not aware of what constituted homosexuality (58). Most of the sexual relationships between the soldiers were regarded only as naive intimacies and expressions of affection. The common understanding of homosexuality, or sodomy as it would be called at the time, on the other hand, was a truly wicked, even nonhuman activity. A strong discourse on homophobia and on the dangers of sexual immorality was still widely used by the press. In the press, homosexuality was mostly associated with an unwillingness to fight, with cowardice; and these arguments were accompanied by the names of leading homosexual pacifists (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 82; Cook, "From Gay Reform" 146). As Cook suggests, these views were reflections of an older perspective which regarded homosexuality as a "foreign vice," and "at times of national crisis" made it "seem positively unpatriotic" ("From Gay Reform" 146).

During the interwar period, some other changes occurred in gender relations. Sexual boundaries, that were already challenged under war conditions, were further contested by the relief of demobilisation (David 70). There was a bohemian resistance to sexual limitations in the society; and this resistance showed itself in many forms, as open relationships, love triangles in artistic groups, lesbian and gay relationships, or nudist movements (Herzog 50). Homosexual desire and gay sensibility were important parts of this resistance. As Jivani argues, it was "chic" to be homosexual in the bohemian circles; and homosexuality was regarded as a challenge to the convention; however, it was difficult to know whether the people in these groups had genuine feelings for the same sex or whether they were putting it on (19). The situation was also similar at universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, where relatively open homosexual groups were established. As Goronwy Rees suggests, "among undergraduates and dons with pretension to culture and a taste for the arts," homosexuality "became a fashion, a doctrine and a way of life" (qtd. in Cook, "From Gay Reform" 158). Sexual dissidence was believed to be an important component of an artistic vision, especially in the sectors of fashion, photography, film, music and most importantly in the theatre. The West End of London was regarded as a safe assemblage for many writers, actors, and musicians, such as Noel Coward, W. Somerset Maugham, who could not be open about their sexualities but lived it freely within their communities (David 77-92). Gradually, theatrical circles were perceived as the most gay-friendly venues where homosexual men could "meet other like-minded people who might also be in the audience" in the absence of well-advertised gay bars (Jivani 46-50).

Male prostitution which was already a part of the homosexual culture since the 18th century also continued in the early 20th century. Some prostitutes inhabited the side streets of London, sometimes in drag but mostly distinguishable by their effeminate manners; while they were picked up by random men, they also faced the danger of police arrests. Other prostitutes worked in a more systematic manner; usually under the protection and the guidance of pimps they were presented to gentlemen at tea parties in a Wildean fashion. In some cases, relationships established in this manner continued for years in the houses financed by the well-off partners (Trumbach, "London" 107). This transition from prostitution to long-lasting relationships was also a result of the fluid

nature of homosexual relationships in general. As Weeks suggests, the relationship between the client and the prostitute in homosexual relationships were different than the ones between female prostitutes and their clients. While "[t]he asymmetry of relationship between the female prostitute and client was permanent, and the stigma of prostitution was lasting; [i]n the homosexual world the patterns and relationships were inevitably more ambiguous; the 'deviance' of prostitution was supplementary to the 'deviance' of homosexuality" (Weeks, *Against Nature* 67).

The relatively free atmosphere of the interwar period also found its reflections outside the theatre world and artistic circles. There occurred an increase in the homosexual population in the big cities, such as London (Trumbach, "London" 108). Many young men who stayed in the urban centres after the First World War were able to live their sexuality more freely in the anonymity provided by big cities. They socialised in parks, theatres and pubs, as well as at newly-emerging private gay parties. From the 1920s onwards, it became possible for men to meet with men of the same age and social status and form long-term relationships. They shared the same house and the responsibilities of the house just like a married couple; some of these relationships were even known in the family and work circles (David 71-73; Cook, "From Gay Reform" 150-52).

The homosexual culture that developed in the early 20th century was also enriched with many codes used by the homosexual community as ways of expression and mutual recognition that enabled them to be "invisible to most people, but recognizable by other gays" (Newall 28). Many dress codes associated with homosexuality, such as the colour pink, started to be used in the 1920s (Jivani 49-50). In the following decades, such codes developed and increased: some groups chose to wear specific colours on specific days of the week; lavender, green or brown clothes and suede shoes were adopted as signs of homosexual identity in Britain in the 1960s; white socks were added to this symbolism in the 1970s; the cowboy image was developed in the US; and later, jewellery such as earrings, finger-rings, and necklaces etc. became other accessories that symbolised the homosexual community (Newall 28-50). Although such signs developed as means of discreet communication within the homosexual groups, in time, they were

recognised by the heterosexual society as well, and they started to be used as evidence against homosexuals or to hunt them down (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 158).

Despite all these developments and the proliferation of discourses on homosexuality, individual experiences of homosexuals were still shadowed by homophobia in the first half of the 20th century. David describes this early 20th-century attitude as an "anti-Wildean backlash" and argues that homosexuality associated with the person of Oscar Wilde "emerged as a new bogey-man-coming to-get-you," especially, in the eyes of "anxious upper-middle class parents" (30-31). This rising homophobia filled the lives of many young homosexual men with feelings of guilt and fear. The stories of scandals lined up at the front pages of newspapers. The wave of homophobia was supported especially by the countries like Nazi Germany that used its fascist ideologies to intervene in the lives of its citizens (Herzog 45-56).

However, the war conditions in the Second World War created a liberating experience in the lives of homosexual men, even more than the First World War as a result of the development in the concept of homosexuality in the European minds over the two decades. The separation of men and women, and the mobilisation of the troops away from "what-will the neighbours-say-factor" lifted the restraint on homosexual desire once again; and this time the sexual experiences were interpreted by the soldiers as homosexual acts, rather than casual intimacies (qtd. in Cook, "From Gay Reform" 148). Moreover, during the Second World War, the war had a big impact on the lives of people on the home front. Constant blackouts and bombings provided a secretive environment that enabled intimacies. Also, with the feeling that death was around the corner, people went after their desires less carelessly. Especially during nights of intense bombing and chaos, there was a great increase in the accounts of secret sexual affairs (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 126; Jivani 56-7; Cook, "From Gay Reform" 149).

Like in many other eras in Western history, during the Second World War homosexuality continued to be associated with "the other;" this time, it was the "*Yanks*" and "*American queens*" who were blamed for corrupting young British soldiers (Weeks

and Porter 141-142, emphasis mine). The efforts of the US Army to remove the homosexuals from its camps very were known, but this could not prevent American soldiers from becoming the most appealing, and outgoing companions for the British gay community during the Second World War (Jivani 58). Just like the American army, the British army was also trying to take precautions against the homosexuals within the British forces. The number of the soldiers who were court-martialed because of their homosexuality increased decisively during the course of the Second World War from 48 in 1939 to 324 in 1944/45 (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 149-150). It was possible for homosexual men to be excluded from the war if they documented their condition, but the price they paid was also dear. They were left behind with documents proving their perversion and also left with the shame of not fighting (Jivani 58-61).

After the Second World War, there was a proliferation in the newspaper articles concerning homosexuality; the subject started to be discussed independent of the scandal news. Even the word homosexual, which had been a taboo earlier, started to be used. However, the way the topic was dealt with in the newspapers was no more than an assertion of the homosexual stereotypes with extremely effeminate photographs, dehumanising representations and the presentation of homosexuality as a dangerous plague (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 142; Weeks, *Coming Out* 162). As Weeks states, "[s]ilence might have been better than these particular articles," the increase in the number of negative press representations contributed to the understanding of homosexuality as a swiftly spreading epidemic (*Coming Out* 162; Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 142).

This negative attitude to homosexuality was even shared by men who experimented homosexual sex during the war period. As Herzog claims, "once the war ended, the very familiarity with and prevalence of male-male sexual activities during the war served as a basis not for developing sympathetic attitudes but rather as a source of discomfort, an excuse to avert one's gaze from the reality of ongoing persecution of men who continued to seek same-sex encounters" (117). It was the men who experienced these desires once who ignored the sufferings of the homosexuals most. In this environment, police forces took on the role of witch-hunters. The more they looked, the more they

discovered homosexual offences; and this resulted in a drastic increase in the number of homosexuals being sentenced following the war (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 142; Ferris 156). The reported cases of sodomy were 719 in 1938 in England and Wales; it rose up to 2,504 in 1954 (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 169). Apart from this, sodomy was also used as an extenuating circumstance in many murder and assault cases, as it was regarded as a source of provocation and insult (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 169). There was also a considerable increase in the cases of political conspiracy based on homosexual activities and in the number of men who paid large amounts of money to keep their blackmailers at bay (Weeks, *Coming Out* 159; Herzog 120). Such legal cases and prosecutions had devastating effects on the lives of homosexuals and harmed the homosexual community remarkably. There were many cases of suicide as a result of increasing pressure; many others lost their jobs or suffered great problems in their families. The trust within the members of the homosexual community was also weakened as homosexuals were not only convicted but also pressured by the police as sources of information on other homosexuals (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 170-171).

In the early 1950s, the Church of England initiated a study on the nature of homosexuality as it was alarmed by the air of misery, anxiety surrounding the concept. A report was prepared as a result of this study in 1954 and expressed a positive view on the decriminalisation of homosexuality between consenting adults, although it did not deny its sinfulness (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 171). In the 1950s, the Church made it obvious that it regarded homosexuality less as a threat to the family compared to other factors leading to high rates of divorce. Some radical Christian sects, such as the Quakers, even started to publish pamphlets questioning sinfulness of homosexuality (Weeks, *Coming Out* 173). Philosophical writings of the time also showed an acceptance towards the existence of homosexuality in society, though it was still presented as an unfortunate condition. The theoretical views on homosexuality were still under the influence of the ideas of the sexual reformers of the early 20th century which regarded homosexuality as a disease, as something to be cured (Weeks, *Coming Out* 173-4).

One of the most important developments in the field of sexology during the late 1940s and the early 1950s came from the US, with the work of Alfred Kinsley. Kinsley was commissioned by the National Institute of Mental Health to conduct a survey on sexual practices in the US. The result of his research "suggested that a large number of so-called heterosexuals had had, at some point in their life, same-sex liaisons of one sort or another, and that the majority of Americans fell somewhere between the strictly heterosexual and strictly homosexual positions" (Sullivan 17). Although the reliability of the figures presented by Kinsley was questioned and proved unreliable by later studies, the Kinsley report was influential in normalising the prevalence of homosexuality in society as it introduced the possibility that even people who defined themselves as heterosexual could experience homosexual desires at some point in their lives (Weeks, *Coming Out* 158; Ferris 148-152).

A similar attempt to investigate homosexuality in Britain came from the Home Office, and a committee was established in 1954 for the task. The committee consisted of a number of people from different fields who were regarded as the specialists on the issue of homosexuality, such as police, magistrates, lawyers, prison officers, doctors, psychologists, representatives of the Church; and, there were only three homosexuals on the committee who were specially chosen from the respectable and elite members of society (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 143). As a result of the meetings and interviews conducted, the committee published the Wolfenden Report in 1957. The main argument of the report relied on the idea that the function of the criminal law was "to preserve public order and decency, and to protect the weak from exploitation . . . not to impose a particular pattern of moral behaviour" and following this principle, the private lives of the homosexuals should only concern themselves as long as they are over twenty-one (Weeks, *Coming Out* 165; Ferris 158). Accordingly, the committee proposed that homosexual relations between consenting citizens above twenty-one should be decriminalised. However, the reformist ideas of the committee were limited with their upper-class perspectives. The report still expressed its concern about the issue of protecting children from homosexuality and stressed the importance of prohibiting homosexual acts in the army for disciplinary reasons. Moreover, it still regarded homosexuality as sickness and proposed that the homosexual people should be allowed

to receive treatment and the research on the treatment of homosexuality should be supported by the government (Adam, *The Rise* 67; Weeks, *Coming Out* 166). The government did not take the findings of the Wolfenden Report into consideration immediately. It took ten years for the propositions of the committee to be realised with a law reform in 1967. However, as an official government report, the Wolfenden Report played an important role in initiating the reform campaigns leading to the law reform on homosexuality (Adam, *The Rise* 67).

The reform movements continued with the foundation of the Homosexual Law Reform Society in 1958. Like many other homophile organisations of the time, the Homosexual Law Reform Society was not a radical organisation aiming at a homosexual revolution. The main concern of the Society was to decriminalise homosexuality and find a place for the homosexual community in the mainstream by creating a respectable public image for homosexuals. To gain the sympathy and support of the heterosexual majority, the Society established an Honorary Committee, composed of famous and mostly heterosexual public figures as its public face. Instead of defending homosexual rights intensely, the Homosexual Law Reform Society took a moderate political and social stand. Some of the members of the Society even followed the medical model of homosexuality which regarded homosexuality as a disease and continued the discourse of victimisation. Till the political victory of the Labour government in 1964, they continued their activities in a milder tone by organising talks not exclusively on homosexuality but on sexual reforms in general and by publishing magazines, newsletters and leaflets (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 144; Weeks, *Coming Out* 168-173; Richardson and Seidman 2; Ferris 158).

The mid-1960s was a period of humanitarian law reforms in Britain, such as the abolition of capital punishment (1965), abortion-law reform (1967), homosexual law reform (1967) and the abolition of theatre censorship (1968), divorce-law reform (1969). These social reforms are interpreted as the result of the shift in the ideology of the Labour Party from its traditional class-oriented politics to identity politics (Osment xi; Robinson 45). The new left developed an awareness on the issues of individual rights and freedoms, and this social awareness and the parliamentary concern for

individual freedoms also affected the campaigns of Homosexual Law Reform Society in a positive way. With the political support from the Labour Government, Homosexual Law Reform Society increased the intensity of its campaign for the law reform, and finally, homosexuality was decriminalised with the Sexual Offences Act in 1967 (Weeks, *Coming Out* 173-6).

After a stormy session in the Parliament, homosexual activity in private between consenting male adults (over twenty-one) was decriminalised in England. The law excluded Scotland and Northern Ireland and the armed forces, and it did not mention lesbianism as there was no previous law prohibiting the sex between women (Osment xii). Moreover, the bill also did not give homosexuals the same rights as the heterosexuals; the age consent was sixteen for heterosexuals, while it was stated as twenty-one for homosexuals. Also, sex between men was only legal if it was in private; homosexual activity in a public place or in a place where a third person was likely to be present was still illegal, although there was not such a limitation for heterosexual sex. These limitations and exclusions would be discussed and criticised a lot in the following years (Hall, "Sexual Cultures" 48).

Along with the law reform, the 1960s also witnessed some minor, but positive, changes in the lives of homosexuals in Britain. The films *Oscar Wilde* (1959) and *The Trials of Oscar Wilde* (1960) and *Victim* (1961) were screened as the first films to reflect a sympathetic approach to Oscar Wilde and homosexuality. The quiet and secretive atmosphere of the gay bars and clubs of the 1950s left their places to more relaxed gay clubs in the 1960s. In the late 1960s, gay magazines such as *Timm, Spartacus, Jeremy* started to be published. Although they had their differences, those magazines usually contained advice columns, sometimes in form of medical advice, sometimes agony columns; they gave tips about travel, fashion and gay scene and, most importantly, provided artistic and pornographic images to their readers (Weeks, *Coming Out* 180-1). Despite these changes, however, problems of "police harassment, popular homophobia, and a hypocritical notion of sexual morality" were not totally overcome (Herzog 125). The reform movement of 1967 failed to provide any social facilities for the members of the homosexual community who felt isolated.

At the end of the 1960s, a very important turning point occurred in the US which would change the homosexual movements all around the world. The pub gathering organised by sexually dissident groups following the funeral was raided by the police. For the first time, lesbians, gays, transvestites, drag queens fought back together; they came out of their hidden rooms and bars and became visible on the streets. The events which started in a local bar called Stonewall, in Greenwich, in the early hours of 28 June 1969 upon a police raid turned into a liberation movement, first, in America, then, around the world. Although such events of police oppression and attacks were common aspects of homosexual life, this time, events took a different turn with the unexpected confrontation of the homosexual community. It was the day of Judy Garland's funeral; and as a woman who was regarded as a fighter in the male word and showed the world that being strong was not an exclusively masculine attribute, Garland was an icon for the homosexual community (Adam, *The Rise* 75; Sullivan 26; Osment xii).

The three days' fight on the streets was combined with the spirit of freedom movements like the Black Power Movement, Women's Liberation, the May events in Paris, the Vietnam, the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia, the new wave of student militancy in universities across the world, the youth movement by rock music, mass open-air concerts, the new freedom and openness about sex (Weeks, *Coming Out* 186; Sullivan 29). The events soon turned into an organised liberation movement under the roof of the Gay Liberation Front and triggered all gay liberation movements around the world (Sullivan 26).

The emergence of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) in Britain was an outcome of these winds of change in America. The organisation was founded by two young men, Aubrey Walker and Bob Mellors, who met in the US (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 180). This organisation, like its American predecessor, was highly different from and critical of the homophile organisations of the earlier decades. While earlier organisations had prioritised becoming a part of the society, merging with the society and being accepted by the mainstream in an apologetic tone, "for liberationists . . . the imperative was to experience homosexuality as something positive in and through the creation of

alternative values, beliefs, lifestyles, institutions, communities, and so on" (Sullivan 29). They criticised the assimilationist approach of the earlier organisations that emphasised sameness, rather than difference, that regarded transsexuals, drag queens, gays and lesbians with radical lifestyles as a threat to becoming mainstream. While homophile organisations sought the support of the politicians through lobbying in a milder tone, the new liberation movements and their organisations regarded homosexuality not only as a sexual choice but as a political identity (Richardson and Seidman 2). Hence, they operated in a mode of radical activism; they did not ask for compromise but wanted revolution.

The liberation movement started by the GLF was shaped around the idea that "taboo against homosexuality was so deeply embodied in Western civilisation (the Judeo-Christian culture) that only a revolutionary overthrow of its structures could truly liberate the homosexual" (Weeks, *Coming Out* 186). They argued that even when the oppression of the heterosexual system was not visible, it forced homosexuals to adopt mainstream values and turned its oppression into a self-oppression by making homosexuals internalise feelings of guilt and self-hatred. They believed that this atmosphere of suffering and oppression could only be changed by homosexuals themselves, and the key to this change was to come out. Weeks describes the process of coming out in three steps:

> [F]irst of all it involved coming out to yourself, recognising your own homosexual personality and needs; secondly, it involved coming out to other homosexuals, expressing those needs in the gay community and in relationships; but thirdly, and most crucially, it meant coming out to other people, declaring, even asserting your sexual identity to all comers. (*Coming Out* 192)

With the transformative effect of coming out, suffering and oppression was replaced by gay pride which was based on the idea that being gay was good and gayness was something to be celebrated rather than something to be ashamed of (Sullivan 31; Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 159). The liberationist gay community defied the idea that being gay required excuses or explanations with the slogans like "I am gay and I love myself", or with the songs like *La Cage aux Folles* "I Am What I Am;" they focused on honouring their gayness (Sullivan 29-30).

However, despite its emphasis on gay identity and gay pride "[g]ay liberation never thought of itself as a civil rights movement for a particular minority but as a revolutionary struggle to free the homosexuality in everyone, challenging the conventional arrangements that confined sexuality to monogamous families" (Adam, *The Rise* 78). The liberationists believed that sexual and political freedom could only be achieved by revolutionising the traditional gender and sexuality roles and the institutions that shape them and shaped by them, because the sources of homosexual oppression was buried into this system which prioritised the patriarchal and heterosexual system and made both society and homosexuals themselves regard homosexuality as an inferior way of life (Sullivan 31). The values of this system were so much inflicted on the lives of the individuals that even the homosexuals sustained them in their lives by mimicking husband and wife roles, adopting a heterosexual language, regarding monogamous relationships as a prerequisite. These liberationist ideas, on the one hand, gave the homosexual cause a philosophical basis; on the other, made the liberationists see their movement as part of a wider cultural struggle.

With this new idea of revolution which necessitated changing the whole system, rather than relieving homosexual communities with reforms, the GLF took part in politics and stood by other oppressed groups. Male and female members of the GLF protested together in many demonstrations, and their stance against sexism became a unifying philosophy that gathered gay men and lesbian and feminist groups together. However, from the middle of 1971 onwards, there occurred some divisions in the GLF. The first one was the division between male and female members of the organisation. Women felt non-represented in the predominantly male membership of the organisation. Their voices were not heard, and their needs were not met in the male centred agenda of the GLF. In early 1972, most female members decided to form their own organisation or join women's liberation groups (Weeks, *Coming Out* 196- 200; Sullivan 32).

Apart from this men-women fraction, there was also an ideological separation within the GFL. People who came from different social and economic backgrounds could not act as a political unit for too long. While some argued for a socialist and Marxist approach and offered merging into labour movement, many other members who came

from more conservative backgrounds with organised work lives found it difficult to embrace the radical lifestyles or visibly political ideas of the GLF (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 187). Still other groups urged creating an independent counter-culture around a communal life; and they believed in the liberating effect of drug use, make-ups and drag (Weeks, *Coming Out* 202).

As a result of such disagreements and fractions, the gay pride week at the end of June 1972 became the beginning of the end for the GLF; and the organisation entered a fragmentation process. Although the GLF and the Gay Liberation Movement it initiated did not achieve a sex revolution by changing the patriarchal and heterosexual system; they created long-lasting changes in the lives of many individuals. Many people who were afraid and ashamed of their sexuality or at least of the reaction they would get from society came out and started to be open about their sexualities. The gay community gained visibility in society as many gay and lesbian couples started going out, holding hands and kissing in public. They started to express their sexuality openly in heterosexual platforms and venues; although they were often refused service or asked to leave at the beginning, they cracked the door for acceptance in many public areas. Gay picnics, balls and gay days that were initially organised by the GLF turned into a tradition. The gay pride week which was initially organised in the US in 1970 to commemorate Stonewall, then in Britain in 1972, still continues to be celebrated around the world every year with big street marches (Weeks, *Coming Out* 190-5).

The Gay Liberation Movement also managed to change the terminology of gay discourse in society. At the end of the 19th century, John Addington Symonds had complained that "[t]he accomplished languages of Europe supply no terms for the persistent feature of human psychology, without importing some implication of disgust, disgrace, vituperation" (qtd. in Halperin 39). Before the term "homosexual," lesbians and gay people were either referred to "in euphemism –such as the constant references to Oscar Wilde's 'unspeakable crime'- or else in pejorative terms, most notably 'invert'" (Jivani 13). Although the term "homosexual" was coined in 1869, most intellectual classes were still ignorant of the term in the 1920s. Even in the 1950s, it was still unknown among the elder members of society, and it was only in 1979 that the term

was accepted into the *OED* (Halperin 40). The Gay Liberation Movement played an important role in the popularisation of the word "gay" in English language. It was used in the US since the 1950s, but in Britain it had an upper-class connotation and was still associated with pretentious and classy clubs. The gay liberationists revived the word "gay" and loaded it with a new meaning representing the pride of their desires, and soon it became the word embraced by the community (Weeks, *Coming Out* 190; Jagose 72).

Despite the dissolution of the GLF in 1972, the 1970s saw an expansion of the gay community in many spheres of the society. Many of the major gay organisations such as the Lesbian and Gay Pride, the Lesbian and the Gay Switchboard, the support service Icebreakers, the gay theatre groups such as the Gay Sweatshop and the Brixton Fairies were established under the roof of or with the initiative of the GLF. After the dissipation of the GLF, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) became the leading homosexual committee. Although it was not "an embracing organisation for gay men and lesbians," with its respectable face and continuous lobbying it managed to get support from political parties and the Church and other organisations (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 182-184).

The period from the 1960s to the 1970s, which brought an end to the Gay Liberation Movement, did not mean the end of the struggle for the gay community. Although the struggle continued, its focus shifted from a liberationist frame to the ethnic model of identity. While the aim of liberation movements was to free all individuals in society from the existing system with a sexual revolution, the ethnic model focused on securing the rights of a homosexual minority through acceptance and recognition in society. For this reason, the agenda of the gay organisations started to be formed around civil rights and official recognition. While such a change was a cause of disillusionment and marginalisation for many people with liberationist views in the gay community, in the coming years, it paved the way for the creation of a mainstream gay community (Jagose 58-62).

In a short time, gays and lesbians became visible in social life. By 1976, all major political parties had their gay groups working for more political and social recognition.

Similar groups were also established within trade unions and among teachers, medics, dentists to prevent job discriminations. Gay groups started to become visible, even in religious communities. The Quakers were already known for their support for the gay community. In 1972 Rev. Troy Percy became a homosexual media personality in the US and some Christian gay groups were set up in Britain as well. In 1976, a Gay Christian movement was launched: "the aim of these organisations was obviously to demonstrate that homosexuality was not incompatible with central Christian teachings, but this commitment came into sharp conflict with nearly 2000 years of Christian prejudice" (Weeks, *Coming Out* 217-18).

Another body of organisation that sprung in the 1970s and played an important role in shaping the gay community was the new gay press. Although gay magazines serving gay desires were known since the late 1960s, the new magazines and newspapers (such as the *Gay News* in 1974) that emerged around the 1970s played an efficient role in raising a gay consciousness, as well as enabling communication among the community and informing it about the gay lifestyles around the world. Also with their advertisement spaces, these new magazines and newspapers initiated the integration of the gay community into the capitalist system and led to the creation of a gay market (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 189; Weeks, *Coming Out* 219-22).

Another sector that initiated the creation of a gay market was the disco culture. The club trends that were initiated in the US were transferred to Britain, discos and clubs became the centres of gathering for the gay. This new trend created its own culture and fashion industry and became an indispensable part of the gay market. This commercial wing played an important role in bringing homosexuality to public attention; and with the increasing number of gay clubs, bars, fashion products, magazines and pornography, it both provided gay people with a way out and also played an important role in replacing the dark and gloomy image of the suffering homosexual with colourful icons and role models (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 189).

The mainstream press also started to draw a more positive picture of the gay community during the 1970s, but a more genuine tolerance came from show business. Successful

musicians such as Elton John, Marc Bolan, Freddie Mercury, David Bowie, Mick Jagger came out. Several films and TV shows presented homosexual/bisexual relationships in positive ways (Weeks, *Coming Out* 228). This new visibility of homosexuality was not accompanied with the full support of society. On the contrary, it created anxiety and hostility. There were still police oppression and high numbers of arrests in some cities, as the law still limited same-sex activities to private spaces and to people over twenty-one. Many people dealt with discrimination in their jobs; they were forced to quit for being openly gay. Homosexual abuse was also a great problem in many schools. Traditional families still evoked feelings of guilt and shame in the young generation of gays. For gay parents, issues such as retaining custody were highly problematic (Weeks, *Coming Out* 229-30; Cook, "From Gay Reform" 191-193).

A major event that further complicated the lives of homosexuals in the 1980s was the health crisis resulting from AIDS. Whether they were infected or not, many homosexuals had to endure the fear of fighting an unknown disease, losing their loved ones, losing their lives or losing the freedoms they had gained. The illness was first reported as a form of pneumonia with the death of five young men in Los Angles in 1981. Before the disease was identified as AIDS (the Acquired Immune-Deficiency-Syndrome), it underwent a long naming process from "the gay cancer" to Gay-Related Immune Deficiency. In its early stages, it was mainly regarded as the disease of the other, the disease of marginalised communities, because the communities which were affected by AIDS at the early stages were homosexuals, heroin users and people of African origin. (Weeks, *Against Nature* 117-118; Ferris 295; Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 168). The early stages of ignorance and the marginalisation of the affected communities also reflected British approach to AIDS. The British medical journals first talked about the disease in relation to the American examples; and "Don't go with Americans" was a common advice in dealing with AIDS. With its first British cases, the disease was named as "the gay plague" as it was mistakenly thought to be exclusive to homosexual communities. Once it started to be detected in heterosexual patients, it was interpreted as a sign of immoral behaviour, such as relationships with prostitutes or drug use (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 167-8; Ferris 295-7).

The way AIDS was introduced as a gay disease brought a new wave of homophobia along with it. The gay community started to be held responsible for the spread of the disease. Some press reports went as far as suggesting that the disease could spread by casual contact, even by breathing the same air (Herzog 177). Weeks suggests that the misconceptions created by such reports and rumours were so extreme that there were incidences where "lesbians and gay men were refused service in restaurants, theatre personnel refused to work with gay actors, the trash of cans of people suspected of having AIDS were not emptied, children with the virus were suspected from schools, and the dead were left unburied" (*Against Nature* 119).

This rising homophobia and the discriminatory precautions that followed it created panic among the gay community as they were afraid that the freedom and rights that were gained over a hundred years would be lost. With the informative leaflets that were delivered door to door and with intense media coverage of the disease, the fear of AIDS entered every household in Britain (Jivani 188). Moreover, the hysteria created by AIDS caused re-medicalisation of sexuality. The medical model of sexuality that had been created at the beginning of the 19th century had haunted the lives of homosexuals until recently. It was only in 1973 that the American Psychiatric Association decided to erase homosexuality from its list of diseases after long years of lobbying. The outbreak of AIDS obviously re-created this long relationship between homosexuality and medical categorisation (Weeks, *Against Nature* 101-4). Apart from that, it also triggered an older discourse that had a longer history in Western consciousness. It was the religious discourse which regarded homosexuality as a sin. This perception of homosexuality as a sin was believed to be replaced by the medical and scientific discourse of the 20th century. With the outbreak of AIDS, the tendency to associate homosexuality with sin came back as a result of the arguments that AIDS was a sign of God's punishment for sexual permissiveness. Such theories were encouraged by the representatives of new right governments both in Britain and in other countries around the world ("AIDS and HIV;" Herzog 177).

As a result of the recent liberation movements in the early 1980s, homosexuality was no longer a sexual activity but an identity, a way of life for many homosexuals. So, they

did not regard AIDS as a threat to their sexual activities but to their whole being. This concern brought many homosexual activists who together thought that they had to fight for their sexual spaces as well while fighting against AIDS. The activists tried to prevent the closure of public baths with the presumption that the disease spread through hot water; and they tried to develop a discourse which did not blame same-sex identities and activities but only certain sexual practices (Weeks, *Against Nature* 106-8; Herzog 179). In the absence of organised government control, many homosexuals came together under the roofs of self-help organisations to help the people who were suffering from AIDS (Weeks, *Against Nature* 119-20).

The disease strengthened the feeling of unity in the gay community, as well as in individual relations. As people living away from traditional family circles, gay people adjusted to the new situation by developing strong friendship bonds and networks called "families of choice," which they substituted for the traditional family and couple relations in moments of crises, illnesses and even in old age (LaSala 267; Cook, "Families of Choice" 1-20). However, these bonds and precautions were not enough to get over the prejudice and discrimination in the eye of law. As gay relationships, let alone friendships, were not recognised by the law, "in case of medical emergency, hospitals" would "often refuse visiting rights to those not connected by blood. Wills, life insurance protection, transfer of property, appropriate recognition of grief and loss" were all among the rights gay people were deprived of in the event of a health crisis such as AIDS (Weeks, *Against Nature* 110-111).

Through the end of the 1980s the AIDS crisis was under control with new medications and with increased health precautions taken by governments and voluntary organisations. However, this time it was the Conservative government of the time that adopted a homophobic discourse. In 1987, after Margaret Thatcher won the election for the third time, she gave a speech at a Conservative Party conference criticising local councils for teaching children to "have an inalienable right to be gay" rather than to "respect traditional values" (Kent 352). This declaration was followed by Clause 28 in the Local Government Act of 1988; it was stated in this clause that

> [a] local authority shall not --

> (a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting of homosexuality;
> (b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship. (qtd. in Weeks, *Against Nature* 137)

This law had three important messages about the politics of the time and its perception of homosexuality. First of all, the law was devised as a measure to control the operations of local Labour governments; with its specific emphasis on local authorities it drew attention to the collaboration between the homosexual community and leftist politics. Secondly, it regarded the attempts of local governments to control homophobia and to build a positive image of homosexuals as a "promotion of homosexuality." And finally, it degraded the relationships between homosexual couples as "pretended family relationships" (Hall *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 173-174).

As Todd argues, with this law, the Conservative government of the time "presided over and took advantage of the most devastatingly homophobic time in recent British history" ("Margaret Thatcher"); and by prohibiting the "promotion of homosexuality" at schools, it backed up the homophobic thoughts that regarded homosexuality as a threat to innocent children and "contributed to a climax in public homophobia" (Spargo 49; Buckle 144-5). However, "the moral backlash embodied in 'Clause 28', paradoxically created a new gay militancy and activism, ranging from relatively 'establishment' bodies such as Stonewall to defiantly 'Queer' protest groups like Act-Up and Outrage" and reinforced the unifying atmosphere created with the AIDS crisis (Hall *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 173-174). So, while the government attempted to suppress homosexuality, it gave a new impetus to homosexual organisations and their attempts to gain recognition.

A new organisation called Stonewall was established specifically as a response to Clause 28, by twenty gay men and lesbians among whom were respected celebrities such as Michael Cashman and Ian McKellen. Although Stonewall was highly criticised by more revolutionary groups such as Outrage for their close relationship with government bodies (especially after Ian McKellen's acceptance of a knighthood in 1989), it saw such a close collaboration as the key solution to problems such as "Clause 28, the age of consent . . . adoption and parenting, housing rights and partnership

recognition" (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 208). The results of their successive lobbying, the subsiding of the initial panic surrounding AIDS cases, the increased visibility of gay culture with voluntary and commercial initiatives such as Gay Pride walks and parties turned the 1990s and 2000s into a time of great improvement for the gay community in Britain.

With established gay scenes such as Soho in London and Canal Street in Manchester, Britain became one of the popular gay holiday destinations of Europe. Even in the small cities and in the towns the gay community was able to socialise in gay venues or find support in local organisations. Most British men also found it easy to go to the gay resorts in Sitges, the Gran Canarias, Ibiza and Mykonos or mingle with the gay communities in big cities such as Amsterdam, New York, San Francisco, Sydney or Copenhagen. Also with the internet and with the introduction of dating sites such as Gaydar, meeting new people and finding the right partner for different sexual interests and desires became possible (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 209-211; Richardson and Seidman 6).

The representations of the gay image in arts and the media also improved. Long-term soap operas such as Channel 4's *Brookside* in 1985, and BBC's *Eastenders* in 1986 added gay characters to their scripts. TV programmes such as Channel 4's *Out on Tuesday* (1989), *Queer as Folk* (1999), *Sugar Rush* (2005), Skins (2007), BBC 1's *Gimme Gimme Gimme* (1999), BBC 2's *Gaytime TV* (1996) ITV's *Vicious* (2013) or radio shows such as Greater London Radio's *Gay and Lesbian London* (1993), BBC Radio 5's *Out This Week* brought a variety of gay representations to the British homes (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 211; Edwards).

Institutions that were perceived as the enemy in the long fight for liberation, such as the police force or the Parliament, started to embrace the gay community more and more with their stance against homophobia and by welcoming homosexuals into their structures. The police started to employ gay officers in the mid-1990s (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 211). When it returned to power in 1997, the Labour Party had homosexual MPs and a gay cabinet minister; although his being appointed as the

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport was thought to reinforce the stereotypical idea about gay men and art (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 173). Oscar Wilde received the accolade of a memorial in Westminster Abbey and the centenary of his trial saw a reduction in the gay age of consent from twenty-one to eighteen, although still not equivalent to the age of consent among heterosexuals (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 174). At the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, a big step was taken in relation to gay parenthood. With a court ruling in 1997, the applications of single parents for child adoption started to be accepted, and the joint adoption of gay couples was allowed with the Adoption and Children's Act in 2002 (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 212).

0.2. From Gay Identity to Queer Theory

At the beginning of the new millennium, most people regarded the case of the gay community as "a battle almost won" (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 212). It was now over a century since the emergence of gay identity, and the community formed around it had reached a certain degree of maturity. However, this time the concern moved from the rights of the community to its structures. Issues such as its integration with the capitalist system, youth-oriented subculture, and most importantly the repetitive association of gay identity with well-off, young, white men opened up gay identity and the elements that form it to a new questioning, the effects of which could also be seen in the developing cultural and literary theories (Adam, "From Liberation" 17).

Till the 1950s, the discussions on homosexuality mostly focused on religious, medical and criminal discourses which tried to make sense of homosexual desire, and categorised homosexuals as sinners, sick people or as criminals respectively. However, in the 1960s, with the consciousness of the gay and lesbian movements and the developments in cultural studies, there was an increase in the academic studies on homosexuality (Adam, "From Liberation" 15-18). The attempts to understand homosexual desire focused mainly on two approaches to identity: essentialism and constructivism. The essentialist approach to gender regards sexuality as an expression of a natural, innate, biological core. It claims that people are born homosexuals or

heterosexuals, and with the passage of time, the internal essence that designates sexuality finds a way of expressing itself in the individual's desires, character and behaviour (Epstein 241-242; Sullivan 81). Although the essentialist view is criticised for its similarity to the medical discourse of the late 19th century which pathologised homosexuality as a reflection of biological and genetic makeup, with its presentation of the homosexual as "a pre-social, pre-cultural and pre-legal subject who [is] in possession of an inalienable nature," essentialism holds an important place within the framework of anti-homophobic human rights campaigns (Johnson 48).

In the 1960s, the essentialist view also created an enthusiasm for reviving a lesbian and gay history. Proving the existence of a universal homosexual desire in different historical eras and cultures became the focus of many academicians and historians. However, the historical enquiries and the studies of theoreticians and authors such as Jeffery Weeks and Alan Bray revealed that although homosexual desire existed in many cultures, these cultures developed different perceptions of homosexuality. While some disregarded or naturalised homosexuality without developing considerable narratives around the topic, others created an awareness of homosexual desire either through its celebration or condemnation. These historical studies also indicated that different institutions such as religion, law and medicine had various impacts on the way homosexual desire was conceptualised (Richardson and Seidman 2-7; Adam, "From Liberation" 18; Jagose 12-15). As a result of these historical studies, the 1980s saw the creation of a massive field of study called social constructivism that focused on different social and political factors that shaped homosexuality. As opposed to the essentialists who believe sexuality to be a biological force, the constructivists claim that sexuality is a social construct. They argue that terms such as homosexual, heterosexual, gay and lesbian are just labels that are produced by different cultural and political conditions and, later, acquired by individuals (Warner, "Introduction" xii; Epstein 241-242).

Especially, Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* plays an important role in the social constructivist theory with his presentation of sexuality as a discursive product. Foucault starts his book by describing the common perception in the modern society that builds a

connection between sexuality and repression. He argues that according to this perception any form of sexuality that did not serve the utilitarian ideology of the Victorian bourgeois was repressed, "denied, and reduced to silence" (*History of Sexuality* 4). Foucault calls this modern myth on sexuality "repressive hypothesis" and rejects it by arguing that the Victorian attempt to regulate sexuality resulted in a proliferation of discourses on sexuality in the medical, psychological and legal circles rather than its erasure (*History of Sexuality* 10-13, 32-33). As Foucault states, "for two centuries now, the discourse on sex has been multiplied rather than rarefied; and that if it has carried with it taboos and prohibitions, it has also, in a more fundamental way, ensured the solidification and implantation of an entire sexual mosaic" (*History of Sexuality* 53). Thus, rather than repressing and silencing sexuality, these discourses enabled the creation of sexual identities and categories such as heterosexuality and homosexuality in the 19th century. Foucault's arguments on the discursive construction of sexuality forms "the main initial catalyst for queer theory" (Spargo 26).

As much as it is influenced by the theoretical questionings of gender, queer theory is also shaped by the conflicts within the gay and lesbian movements. While the academia questioned the existence of unified, universalising identity categories, many people with unorthodox sexual desires also struggled to fit in existing identity categories. From the 1970s onwards, different groups who worked together within liberation movements, such as lesbians, bisexuals, people of colour, transgender people challenged the idea of a unified homosexual identity as they felt marginalised and un-represented within the dominant gay subculture (Sullivan 38). The first fraction within the homosexual community occurred with the lesbian members' leaving the Gay Liberation Front. Women within the GLF felt disillusioned by the fact that the liberation movement which had started with the aim of abolishing "a sex/gender system that privileges heterosexuality and men" resulted in a gay community ruled by white, middle-class men (Seidman, "Identity and Politics" 115). Lesbians in the GLF argued that decisions within the community always prioritised male needs in a patriarchal fashion, although gay and lesbian members were stigmatised by the heterosexual society in a similar manner (Jagose 58). Women who left the GLF either joined the feminist movement or initiated the creation of a lesbian subculture (Seidman, "Identity and Politics" 116-17).

Soon after this first division, the GLF dismantled and this marked the end of the Gay Liberation Movement. Leaving the revolutionary ideas behind, the gay community embraced an ethnic model of identity which was modelled on the American civil rights movement. Just like the ethnic groups, which regarded their ethnicity as their primary referent, the gay community also embraced same-sex desire as the source of a fixed, authentic identity which defined and united its members. The members of the gay community which united in their same-sex desire created their own culture and assumed a minority position within the heterosexual society, and as a minority they demanded integration into the mainstream society (Gamson 391; Warner, "Introduction" xxvii).

Under the ethnic model of identity, gay identity formation depended on a unified gay community which prioritised assimilation into the mainstream. Therefore, the differences among the members of the community became of secondary importance. Moreover, designating same-sex sexuality as its main criteria for self-definition, gay identity created a conflict for many people whose identities were equally defined by their race, physical abilities/disabilities and age (Jagose 58-62). Also, subcultural spaces, such as bars, restaurants, that played a critical role in the creation of gay culture were dominated by white, wealthy, gay men; the media representations of the community, the images in gay magazines or pornography, which were regarded as important ways of establishing visibility, depicted gay men as stereotypically young, good-looking and white. Anyone who did not fit in this formula felt marginalised and uncomfortable with their sexuality (Warner, "Introduction" xxvii).

As it has been stated before, gay ethnicity perceived the same-sex object choice as the main indicator of one's identity. This way, the community positioned itself around hetero/homosexual division that had been imposed by the heterosexual society. And in this positioning, identity categories such as bisexuality, transgenderism and other unconventional sexualities were not recognised (Seidman, "Identity and Politics" 121-125). Also, since the main concern of the community was to gain social acceptance within mainstream society, more marginalised sexualities like sadomasochists were not welcomed within the community as they were regarded as a threat to the respectability of the gay community. In addition to these sexual categories which did not comply with

the same-sex object choice criteria, there were also many other people who felt that their sexual desires or activities could not be covered by any of the existing sexual categories, such as people who engaged in same-sex acts from time to time, but they did not perceive themselves as homosexuals, or people who felt same-sex desires but never engaged in sexual activities (Jagose 8).

The definitional limits of gay identity were not only realised by people who felt excluded by the gay and lesbian communities, but they were also noticed by the mainstream society during the AIDS crisis as a result of the practical difficulties in categorising the risk groups. At the beginning of its outbreak, AIDS was falsely defined as a gay disease, and this misconception also continued in the designation of risk groups and in the introduction of safe sex methods during consciousness raising activities or in the health reports. The restrictive use of the terms gay and homosexual to describe high-risk groups caused many people who engaged in male-male sexual activities but did not define themselves as homosexuals to disregard the warnings. Moreover, presenting homosexuals as a risk group also caused confusion among lesbians. This conceptual confusion concerning such an alarming issue as AIDS brought the limitations of the sexual categories to public attention (Jagose 20-1).

Apart from revealing the limitations of gayness as an identity category, the AIDS crisis is also important in terms of the consciousness it created among sexually dissident groups which enabled the revival of the term "queer." As Hall states, following the disintegration of the Gay Liberation Movement, many people who left the gay community in the 1970s, came together once again despite their different "opinions and priorities" that separated them in the first place; they protested against futility of the assimilationist politics and "governmentally sanctioned homophobia" during the AIDS outbreak (*Queer Theories* 52-54). Their street patrols and graffiti campaigns revived the militant energy of the liberation movements (Sears 100; Spargo 37). At this moment of "heightened group consciousness and cohesive reaction," radical activist groups such as ACT UP and Queer Nation in the US and Outrage in Britain "reclaimed" the term queer "as a (now positive) marker of difference, and that more broadly drew attention to the way language has long been used to categorize and devalue human lives and lifestyles"

(Hall, *Queer Theories* 53-4; Caudwell 2). This way word "queer" which "was once commonly understood to mean "strange," "odd," "unusual," "abnormal," or "sick," and was routinely applied to lesbians and gay men as a term of abuse," (Halperin, "The Normalisation of Queer Theory" 339) transformed itself into something "sexier, more transgressive, a deliberate show of difference which didn't want to be assimilated or tolerated" with the energy it took from the streets (Spargo 38).

In this process of re-appropriation, which started within the activist movements, then, continued in the academia, queer took its place in "[t]he context of the ever-changing terminology" that is associated with "same-sex sexual communities" (Beemyn and Eliason 5). At this point it can be useful to review the cultural signification of these different terms. As it is stated above, the term homosexuality coined in the 19th century marks the start of the modern understanding of same-sex relations. Although it is still commonly used to describe both male and female same-sex intimacies, its usage as a term of self-identification is rare because it is regarded as a term given by the heterosexual society and it is still associated with "the pathologising discourse of medicine" (Jagose 72). The next term in this timeline is gay. Gay was appropriated by the liberationists in the early 1970s, as "a specifically political counter to that binarised and hierarchised sexual categorisation which classif[ied] homosexuality as a deviation from a privileged and naturalised heterosexuality" (Jagose 72). At the beginning of the liberation movements, as a result of the close collaboration between the male and female members of the group, the term gay was used to define both male and female same-sex desire. However, in time, with the separation of women from the liberation movements, the term lesbian started to be used more often to differentiate women (Hall, *Queer Theories* 25). As a modern, affirmative, well-defined term, gay is still regarded as the most commonly used category of self-definition by the gay community both in the 20th and the 21st centuries, although, its place is threatened with the more recent arrival of queer (Hall, *Queer Theories* 23; Gamson 390).

While gay identity represents male same-sex desire, queer opens up a space for all those people who cannot define themselves within the categories of gay or lesbian, and cannot find a place for themselves in the gay and lesbian communities both socially and

categorically (Beemyn and Eliason 5). As Gamson argues, "the ultimate challenge of queerness . . . is not just the questioning of the content of collective identities," in addition to that, queerness also proposes a challenge to the way terms gay, lesbian and even heterosexual, man and woman claim to reflect an inner essence, or present sexuality as a way of being (397). Halperin explains this feature of queer in the following words:

> Unlike gay identity, which, though deliberately proclaimed in an act of affirmation, is nonetheless rooted in the positive fact of homosexual object-choice, queer identity need not be grounded in any positive truth or in any stable reality. As the very word implies, "queer" does not name some natural kind or refer to some determinate object; it acquires its meaning from its oppositional relation to the norm. 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 Politics" 297)

This resistance to the norm and challenging a fixed stable gender identity permitted queer to become a topic of interest in the academic circles, and also facilitated many further questionings under the heading of queer theory. Tracing these changing terminologies of same-sex sexuality allows us to observe the "historical shifts in the conceptualisation of same-sex sex" (Jagose 73). However, it should also be noted that such a historical observation can also be problematic as "there are contradictions, reversals, recurrences" in the ways these terms are used throughout the time (Hall, *Queer Theories* 21).

Queer as a word was first introduced into academia by Teresa de Lauretis at a conference at The University of California in February 1990. Lauretis was impressed by this new usage of the word "by activists, street kids, and members of the art world in New York during the late 1980s . . . in a gay-affirmative sense," and she combined queer with the word "theory" in a "mischievous" way to challenge "the complacency of 'lesbian and gay studies'" (Halperin, "The Normalisation of Queer Theory" 339-340). Although Lauretis later disowned the phrase "queer theory" and questioned its efficiency, with this one single usage, the phrase was embraced in the academia instantly as a result of its resistance, ambivalence, and dynamism (Hall, *Queer Theories* 55; Salih 9; Jagose 76).

After its first usage by Laurentis, "queer theory" established itself as the name of an already existing body of work from postmodern studies, psychoanalytic studies, feminist studies, gay and lesbian studies which question the authenticity of sexuality, reject binary construction of heterosexuality/homosexuality, and aim to introduce an inclusive approach to people with unconventional sexualities who are not included in conventional gay and lesbian studies (Beemyn and Eliason 5-6; Gamson 393; Sears 100; Salih 9). Queer theory claimed as its founding texts two already published works: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990). In a way, these works "suppl[ied] the demand [queer theory] had evoked" (Halperin, "The Normalisation of Queer Theory" 341). Considering that it is a retrospectively created theory as a result of the collaboration from various fields in humanities, it is natural that queer theory borrows a lot from the previous theories that shaped the 20th-century Western thought (Jagose 77; Spargo 41).

As it has been argued above, queer theory is influenced by the constructionist view of sexuality in its evaluation of homosexuality as a historical, social and cultural construct. The post-structuralist theories provided queer theory both with its highly abstract and theoretical language and formed the basis of its problematisation of a stable sexual identity (Kollias 144-147). Roland Barthes' presentation of human beings as the result of a complicated process of signification rather than as self-determining entities, Althusser's perception of identity as an effect of ideology (Jagose 78), Freud and Lacan's psychoanalytic models which questioned the control of the subject over its consciousness (Kollias 160; Rifkin 203) established the foundations of queer theory's questioning of coherence, unity and stability of sexual identities. Additionally, Derrida's deconstruction of the binary understanding of Western thought and his questioning of the privileged status of the first concept of binary oppositions originated queer theory's problematisation of binary gender system based on heterosexual/homosexual difference (Hall, *Queer Theories* 61-62; Adam, "From Liberation" 18).

Apart from these theories, queer theory is also heavily influenced by the works of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler and Eve Sedgwick, and later, it developed with the contributions of many other writers such as Diana Fuss, Douglas Crimp, Lee Edelman,

Sue-Ellen Case, Lisa Duggan, Michael Warner, and Judith Halberstam. All these writers, and many others, discussed different agendas concerning sexuality, gender and desire in their queer works; therefore, as Jagoes states, "there is no critical consensus on the definitional limits of queer—indeterminacy being one of its widely promoted charms—;" queer theory only lets its outlines to be sketched vaguely (3). A compact outline of the queer agenda is provided by Stein and Plummer who state that queer theory deals with

> 1) a conceptualisation of sexuality which sees sexual power embodied in different levels of social life, expressed discursively and enforced through boundaries and binary divides; 2) the problematization of sexual and gender categories, and of identities in general. Identities are always on uncertain ground, entailing displacements of identification and knowing; 3) a rejection of civil rights strategies in favour of a politics of carnival, transgression, and parody which leads to deconstruction, decentring, revisionist readings, and an anti-assimilationist politics; 4) a willingness to interrogate areas which normally would not be seen as the terrain of sexuality, and to conduct queer "readings" of ostensibly heterosexual or nonsexualised texts. (182)

These issues mostly challenge the normative understanding of sexuality which prioritises heterosexual, gay or lesbian points of view that overlook or stigmatise any kind of different positioning.

Queer theory regards the binary positioning of heterosexuality/homosexuality as the main source of this stigmatisation in the society (Spargo 44) and problematises many other "linguistic binaries like . . . male-female, white-black, and so on" that regulate sexuality and subjectivities in the society (Richardson and Seidman 3). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, particularly, questions this binary categorisation in her *Epistemology of the Closet* and argues that "homo/heterosexual definition" has not only affected homosexual identity and culture but also shaped "modern Western identity and social organisation" by creating more "visible cruxes of gender, class and race" as it developed a binary mind-set which facilitated creation of many other binaries such as "secrecy/disclosure, knowledge/ignorance, private/public, masculine/feminine, majority/rninority, innocence/initiation, natural/artificial, new/old, discipline/terrorism, canonic/noncanonic, wholeness/decadence, urbane/provincial, domestic/foreign, health/illness, same/different, active/passive, in/out, cognition/paranoia, art/kitsch, utopia/ apocalypse, sincerity/sentimentality, and voluntarily/addiction" which governs

sexuality (11). Moreover, Sedgwick also underlines the "unsymmetrical" relationship between these concepts and defies the privileged position of one term over another in following words:

> The analytic move [this book] makes is to demonstrate that categories presented in a culture as symmetrical binary oppositions - heterosexual/homosexual, in this case - actually subsist in a more unsettled and dynamic tacit relation according to which, first, term B is not symmetrical with but subordinated to term A; but, second, the ontologically valorized term A actually depends for its meaning on the simultaneous subsumption and exclusion of term B; hence, third, the question of priority between the supposed central and the supposed marginal category of each dyad is irresolvably unstable, an instability caused by the fact that term B is constituted as at once internal and external to term A. (*Epistemology of the Closet* 9-10)

This way, Sedgwick states that heterosexual/homosexual division presents heterosexual as the norm; however, she problematises this presentation by displaying that heterosexuality's claim to authenticity and privilege is unstable as heterosexuality also depends on homosexuality for its definition, so they are equally social constructs.

Queer theorists also lay bare the arbitrariness of the homosexual/ heterosexual divide by questioning its defining characteristic: the gender of sexual object choice. First of all, the historical analyses of Foucault indicate that such an object choice may not always be the only marker of sexual identity (Spargo 33). In her questioning of homosexual/heterosexual categories, Sedgwick also argues that picking the gender of object choice among many other things that differentiate the way people participate in sexual activity such as "preference for certain acts, certain zones or sensations, certain physical types, a certain frequency, certain symbolic investments, certain relations of age or power, a certain species, a certain number of participants" indicate how random this categorisation is (*Epistemology of the Closet* 8). She also argues limiting sexuality to this binary divide takes away the "diacritical potential" of every other desire for "specifying a particular kind of person, an identity" (*Epistemology of the Closet* 8). Thus, this binary system recognises only a small homosexual minority, and to some extent bisexuals but also making them seem like they have "a less secure or developed identity," while it marginalises transsexualism, transgender identification, sadomasochism and other transgressive desires (Spargo 34).

Queer theory by denouncing this binary categorisation aims to dismiss the minotorising logic of both the heterosexual and homosexual community and to give an equal representation to the stigmatised and marginalised sexual and gender identities in the spectrum (Richardson and Seidman 3). Moreover, it also covers topics like cross-dressing, intersexism, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery in its wide analytic framework (Jagose 3). In queer theory, many other issues which are still regarded as taboo subjects in society such as infantile sexuality or the rights of sex offenders are opened up to discussion through such questionings:

> Are they ill, and if so, what's the cure? Or are they 'evil'? What or whom are they offending? Nature, the Law, Society? And how, more generally, do we know what makes one erotic activity good and another bad? Is it a matter of divine ordinance, biological nature, or social convention? Can we really be sure that our own desires and pleasures are normal, natural, nice – or that we are? Why does sex matter so much? (Spargo 5)

Thus, it aims to offer new ways of thinking about sexuality and question its regulations. In addition to questioning the treatment of non-conventional genders and sexualities, queer theory also conveys how essentialist and assimilationist policies of gay and lesbian movements cause segregation among gays and lesbians as well. It emphasises the impossibility of restricting gayness to a young, white, respectable middle-class image and shows diverse ways of being gay and gayness is not separable from or superior to other forms of identities such as race, class, nationality, gender, age or (dis)ability in an individual's life (Spargo 31-32; Richardson and Seidman 3).

Apart from acknowledging these diverse gender categories, queer theory also argues that many people who identify with them or practice them may also "adopt some variety of relatively inconsistent positions regarding their identity over the course of time, often depending on the needs of the moment" (Epstein 240). Judith Butler in her article "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" also touches upon this fluidity in the following words:

> I'm permanently troubled by identity categories, consider them to be invariable stumbling-blocks, and understand them, even promote them, as sites of necessary trouble. In fact, if the category were to offer no trouble, it would cease to be interesting to me; it is precisely the pleasure produced by the instability of those categories which sustains the various erotic practices that make me a candidate for the category to begin with. (308)

This way, gender identity, which assumes a common and unchanging sexual state for all members of the community in ethnic model identity, is deconstructed in queer theory which rather focuses on the "indeterminacy and instability of all sexed and gendered identities" (Beemyn and Eliason 6; Salih 9).

Queer theory's argument on the instability of gender identity mainly depends on two things. First of all, queer theory regards identity not as an innate, essential part of a subject's life but as "a product of the social environment" (Richardson and Seidman 5). Secondly, identity which is a social construct is not learned from the society and then fixed as an unchanging part of life; rather, it is produced by the subject performatively (Richardson and Seidman 5). Theory of performativity as it is explained by Butler in her *Gender Trouble* argues that gender is fiction that is recreated by the subject continuously as a result of his/her reiterative acts; however, this creation is not the result of a conscious choice but happens within the boundaries of a social and cultural framework. Butler also argues that this continuous performative repetition that constitutes identity categories also turns them into "instruments of regulatory regimes" and for this reason identity categories should always be contested as a form of political resistance ("Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 308). Another thing that makes queer theory's critique of identity a political resistance is that while challenging identity categories, queer theory interrogates the social processes that produce, recognise, normalise and sustain these categories; this way queer criticism covers structures and institutions that directly or indirectly influence the perception of gender (Eng. et. al. 1).

Queer theory not only assumes that social structures and institutions affect the gender categories in the society but also suggests that these institutions are affected by these gender categories. Sedgwick argues that while the medical, legal literary discourses led to the creation of the homo/heterosexual binary, this binary understanding also affected the "[n]ewly institutionalized taxonomic discourses—medical, legal, literary, psychological—" and "so many of the other critical nodes of the culture" which "were being, if less suddenly and newly, nonetheless also definitively reshaped" (*Epistemology of the Closet* 2). Thus, many concepts and institutions that are not directly related to sexuality are also affected by sexual discourses: "Western culture has

placed what it calls sexuality in a more and more distinctively privileged relation to our most prized constructs of individual identity, truth, and knowledge, it becomes truer and truer that the language of sexuality not only intersects with but transforms the other languages and relations by which we know" (Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* 3).

Also, Berlant and Warner focus on sexuality's ability to shape other languages in social life but they specifically focus on heterosexuality. They argue that when the language of heterosexuality takes over our social life, "[a] whole field of social relations becomes intelligible as heterosexuality, and this privatized sexual culture bestows on its sexual practices a tacit sense of rightness and normalcy" (554). They define heterosexual culture's "sense of rightness-embedded in things and not just in sex-" as "heteronormativity" (554). With this awareness, queer theory takes a stand against the assimilationist politics, which seek social inclusion within a heterosexual culture, and aims to challenge heterosexuality's privileged position in the heteronormative system (Richardson and Seidman 8). It tries to disturb the idea of a "national heterosexuality" which is "the mechanism" which assumes "a core national culture," based on a "familial model" that governs "sentimental feeling and immaculate behaviour" of the citizens (Berlant and Warner 549).

In its battle with heteronormativity, queer theory pays attention to heteronormative discourses in different "forms and arrangements of social life" such as "nationality, the state, and the law; commerce; medicine; and education" because when "mixed with other languages, heteronormativity . . . is disguised into acts less commonly recognized as part of sexual culture [such as] paying taxes, being disgusted, philandering, bequeathing, celebrating a holiday, investing for the future, teaching, disposing of a corpse, carrying wallet photos, buying economy size, being nepotistic, running for president, divorcing, or owning any-thing 'His' and 'Hers'" (Berlant and Warner 555, 554). Consequently, more recently queer study has shifted its focus from identity politics towards more social and political subjects such as the "considerations of empire, race, migration, geography, subaltern communities, activism and class" (Eng et. al. 1-2).

Moreover, queer theory also plays a crucial role in the analysis of gender relations in literary works. Queer theoreticians and literary critics used arguments of queer theory to deconstruct gender representations in both written and visual texts (Spargo 41). These analyses were not limited to studying representations of queer charters but also used in problematising heterosexual characters and norms. As a professor of English Literature, Sedgwick especially supports her queer discussions with examples from traditional literary texts in her books. She traces down homoerotic "subtexts by sexualizing numerous words, phrases, images, and relationships that otherwise would not have been read sexually" (Golden).

0.3. Representations of Homosexuality in British Drama

Long before the creation of gay, lesbian and queer studies that analysed sexuality in literary works, theatre as an art form had already been associated with homosexuality. The association between theatre and homosexuality mainly depends on the perception of the theatre as a queer space. During the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, "theatres were condemned as the haunts of the sodomite—the sodomite defined quite literally as a passionate theatre-goer" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 8). This association depended on the proximity of "the bawdy house" and theatre buildings and also "the impresario of the stage also functioned as the keeper of the brothel" and the knowledge that the actor "was reckoned likely to be engaged in a relationship with his patron which today would be understood in terms of homosexual prostitution" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 8). In the following centuries, the coffee houses and cottages[1], which were regarded as the meeting places of sodomites, also existed in theatrical vicinities, and "in the rear stalls area of many London theatres there was a deep, dimly-lit area between the seats and the back wall, which was often used as a miniature cruising ground" (Rebellato, *1956 and All That* 161). This closeness still continues today between the theatrical circles in London and gay subcultural places; according to Sinfield, in the West End, the centre of London's commercial theatres, "theatre bar and

[1] Cottage is the name given to the public restrooms, usually situated in public parks and known as popular cruising areas for same-sex acts ("cottage").

adjacent public houses and coffee shops have been known as places of same-sex encounters" since the 19th century (6).

This spacial association also had its effects on the perception of social relations in theatre. Miller argues that "[a]s a profession theatre has attracted refugees from erotic orthodoxy" because performance makes it possible to assume new gender roles, provides legitimate environment for cross-dressing and makes the transition from one self to the other easier. Similarly, the theatre also provides "a communal experience, which touches the intimacies of sexual and emotional desire" (1-2). Especially before women started to act in the 17th century, cross-dressing, which was a taboo in other parts of life, was an essential part of the theatre business (Miller 2).

Rebellato and Sinfield also argue that the association between theatrical circles and homosexual men increased in the 1940s and 1950s with the existence of powerful gay and bisexual men in the theatre business, such as Terence Rattigan, Noel Coward, Rodney Ackland, Laurence Olivier, Richard Buckle, Somerset Maugham, Philip King, Peter Shaffer, James Agate (*1956 and All That* 163; 7-8). Theatres have come to be regarded as gay-friendly spaces (Rebellato, *1956 and All That* 161). However, this assumption also led to the creation of some stereotypical and even homophobic perceptions about homosexual community and theatre: the art world, especially fields like theatre, dance and music are claimed to be dominated "by a kind of homosexual mafia—or 'Homintern,' as it has been called;" homosexual people with their experience in "pretending to be someone else," "passing," "presenting a self" are believed to develop a "dramaturgical consciousness;" their attraction to the theatrical world is interpreted as an attempt to obtain the power and control that they cannot have in the real world (Sinfield 8-9). Sinfield interprets this assumed connection between "queerness and theatre" as a social formation and argues that "[i]n practice, because gay men are said to congregate in and around theatres, that becomes a good way for them to feel at home and meet other gays" (10).

Talking about his career in the theatre business, Ian McKellen says that "his dreams of belonging drove him to become an actor" because he heard "everyone in the theatre was

queer" (qtd. in De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* xiii). Yet, De Jong challenges this argument and asserts that for the most part of the 20th century, the theatre which was thought to be "queer" was "enthusiastic in its incitements to hate homosexuals" (*Not in front of the Audience* xiii). Until the 1960s, the representation of the (male) homosexual in dramatic works was a rarity, and when he was depicted, this presentation had to be ambiguous through codes and signals that could only be understood by an informed eye (Rebellato, *1956 and All That* 173). Moreover, the homosexual was either presented as "the epitome of effeminacy, an object of scorn and contempt" or "a sinister and potent agent of the devil, a proselytiser, who encouraged young men to that dangerous addiction, homosexuality" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 2). In this sense, the representations of the homosexual in drama reflected "the society's view of him" as a "pathetic" creature suffering from "guilt and self-pity" and also as a threat to heterosexuality (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 2; Osment vii).

Since the representations of homosexuality have almost always been shaped by the social and political perceptions of the homosexual in the society, before the late 19th century when there was not a perception of homosexuality as an identity, there were not any noticeable representations of homosexuality in British drama. It was only after the medical and scientific categorisation in the late 19th century that homosexuality emerged as a category, and with the trials of Oscar Wilde[v] in Britain, this category gained "a great and lurid public manifestation" and a theatrical association (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 8-9).

Most critics working on the dramatic representations of homosexuality in the first half of the 20th century state that homosexuality could only be depicted in plays through codes and signals that "were only discernible to any gays [among the readers/]in the audience but which would be undetected by the average [reader/]theatre goer" (Spiby 15). Sinfield defines these oblique representations as "open secrets," (115), De Jong as "cryptic signifiers" (*Not in front of the Audience* xii), and Rebellato describes the first half of the century as a time when homosexuals were "both present and not-present on the stage" (*1956 and All That* 173). While avoiding "the general hostility to homosexuality" was a crucial reason for this secretive mode of expression, it was

employed by the playwrights and directors to avoid censorship that controlled British stage from 1737 to 1968 (Brayne 13).

Lord Chamberlain's ultimate control on the British stage started with the Licensing Act of 1737 introduced by Robert Walpole as a way of controlling the political satires against him. Lord Chamberlain's initial duty as "a senior official in the monarch's household" was "cherishing royal swans and arranging royal furniture;" however, in the period stated above, he "reigned over the stage" and provided the production license for every play before it was presented on stage (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 12). The Lord Chamberlain could demand changes to be made in the plays or the plays could be banned all together with the claims, "protecting the moral fabric of the nation," "protecting conservative ideas from radical challenge," "protecting conventional notions of good taste and decency" (Sinfield 14). The "forbidden territories" for the Lord Chamberlain were defined as "slander, religion, sexy, royal and political figures" (Sinfield 13). However, the Lord Chamberlain's focus shifted more towards the issue of sexuality and morality at the beginning of the 20th century (Brayne, 144). Although homosexuality was the most strictly banned issue, the explicit representations of heterosexual intimacy, adultery, prostitution, nudity were also restricted by the Lord Chamberlain's office[vi] (Sinfield 13).

The number of plays that were "smothered" as a result of their homosexual content were relatively low; however, Brayne assumes that many more were not written "because the writers felt that the act of writing them would be a futile" endeavour (144-5). Despite this rigid control, it was not possible to talk about an ultimate ban, as the censor did not cover the staging's in theatre clubs which were regarded as private performances. In certain cases, even the West End theatres "were 'converted' into clubs for the fun of a play which would otherwise have been banned" (Spiby 14). This circumvention, however, also had its shortcomings. In club theatres, performances could only be staged for the members of the club; this inevitably limited the number of people who could see these plays. Moreover, if the playwrights and directors "overstepped the line," censorship could have been extended to club theatres, and they could be prosecuted (Spiby 14-15).

To get around censorship writers, actors and directors had to find some ways. For example, they developed "a homosexual iconography, a series of signifiers and codes that corroborate what the play texts could only imply" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 2). However, these codes were developed out of the stereotypical perception of the homosexual as effeminate and feminine. Therefore, if the character's sexuality was signalled through his looks, manner and diction, he would be "slim, slender, willowy, not broad, athletic or powerful"; he would dress in exceptionally fashionable clothes; he would be "gentle or poetic, nervous and artistic, emotional and loquacious" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 3-4). Sinfield gives Dodie Smith's *Call it a Day* (1936) as an example to such a signification. In this play, the father of the family tells his son Martin to stop his friendship with Alistair, a young man aged twenty-one. Alistair seems quite a nice young man except that he talks about his interest in interior design, he comes to breakfast in his dressing gown (Sinfield 21). Sinfield states that while some of the readers/audiences "did not notice a queer aspect" [in these depictions and] wondered why Alaistair was a problem. Others noticed it" (22). Moreover, the homosexuality of a character could also be hinted through intimations and omissions that which allowed only gay people to drive their own meanings from ambiguity (Spiby 16). Noel Coward's *The Vortex* (1925) was one of these plays, "its depiction of" Nicky Lancaster's sexuality was so "oblique" that it allowed him to be interpreted as a homosexual (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 22).

The Christian morality of the age and the hostility to homosexuality required homosexuals to be presented as "as the epitome of evil, danger and corruption," and the repetitive use of these same characteristics in the coded presentations of homosexuality limited homosexual representation to an evil, effeminate stereotype (Rebellato, *1956 and All That* 173; De Jong *Not in front of the Audience* xi, 2-3). Frederick Lonsdale's *Spring Cleaning* (1925) provides an example to this stereotypical representation. Bobby Williams is introduced in the play as a very fashionable "an effeminate boy;" he is described by other characters as a "caricature of a human being," "a powder-puff," "a fairy" (qtd. in De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 31-32). Although he is accepted as the first clearly depicted homosexual character in British drama, "he has no function in

the action other than to be vilified" (Sinfield 66; De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 30).

Mordaunt Shairp's *The Green Bay Tree* (1933) is the most open play about homosexuality in British drama until the 1950s; however, still, the term homosexual, or any other historical equivalent of it, is not used in the play. The theme of homosexuality is presented as a threat lurking in the background in the relationship between a rich, artistic, upper-class patron Dulcimer and his young inexperienced working-class ward Julian, and the play sustains the stereotype of the depraved upper-class homosexuals trying to seduce younger working classes arose with the Cleveland Street and Oscar Wilde scandals (Brayne 36-48). Dulcimer carries the stereotypical characteristics that were used to imply homosexuality. He is described in the play as a man with a "sensitive personality" and "a delicate appreciation of beauty" he is "elegantly dressed," has "an artistic nature" (1.i 55-57). However, his homosexuality is more explicitly depicted with his unusual attachment to Julian. Dulcimer is criticised by other characters for getting "hold of Julian body and soul" (2.ii.94). Dulcimer also tells Leonora, Julian's fiancée "I'm lost. Like you I have feelings, but with Julian in my life I am never troubled by them. He keeps them content and satisfied" (2.ii.94). The play strengthens the association between decadence and homosexuality, and condemns homosexuality as a vice that should be fought against without mentioning it "unequivocally," and this way it becomes one of the few plays that "reache[s] the public stage" before it was censored (Wilcox 6).

As a result of the medical interest in the subject and also the reform movements at the end of the Second World War, homosexuality moved from the "shadows" into the "spotlight" (Brayne 82). In the post-war period, homosexual characters started to be represented more commonly and in a more varied manner in British drama, going beyond the stereotype of the decadent upper-class homosexual with the plays, such as Travers Otway's *The Hidden Years* (1948) and Roger Geller's *Quaint Honour* (1958), which take place in public schools and present homosexuality as a transitory phase in the lives of the students and as a result of the sex-segregated environment of the public schools, and W. D. Home's *Now Barabbas* (1947), which introduces homosexuality in

an all-male setting of a prison (Brayne 103). Another example to this diversification is Benedict Scott's *The Lambs of God* (1948); the play presents homosexuality in the slums of Scotland. Although *The Lambs of God* (1948) is neglected for being a part of agit-prop tradition, with its realistic and non-judgemental attitude towards its homosexual character, it challenges "the stereotype of the decadent, upper-class pervert" (Brayne 114-115). However, with its oppressive tone as it is indicated in its stage directions: *"Dick watches him go, his whole body sags dejectedly, as if all the bitter self-disgust and torment, all the tragic unhappiness and inherent loneliness of his inversion had of a sudden been thrust upwards by his overburdened conscience,*" it gives the signals of the creation of another stereotype that is the doomed and self-oppressed homosexual which would be more commonly observed at the end of the 1950s and in the 1960s (qtd. in Wyllie 85).

The iconography and the stereotyping that presided over the representation of homosexuality in the first half of the century reduced homosexuals to people that could be easily recognised and identified (Rebellato, *1956 and All That* 166-7). This perception went hand in hand with the Cold War period's "notoriously influential" politics which urged "that the Communist and homosexual alike were potential spies and traitors" and turned homosexual into someone that should be recognised and exposed (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 49). This anxiety found its reflections in British drama with two plays about false allegations: Philip King's *Serious Charge* (1955) and Joan Henry's *Look on Tempest* (1960). In Philip King's *Serious Charge* (1955), a young boy makes a false accusation against the vicar of a small town for sexually assaulting him. Despite the vicar's attempts to prove his innocence, his being a bachelor, his artistic taste, his interest in interior decoration make him a usual suspect in the eye of the town (Sinfield 241-242) The other play, Joan Henry's *Look on Tempest*, is about a woman whose husband is accused of being a homosexual. The man accused of homosexuality is never presented in the play but it is hinted that the allegations concerning his homosexuality are true (Brayne 121; Rebellato, *1956 and All That* 200). These two plays are significant in terms of their reflection of the panic surrounding homosexuality in the late 1950s and the depiction of how little and circumstantial evidence on homosexuality can lead to such severe reaction from the society. Besides,

both plays carried the pain and suffering the accusation of being a homosexual caused, regardless of the truth behind the claims (Sinfield 243).

The extremely judgemental attitude towards homosexuality seen in the drama of the time also reflects "the governing sense of panic about homosexuality engendered by politicians, doctors and clerics" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 54). Homosexuality which could only be seen by curious and wandering eyes in the previous decades, was "[f]ar from being invisible, homosexuality seemed to be everywhere, driving a wedge between meaning and expression, destabilising the security of our national and cultural identity" (Rebellato, *1956 and All That* 192). In the middle of the century, psychoanalysis claimed the responsibility for solving the 'problem' of homosexuality, and the pathologising discourse developed by psychoanalysis affected every field that dealt with the issue of homosexuality from sociology to law and religion (Rebellato, *1956 and All That* 192-193). The interest of psychoanalysis in homosexuality and the discourse produced out of this interest were adopted by both liberal and conservative circles in different ways. While the liberal views focused on psychoanalytical arguments to deny the criminal capacity/punishability of homosexuals, the more conservative views focused on homosexuality as a "sickness" (Sinfield 237-240). But in all these different discussions, the use of psychoanalytical discourses turned homosexuality into a serious and scientific matter. The theatrical circles also embraced the idea of homosexuality as a serious matter, and used this view as a means of negotiation with the Lord Chamberlain to make him allow homosexual representation in theatres. These libertarian critics and writers, who were also affected by the new egalitarian values reflected on the British drama by the new wave of playwrights (Brayne 81-82; Godiwala 1), argued that as "the theatre is an adult art form," and homosexual plays which deal with the serious matter of homosexuality should be considered as "serious adult drama" and should not be left to the immature codes and signals (Rebellato, *1956 and All That* 208-212).

As a result of these attempts and also as a reflection of the changing spirit of post-war period on 6 November 1958 the Lord Chamberlain announced that homosexuals could be represented and homosexuality could be discussed in plays if the following

limitations are minded (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 89; Rebellato, *1956 and All That* 212). It was stated that "'embraces between homosexuals," "the practical demonstrations of love," the use of certain words such as ""bugger" would not be allowed (qtd in Dorney 44). Moreover, only serious references to homosexuality could be included in plays, the celebration of homosexuality was not permitted (Dorney 44). Thus, this change in censorship allowed the presentation of characters who acknowledged their homosexuality openly, but, as it is stated above, new standards were introduced. Homosexual characters were not allowed to express their sexuality through physical contact or through sexually explicit language; certain ways of sexual expression such as drag or positive representations of homosexuality through well-adjusted happy characters were not tolerated (Brayne 152).

This relative relaxation of censorship was also the reflection of the reform movements and homophile movements which aimed to increase tolerance to homosexuality (Jagose 22). This more tolerant perspective also reflected itself on the stage. In the dramatic/theatrical representations of homosexuality, readers/audiences were encouraged to pity rather than condemn homosexual characters; the stereotypical representations of homosexuals as dangerous, degenerate villains were replaced with sad and lonely homosexuals who were victims of their tragic condition (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 5; Brayne 121). The plays about homosexuals became more melodramatic; characters with homosexual desires were in a constant struggle to come to terms with their homosexuality; they were full of self-hatred. Homosexuality was presented as bringing pain and suffering which at times led to both physical isolation by the abandonment of friends and families, expulsion from jobs and emotional isolation resulting in the feeling of depression and ending in suicide (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 119-139)

Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* written in 1958 provides an example to the representation of homosexual as an isolated individual. The homosexual character of the play Geof is presented as quite a likeable character, as the ideal friend to the pregnant working-class heroine, Joe. However, he is not a strong character. He does not have any social contact with anyone other than Joe; he lacks self-confidence. (Spiby 29; De Jong,

Not in front of the Audience 90-93; Wyllie 92) As De Jong puts forward, with Geof, "Delaney had thus written the first major British play in which a gay and effeminate man is both ridiculed and approved, derided and accepted" (*Not in front of the Audience* 93). Although his suffering does not dominate the play, in his isolation and weakness, Geof becomes a good example to the stereotypical representation of homosexual drawing sympathy rather than respect.

The stereotypical representation of the unhappy homosexual troubled by his 'perversion' can be observed in a clearer way in plays such as John Osborne's *A Patriot For Me* (1965) and Charles Dyer's *Staircase* (1966). The character Redl in Osborne's *A Patriot for Me* is an officer in the Austrian army in the late 19th century. At the beginning of the play Redl is presented as a bright and successful person; however, after his homosexuality is discovered by the Russians, he is blackmailed and forced to spy on his country. He becomes increasingly alienated from his environment and at the end, commits suicide (Wyllie 93-94). Although the play's ending with a suicide adheres to the conventional idea of morality and its historical setting helps to create a distancing effect, the play was still censored because of Osborne's refusal to use a euphemistic language and his insistence in depicting the physical side of homosexual attraction (Brayne 146-150). With Osborne's refusal to apply the alterations offered by the Lord Chamberlain, the play was not granted a license but staged at a private performance at the Royal Court. *A Patriot for Me* received great attention and won The Evening Standard Award for the best play of the year (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 106). The success of the play and also Osborne's reputation as one of the most important playwrights of his time led, once again, to the questioning of the Lord Chamberlain's censor (Brayne 151).

Despite *A Patriot for Me*'s success at hastening the abolition of the censorship and its daring depiction of homosexuality as a physical desire, the play was still criticised for falling back on the stereotypes. First of all, Redl is interpreted as a character who reeks "of self-hatred, cursed with a love-life that always went wrong" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 105). Another point of criticism directed to Osborne's representation of homosexuality in *A Patriot for Me* is that the characters who are supposedly more in

peace with their homosexuality than Redl in play's drag ball scene, are depicted as extremely "effeminate and giggly" (Spiby 32), exemplifying the camp queen stereotype of mainstream British comedy (Dorney 40).

Charlie and Harry's depiction in Charley Dyer's *Staircase* is a combination of the stereotypical representations discussed above in relation to Osborne's *A Patriot for Me*. The homosexual couple of the play, Charlie and Harry, reflect the camp sensibility in their extremely effeminate and flamboyant manners. Moreover, they are also very discontent with their homosexuality and their homosexual relationship. They continuously judge themselves and each other by the society's limited perception of homosexuality (59,60, 77). At the end of the play, the characters realise that Harry and other characters mentioned in the play are the product of Charlie's imagination, and their "neurotic" representation of homosexuality in the play turns into a presentation of "the homosexual as psychotic" (Brayne 136).

In the 1960s, when not only dramatic but almost all fictional representations of homosexuality were confined to the presentation of homosexual men as conscious-stricken and unhappy[vii], Joe Orton managed to challenge the outlook of his time with his modern and "non-judgemental presentation" of guilt-free homosexual characters (Wyllie 94). Orton's characters are beyond the stereotypical representations of the homosexual as the camp queen or the homosexual as the sufferer with their display of assertive masculinity and with their untroubled relationship with their homosexuality (Dorney 37). In this sense, Orton is regarded as "the first playwright in Britain—indeed one of the first writers in either Britain or America—to reject the dominant myth of homosexuality as sickness and sin" and to present homosexuality as mere sexual pleasure (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 94). In *Entertaining Mr Sloane* (1964), Sloane is presented as a bisexual young man: the object of sexual desire of both son and daughter of the man he kills. The son, Ed is a masculine homosexual who is not a victim but a "sex predator" (Brayne 164). In *Loot* (1966), Hal and Denis are presented as "ordinary boys who happen to be fucking each other" along with some other women; and in *What the Butler Saw* (1969), Nick is a young boy who is ready to open himself, casually, to any kind of sexual adventure, and none of these characters listed above are

judged because of their sexuality. Orton, in that sense, presents his homosexual and bisexual characters in a way that anticipates the "assertions of Gay Liberation Movement" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 100).

The 1960s ends with significant events that affected the representation of homosexuality in British theatre drastically. The changes in the theatrical and political spheres, such as "The Sexual Offences Act" of 1967 which decriminalised same-sex relations in private, the "1968 Theatres Act" revoking the Lord Chamberlain's powers in theatrical censorship, the opening of "the small theatre venues where non-commercial theatre could be cheaply staged" facilitated both the creation of an alternative fringe theatre and also prepared a suitable environment for the creation of gay drama (Banham 414).

0.3.1. British Gay Drama

The first theatrical activities that represented the new gay consciousness were "GLF-inspired happenings or street theatre[s]" (Wyllie 95). In the early years of the Gay Liberation Movement, "[t]he established theatre - both the commercial playhouses of the West End and the subsidised giants - were at best indifferent to the idea of a positive gay drama, and often antagonistic" (Brayne 176). In the early 1970s, gay writers and actors started to stage their own plays as a part of political fringe theatre and feminist theatre companies. These early plays "combined the liberationist agenda with socialist left politics" (Brayne 161; Dolan 3). In 1975, The Gay Sweatshop[viii] opened in London as Britain's first gay theatre company. The dramatists, actors and directors who came together under the banner of The Gay Sweatshop expressed their refusal of the old stereotypical representation of homosexuality on stage as ridiculously camp or painfully tragic (Osment viii-ix; Greer 44). Leaving the troubled representations of homosexuality behind, they aimed to create a "gay theatre" presenting proud and happy "gay" heroes (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 5). The Gay Sweatshop still holds a significant place in the history of British gay drama as it "has affected the lives of countless individuals" and played an important role in carrying liberationist consciousness to the stage and in "changing attitudes towards homosexuality within the world of theatre and within society as a whole" (Osment vii).

The end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s marked the introduction of gay plays to the mainstream stage. The Gay Sweatshop's later plays such as *The Dear Love of Comrades* (1976) and Noel Greig and Drew Griffiths's *As Time Goes By* (1977), Michael Wilcox's *Rents* (1979) and *Accounts* (1984), Julian Mitchell's *Another Country* (1981) were important in terms of their contribution to the diversity of the representation of gay life in the British mainstream drama (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 190-1; De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 162-170). These plays are crucial in marking the development of gay drama in a short period of time from topical plays that only celebrated the creation of gay consciousness and awareness to established plays with a dramatic quality (Wylie 99). In this period, two plays, Howard Brenton's *The Romans in Britain* (1980) "with its simulated male rape scene" and Kevin Elyot's *Coming Clean* (1982) with its "graphic scenes of sex between men, and some robust verbal exchanges" exhibit the "distinct preparedness of playwrights to discuss [homo]sexual matters on stage in a very overt way" (Wyllie 102).

This initial energy and speedy development in gay drama is interrupted with the AIDS outbreak at the very beginning of the 1980s and with the political antagonism of the Clause 28 in 1988. These events created a "climate of confusion and fear" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 179). While the American scene, responded to the AIDS crisis with high quality works like William Hoffman's *As Is* (1985), Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* (1985), Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* (1990), Britain only produced a few minor AIDS plays like Andy Kirby's *Compromised Immunity* (1986) and Noel Greig's *Plagues of Innocence* (1988), and the British gay drama went through a period of decline in the second part of the 1980s (Sinfield 315-326; Davies, "Loving Angles Instead" 57-69). This unproductive period in the British gay drama is explained with several reasons. First of all, "the hardening of the official attitudes" to homosexuality caused many local councils to drawback their funds from gay theatre companies, and also, this stigmatisation combined with the shock of the AIDS outbreak had a crippling effect on the creativity of writers (*Not in front of the Audience* 179; Wyllie 105). Secondly, in British scene, the AIDS crisis was experienced in a different way than it was experienced in the US. The virus hit the US much earlier and at a greater scale than

it hit Britain. By the time the virus came in Britain, "the knowledge about the safer sex" had already arrived in Britain; British people suffered less from the disease itself than the "horror and fear" aroused by the stories coming from American scene (Sinfield 328). Therefore "much of the British emotional reaction to the AIDS crisis was experienced second-hand, and, as such, was perhaps incapable of generating a strong artistic response" (Wyllie 105). Moreover, as Sinfield argues, so many American plays and films on AIDS were performed and screened in Britain that British did not need to create their own work as it had already been done for them (328-329).

In Britain, the only successful and notable play on AIDS was Kevin Elyot's *My Night With Reg* (1994) which is mostly praised for its "un-American" approach to AIDS (Sinfield 328). The first thing that separates *My Night With Reg* from its American counterparts is its humorous and unheroic approach to AIDS (Davies, "Days Gone By" 114; Sinfield 328). The play is a black comedy about six friends, five of whom confess to have had sex with HIV-infected Reg who never appears in the play. Guy, the play's shy protagonist, juggles with his friends' confessions of their affairs with Reg. The comedy arouses from each character's attempt to hide their relationship with Reg and from the contrast between Reg's promiscuity and Guy's sterile sex life which is limited to phone-sex. In the second act, Reg dies of AIDS. Although the characters who had secret affairs with Reg become more anxious, overcautious Guy, who "won't look at pornography without a condom over his head" (23) dies of AIDS, probably as a result of a sexual assault he suffered from when he was on holiday (71). In addition to its use of humour, *My Night With Reg* also differs from other AIDS plays in its presentation of AIDS as only one of the issues the play deals with, along with friendship, love and gay lifestyle (Davies, "Days Gone By" 117-17).

In the period between the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, the place of gay plays on the mainstream stage solidified. At the beginning of the 1990s, the plays like Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* (1993) and Kevin Elyot's *My Night With Reg* (1994) presented sentimental and light-hearted representations of gayness with the intention of attaining mainstream appeal (Sinfield 341). In the second half of the decade, the representation of gayness became more sexualised. Moreover, writing exclusively gay

plays were no longer the main purpose of the playwrights. Instead, plays such as Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking* (1996), Sarah Kane's *Cleansed* (1998), Jonathan Harvey's *His Guiding Star* (1998) presented gayness as one of its themes along with other issues (Wyllie 109). Moreover, the 1990s also saw Britain's first prominent black gay play, Paul Boakye's *Boys with Beer* (1995) (Ukaegbu 325-326). In the 2000s, the plurality of the representation of sexuality in British drama increased to such an extent that it was no longer possible to talk about an exclusively gay drama. Also, the plays like Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* (2001), Philip Ridley's *Mercury Fur* (2005), Mike Bartlett's *Cock* (2009) are important plays that presented queer characters in British plays (Monforte, "Witnessing, Sexualised Spectatorship" 152-169; Wyllie 109).

This introduction is an attempt to survey different historical, theoretical and dramatic developments that shape and constitute the modern understanding of homosexual, gay and queer identities that form the basis of this dissertation. In the first section of the introduction entitled "History of Homosexuality," the changing social and political conditions that created different perceptions of homosexuality in Ancient Greek, Roman and Hebrew societies and in British history are investigated. In the second section, "From Gay Identity to Queer Theory," the academic discussions on homosexual, gay and queer identities which establish the theoretical background of this study are revised. Finally, in the third section, "Representations of homosexuality in British Drama," the changing representations of homosexuality in the 20th-century British drama are examined. As it can easily be observed from these different sections of this Introduction, the perception of homosexuality in British culture and its representation in British drama are constantly reconstructed in line with the social, political changes in the society.

In the light of this background, the study of Julian Mitchell's *Another Country* (1981), Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* (1993) and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* (2001) which constitute the focus of this dissertation will show us how the representations of gayness in these plays also change in each decade and hence reflect the conditions of the periods they were staged in. With an in-depth and chronological

analysis of these plays, in accordance with the theories on gay and queer identity, this study will try to examine to what extent the representations of gay identity in British drama changed within the span of twenty years during which these plays were written, and how the study of the above-mentioned plays exemplifies the appearance, development and deconstruction of gay identity in British society.

CHAPTER 1

THE REPRESSION OF HOMOSEXUALITY: JULIAN MITCHELL'S *ANOTHER COUNTRY*

In the 1980s, the explicit presentation of homosexuality in the British mainstream drama was still new. Julian Mitchell's *Another Country* (1981), known for its West End success, is one of the earliest gay plays on mainstream British stage (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 143). The aim of this chapter is to examine how *Another Country* reflects homosexuality as a site of struggle against repression. As one of the first plays to present the homosexual identity on the mainstream stage, the play combines different discourses on homosexuality that prevailed in Britain in the 1980s. On the one hand, it still presents homosexuality in a mode of anguish through its repressive public school setting in the 1930s. On the other hand, through its unyielding characters, it reflects the liberationist vision concerning gayness in the 1970s and the early 1980s.

Another County's success in presenting these two different attitudes towards homosexuality together in its historical setting can be explained with Julian Mitchell's long writing career guided by interest in bringing the past to the present. Mitchell was born in 1935 in Epping. He had his early education at Winchester College as a public school student and had a first-hand experience of public school homosexuality as a closeted gay boy. His need to hide his sexuality also continued at home as his father "hated homosexuality and thought it was a crime" (Armstrong). After high school, Mitchell took his university degree from Oxford University where he studied history but also kept his interest in literature and theatre alive by acting and writing (Mitchell, "First Person").

Julian Mitchell started writing professionally as a novelist and wrote six novels: *Imaginary Toys* (1961), *A Disturbing Influence* (1962), *As Far as You Can Go* (1963), *The White Father* (1964) (brought Mitchell the Somerset Maugham Award), *A Circle*

of Friends (1966) and finally *The Undiscovered Country* in 1968. None of these novels reflected Mitchell's engagement with history, and as he turned to writing plays and adaptations for TV and cinema in the early 1970s, novel writing remained as an early phase in his career. Mitchell's adaptation of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1971), Paul Scott's *Staying On* (1980) and Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* (1981) are among the first works he did for TV (Melody). Later, by writing a script for Colin Dexter's stories, Mitchell introduced Inspector Morse to the screen who became "one of the most popular detectives ever to appear on television screens worldwide" (Mitchell, "First Person"). He also wrote films scripts such as *Arabesque* (1966), casting Sophia Lauren, *Vincent and Theo* (1990), the story of Van Gogh with his brother Theo, *August* (1996), an adaptation of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* starring Anthony Hopkins, *Wilde* (1997), the story of Oscar Wilde with Stephen Fry as Wilde, *Consenting Adults* (2007) commemorating the Wolfenden Report (1957) (Mitchell, "First Person;" Armstrong).

As time passed, Mitchell's literary interest shifted towards the theatre but his interest in history and adaptation continued. His first play *A Heritage and Its History* (1966) is an adaptation of Ivy Compton-Burnett's novel of the same name. In 1976, he adapted another novel to the stage by Compton-Burnett, *A Family and a Fortune*. In 1977, he wrote another play *Half-Life,* the story of an ageing archaeologist, which brought Mitchell success in the West End (Birch). His success as a playwright continued with *Another Country* (1981) which won Mitchell the Olivier Award for best play and also brought fame to the actors such as Rupert Everett, Kenneth Branagh, Daniel Day-Lewis and Colin Firth who were then at the very beginning of their careers (Melody). Mitchell's later plays include *Francis* (1983), a play on the life of St. Francis of Assisi, and *After Aida* (1986), a musical play about the composer Giuseppe Verdi that won Mitchell the SWET Award ("Julian Mitchell;" Melody). His next two plays were *The Good Soldier* (2010), adapted from Ford Madox Ford's novel about Edwardian life, and *The Welsh Boy* (2012) commissioned by The Theatre Royal Bath (Mitchell, "First Person"). Mitchell gave a new voice to the past by adapting old literary works to TV, the cinema and the stage. In addition, in his original works, he established a bridge between the past and the present by using historical plots or borrowings from past events and people. Mitchell currently lives in Monmouthshire, Wales and is working on

a series of novels on the history of the county which proves that his interest in combining literature and history still continues to this day (Armstrong).

Another Country, written in 1981, is also one of the works by Mitchell that is set in the past although this does not make it a play about the past. The play takes place in an English public school in the early 1930s. Revolving around male students at the age of seventeen, *Another Country* deals with the issues of discipline, repression, militarism, politics, colonialism and homosexuality within the hierarchical structure of the public school system. The play opens with three students chatting in the library on an ordinary day, but the harmonious atmosphere of the opening is disrupted with the news of a suicide. The students are informed that a younger student called Martineau hanged himself as he was caught with another student in an intimate position. Although same-sex romances and intimacies are apparently a common part of the life at school, and most of the students are involved in these activities, the prefects of the school panic over the possibility of a scandal, and with the suggestion of the authoritarian student Fowles, they decide to wage war on same-sex activities at school. This turns the openly gay student Bennett into a scapegoat. Bennett and his Marxist friend Judd try to reverse this suppressive measure by constituting the majority in the exclusive student group Twenty Two, yet the play ends in their disillusionment. Bennett and Judd are left with no choice but to dream of "another country."

Although *Another Country* is written more than a decade after the Gay Liberation Movement, the play still draws a gloomy picture of adolescent homosexuality where boys like Martineau and Bennett pay the price of their homosexual desires with grief, loss and even death. This way, the play's treatment of homosexuality reminds us of the dramatic representations of homosexuality in the 1960s where with the attempt to present a more sympathetic picture of homosexuality, homosexual characters were presented as physically and emotionally tormented people, destined to live unhappy and isolated lives which leads them to depression and even suicide (Osment vii-xi), rather than the "new mode of gay positivism" that was promoted throughout the 1970s by the fringe theatres that were set up by liberationist theatre companies such as the Gay Sweatshop (De Jong, *Not in Front of the Audience* 141).

This retrospective outlook the play brings with its emphasis on the homosexuals' suffering can be interpreted in several ways. First of all, "the candid representations of sexual dissidence" in fringe theatres depended on "challenging the audience" and they were too provocative for the mainstream reader/audience who were "conditioned to apologetic portrayals of unhappy homosexuals" (Sinfield 336-339; Brayne 179). The first mainstream plays, including *Another County* carry the post-liberation vision to the stage but in a way that does not "unsettle the prevailing notions about gays" (Sinfield 339). Therefore, the play still reflects the mainstream ideology which associated the fate of the homosexuals with betrayal, discrimination, exclusion and depression.

Although *Another County* foregrounds the difficulties its homosexual characters experience, it does not present the suffering of the homosexual exclusively in personal terms as it was presented in the plays of the late 1950s and 1960s, but it presents the suffering of the homosexual in a way that includes the political consciousness of the 1970s, the play relates this suffering to the socio-cultural circumstances and presents it as an effect of repression (De Jong, *Not in Front of the Audience* 112; Sinfield 283-283). This tendency to regard sexuality as a reflection of repression is also a point touched upon by Michel Foucault in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1976). Foucault talks about the way of thinking that regards the understanding of sexuality in the 20th century as a result of Victorian morality. According to this perception, referred to by Foucault as "repressive hypothesis," sexuality in the modern times is an extension of the repressive Victorian regime; and "the image of the imperial prude is emblazoned on [our] restrained, mute and hypocritical sexuality" (*History of Sexuality* 3). Although Foucault regards this hypothesis as an illusion and defies it by placing sexuality and discourses surrounding it into a much more complex system of thinking, the idea of the repressive hypothesis was a common notion both in the studies of sexuality and in the society of the 1980s. This concept regards the perception of sexuality in modern societies as a continuation of the prudish attitudes of the early bourgeois society and the capitalist system (*History of Sexuality* 3). As a play written in 1981, *Another Country* adopts a similar outlook as the homosexual activities of the students are associated with pain and grief as a result of the repressive public school system of the 1930s.

Foucault argues that repressive hypothesis assumes a system of total repression. Any behaviour that is outside the norm, politically or sexually and "insisted on making itself too visible . . . would have to pay the penalty" (4). The system does not make escape possible; any individual who abides by the rules of the system would be punished accordingly without exception. In this line of thought, *Another Country* provides numerous examples of such transgressive behaviour which are punished by the system in different ways, directly or indirectly.

The grimmest of these punishments is Martineau's death. At the end of Act I Scene i, we are informed that one of the younger students of the school, Martineau, hanged himself on the bell tower after being caught with a boy by one of the masters. Although suicide, which is a self-inflicted end, is not a direct punishment imposed by the system, it is still possible to discuss homosexual suicides as indirect results of the punishment mechanisms of repressive systems. Studies suggest that compared to their heterosexual counterparts "gay men and lesbians suffer from more mental health problems including substance use disorders, affective disorders, and suicide" as a result of the "stigma, prejudice, and discrimination" they have been experiencing in life (Meyer 675). While such breakdowns can stem from the stress arising from the conflict within the heterosexist environments, they can also result from the internalised homophobia which is "the internalization of the heterosexist social attitudes and their application to one's self" (Frost and Meyer 97). Hence, the individual does not need a higher system to punish himself/herself but becomes his/her own prosecutor. Although in Martineau's case the details of his psychological condition leading to his suicide remain a mystery as his voice is never heard on stage. It is Judd, one of the senior boys of the school, who holds the hypocritical school system and its corrupt rules responsible for Martineau's death:

> JUDD. You don't actually believe in rules, do you?
> DELAHAY. What?
> JUDD. You think they're only there to be *seen* to be obeyed.
> DELAHAY. Depends who you are. If you can ride 'em, ride 'em. If not — watch out!
> JUDD. What a hypocrite you are. [*He washes his face*.] Martineau wasn't a hypocrite. That's why he did it. This ghastly school persuaded him its footling,

meaningless rules actually stood for something real. (31)

Judd feels that while defenders of the system like Delahay wangle the rules for their own interests with their "pragmatic . . . morality" (De Jong, *Not in Front of the Audience* 158), students like Martineau, who take the rules seriously, become their own prosecutor. Mitchell avoids giving an exact answer to Martineau's death but leaves the reader/audience to devise their own interpretation.

For the reader/audience of the 1980s, such a homosexual suicide was a familiar topic, as they were regularly exposed to a discourse connecting homosexuality and suicide. Initially developed from the medical assumptions that linked homosexuality "to a pathological drive to end one's life" and assumed that homosexuality promised a life with no future, suicide became an indispensable part of the homosexual experience ("Gay Suicide and Gay Futurity"). Such a connection was both a part of the homophobic discourse, which used the link between homosexuality and suicide as a warning against homosexual practices, and it was also widely used by the homosexual community as a cry for sympathy. The existing statistics, especially of teenage suicides, which had already reached alarming rates, were further exaggerated to prove the extent of homosexual suppression and internalised homophobia, and to promote acceptability (Medinger; Holland 91-97). Although the use of statistics was effective in getting attention from the authorities to initiate anti-homophobic campaigns, their extensive use and the reproduction of this image of the suicidal homosexual in many works of fiction at the time also had a devastating effect on the teenage gay community and their perception of themselves and the future awaiting them (LaBarbera).

In this sense, Martineau's death can be interpreted as a symbol that evoked the memory of many familiar examples of homosexual suicides in their own time for the reader/audience of the 1980s. The compassion the reader/audience feels for Martineau and the feeling of sorrow increase with this familiarity. Rather than belonging to a point of time in the 1930s, Martineau becomes a representative of a collective memory. Although Martineau plays a significant role in the play, he never appears on the stage; he haunts the play with his absence. The reader/audience is informed about his death through third parties. As he lacks a physical entity, the association between Martineau

and other suicide victims becomes more natural, and the reader/audience can visualise other homosexual suicide instead. Martineau becomes the concept of the suicidal homosexual in the play, rather than a character. He stands for all the dead boys and men at different points of time, and the idea of homosexual suicide itself.

In *Another Country*, Martineau's death is not presented as a sterile personal calamity, but it becomes an important turning point in the play that affects all the other students deeply. The news of his death at the very beginning of the play changes the tone of the play which had opened with a very witty and light-hearted dialogue between three fourth year students: Bennett, the homosexual Casanova of the school, Judd, the self-confessed socialist, and Devenish, a true believer of the imperial values. In the first scene of the play, the reader/audience observes the boys in their leisure time, chatting in a casual and playful manner:

> JUDD. What have you done with Lenin? Oh, there he is. (*He fetches a bust of Lenin from where it has been turned face to the wall, and puts it in front of his place at the table.*)
> You do realise it would be a sacrilege to lay him on chapel altar? Charlie Chaplain would want a man-to-man talk with you.
> BENNETT. He can marry us if he likes. Sanctify our passion.
> DEVENISH. Bennett!
> JUDD. I'm afraid he'd only tell you how men managed without women in the war. (6)

As the dialogue continues, Judd takes Bennett's binoculars with which Bennett watches a student residing in another house of the school:

> JUDD. But he's not there.
> BENNETT. Not yet. But any moment now the great oak door of Langford's will swing open on its rusty hinges —
> DEVENISH. How do you know they're rusty?
> BENNETT. — and the glorious vision will step forth. He'll stand a moment, winsomely framed in the tumescent archway —
> JUDD. The *what*? (6)

This extract is one of the many places in the first scene where the reader/audience is introduced to the insights of the main characters of the play, their relationship to one another, their stances in life, as well as the issues they discuss in their daily routine. In these witty conversations, homosexuality does not only come up as a common school practice, pursued quite often by Bennett, but also as a topic of numerous jokes and word

plays. In the example given above, the word "tumescent," which means the swollen position of the male sexual organ after sexual arousal, is used by Bennett to describe the archway of the school (“tumescent”). The way this medical term is humorously appropriated to an architectural structure (6) not only demonstrates the light-hearted way the boys deal with the topic of sexuality but also reveals the meaning Bennett ascribes to the House of Langford and the feelings the sight of Harcourt arouses in him. This playful and witty way the theme of homosexuality is handled initially in the play, however, changes with the news of Martineau’s suicide. The issue of homosexuality which was referred to playfully through the sexual innuendos uttered by Bennett and Judd turns into a serious matter, a life and death situation; and the tone of the play gradually becomes gloomier.

The change in the tone and the mood of the play can be regarded as a warning that Martineau is only the first of many students to be punished by the system. The second student to be targeted by the repressive system is Bennett. While Martineau is defeated by the system, after being accidentally discovered by one of the masters, Bennett’s punishment results from his deliberately challenging the system. Despite the tightening atmosphere at school following Martineau’s death and his friends’ warnings about the critical period before Twenty Two memberships, Bennett refuses to hide his homosexual inclinations. In a way different from Martineau, who yielded to the system and chose eternal silence with his suicide, Bennett derives pleasure from speaking about his sexuality. As Foucault states:

> If sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom. (*History of Sexuality* 6)

Bennett's insistence on speaking up for his feelings, his continuous remarks on his homosexuality and his love for Harcourt can be explained through the pleasure and freedom arising from the challenge itself.

However, when the note he sends to Harcourt is discovered by Fowler at the end of the play, Bennett loses his power and influence at school as a result of the humiliation of

being beaten up, and also loses his chance to become a member of Twenty Two, something he had been wishing for since the beginning of his school years (87-88). As a result of these events, Bennett realises that "the system is a 'game,'" and a man of his desires has little chance of being a winner by working in the system" (Clum 185). However, such a realisation does not lead Bennett to defeat like Martineau as he adjusts his future plans and chooses a different path for himself. At the end of the play, he still regards his love for Harcourt as a happy event (90); however, this time, he chooses to work against the system, and Bennett and Jude unite in their exclusion by other students and in their anti-establishment attitudes (93-95).

Another character who is suppressed by the system, as a result of the stand he takes on homosexuality, is Barclay, the head of the house. Despite his position as the head, Barclay tries to change the system through his tolerant rule and lift the pressure on the students. While talking about his attempted change of the system, he says, "I made a vow at the end of my first term, if I ever became the head of the house, I'd do my utmost to make sure that no-one ever had to creep about in fear and terror the way we did" (27). However, his ideal rule based on "no fear and no violence" cannot be realised, and he fails to overcome the suppression of the system; hence, he fails to prevent Martineau's death. The sorrow and responsibility Barclay feels after Martineau's death leads him to a mental breakdown. He cannot sleep and feels suicidal and considers leaving his post (46-48). In a way, he does not prove durable and unbreakable enough to survive in the system in which there is no room for sensitivity and idealism. Far from protecting other students, Barclay becomes another victim of the repressive system.

While Barclay fails to fulfil the requirements of the system, Menzies, who is regarded in the play as Barclay's possible successor (46), proves useful for the system, even before he becomes the house head. Contrary to Barclay, who lets his emotions interfere with his duties, Menzies looks after his own interests without feeling any empathy. Regardless of his close friendship with Bennett, and having persuaded Judd to become a candidate for Twenty Two despite Judd's strong political stance against this society, Menzies decides to rule out Judd and Bennett from the membership of Twenty Two at the very last minute after Fowler catches the note Bennett sent to Harcourt (92-93). For

Menzies, maintaining the system and maintaining his position in the system come before friendship and promises.

The repression caused by the school system is not only related to homosexual desire. Judd, who declares himself a heterosexual, is another character who is marginalised at school, but this time, as a result of his strong political views. As a socialist, Judd is critical of every component of the hierarchical system both at school and in the country. He is against the traditions and workings of the public school system and only endures it to get a scholarship to go to Cambridge (30). However, in the end, he is persuaded by Menzies and Bennett to compromise his principles and become a candidate for Twenty Two to prevent Fowler from becoming the head of the house and imposing an oppressive regime over the whole house (85). Till this point in the play, Judd regularly voices his refusal to be a part of the upper classes and tries to prove that his ideas are different from the "predatorily imperial" values of his ancestors (8). Despite the advantages it may bring him, such as long hours to work on his scholarship, Judd refuses to be a prefect saying: "I can't be against the class system and be a prefect" (9). His agreement to step up as a candidate for Twenty Two turns into a great sacrifice of his beliefs because for him, Twenty Two is nothing more than "a self-perpetuating oligarchy of mutual congratulation" where "[t]wenty-two boys, out of a hundred" are "electing each other to be demi-gods" (10). However, this sacrifice is rendered pointless as Menzies and Devenish develop a backup plan when Bennett is caught sending a note to Harcourt (87). Devenish's father decides to keep him at school despite the rumours of homosexual scandal on the condition that he becomes a member of Twenty Two (92). This way, Judd's bold compromise in becoming a candidate despite his hatred for the hierarchy backslides, and he looks like a fraud in front of the whole school (93). This way he takes his place among the other students who are victimised by the system through humiliation.

Julian Mitchell also uses props and stage directions in the most efficient way to reflect the idea of repression targeting homosexuality. The play provides both Bennett and Judd, the two transgressive characters, with props that underline their outreaching nature. For instance, at the very beginning of the first scene, as the characters are

presented for the very first time, the stage direction describes Bennett as looking out of the window with binoculars (6-7). This image of Bennett looking out of the window with binoculars is repeated several other times throughout the play and shows Bennett's keen interest in Harcourt from the very beginning of the play. But also the act of looking out of the window with binoculars is presented in the play as a symbolic action for Bennett. This action points out Bennett's search for another country, his search for a homosexual identity, his yearning to go beyond the doors of the public school, a yearning, even Bennett himself does not realise till the second act of the play. Moreover, Bennett's looking out with the binoculars has further symbolic significance. Binoculars can also be regarded as a symbol of Bennett's potential career as a spy as they are closely connected to the stereotypical spy image. On the other hand, the prop with which Judd engages himself as a means to see beyond the school is his torch. Just like Bennett's binoculars, Judd's torch is also a device related to vision. As Bennett looks out of the window with his binoculars, Judd looks into his books with his torch (71). For him, his books are the promise of another life, another country outside the public school. However, throughout the play, both of these devices are confiscated by the prefects over and over again. Both Bennett and Judd are robbed several times of their means to escape the system, and by taking their vision providers from them, the system tries to condemn them to the darkness of the school.

In addition, through the stage directions on lights, the metaphorical darkness of the school is reflected on stage, and darkness plays a significant role in creating the repressive atmosphere in *Another Country*. The play opens with the stage direction: "*the curtain raises on darkness*," (5) at the end of scene two "*[i]n the darkness we hear a chapel full of boys reciting the General Confession, led by* FOWLER," (27). Similarly, the curtain rises into darkness in the second act again (45). These repetitive periods of darkness which the audience is exposed to becomes effective in reflecting the depressing and gloomy atmosphere of the play. The descriptions of different spaces in the play also play a crucial role in creating this dark atmosphere. All of the scenes in the play, except for the one on the cricket field, are confined to the indoors of the school, the gothic architecture of which is intended to be carried to the stage with the detailed stage directions. Rather than leading his readers/audiences to an intellectual reaction,

with the gloomy atmosphere created in the play, Mitchell tries to create an emotional involvement. The play even tries to guide the emotions of the characters and the readers/audiences through the stage directions. When Fowler suggests that the danger the school faces following Martineau's death is not big enough to put the school in jeopardy the following year, the stage directions read as "[*The other's silence indicates they do not share his optimism*]" (25). This tells the reader how to interpret the silence. Not only through dialogue but also through such stage directions, Mitchell controls the feelings and messages that will be transmitted to the reader. This dark and pessimistic mood in which Julian Mitchell develops the theme of homosexuality does not mean that the darkness comes into the lives of characters because of their homosexual desires. Homosexual characters of the play, Martineau and Bennett are not presented as victims of their homosexual desires but the victims of the public school system.

As it is presented in *Another Country*, public schools in England were designed as institutions that shape the future generations with the ultimate discipline and help them to develop "the capacity to govern others and control themselves" (Clarendon Report qtd. in Chandler 26). However, in many ways, the rules, regulations and even the curricula which are designed with the mission of "preparing the nation's elite for leadership" also functions as a means of regulating masculinity (Robb 47; Mangan xxiii). This function of public schools is recreated meticulously in *Another Country*. With the examples from the typical "masculinizing practices" that can be observed in gender-segregated schools (Connell 215), the play presents the public school as a hyper-masculine practice field in which the boys of the important families of England are prepared for the future.

The first of these masculinising practices that can be observed in *Another Country* is the practice of military drills. While preparing the students for the future, military drills had a special function to train and encourage public school students for their potential posts in the army and the empire in the future (Ndee 877-9). An example of this preparation in the play is the army practices that the boys are expected to join. As adolescents growing up in the interwar period and as the members of upper-class families, the characters of the play are heavily exposed to the ideas of militarism and colonialism;

and they are well-aware of the part they are expected to take within the colonial system. The first act of the play opens in the aftermath of the Dedication ceremony, which is organised as a commemoration for the war losses, where boys were expected to honour the dead (11). The students are taught to ascribe a significant meaning to such ceremonies so that after Dedication, Devenish feels guilty of failing to concentrate well on the dead since Judd "giggled silently" (11). The roll-calls in the evenings where the boys are counted in a military manner as the boy at the end of the line shouts "sum" is another example of this militarism deeply ingrained in public school life (73). Similarly, each day at school ends with an army symbol, the blowing of the Last Post (39); this trumpet call was used to mark the end of the battle day at war and was also a symbol of commemoration for the Fallen who could not make it to the end ("Last Post"). As it can be seen, in all these activities and also "in the form of lectures from visiting speakers, headmaster's speeches and chapel sermons," the students in *Another Country* are exposed to the aggressive rhetoric of the battlefield as any other student would have been in public schools in the 1930s (Mangan 191).

Reviving army traditions played a major role in public schools in keeping the military spirit awake. So, all the military symbols and terminology used in *Another Country* emphasise the importance of the idea of militarism in British upper-class ideology and also build a bridge between school life and the life in trenches; however, the main event in which the boys rehearse for the army is the military competition called Jacker Pot. In this competition, the students of different houses are inspected for the neatness of their Corps uniforms and the accuracy of their military steps, and every year one house is rewarded. This event becomes one of the turning points of the play in which Bennett's position at school and his perception of it changes; since, with his shabby uniform, he deliberately causes his house to lose the competition. Bennett openly undermines the school rules and publicly rebels against one of the most fundamental values of the school., which is discipline. Moreover, to get away from the punishment for sabotaging Jaker Pot, he threatens all the prefects with revealing their involvement in homosexual acts and takes a stand against them (81). Although Bennett habitually challenges the norms with his witty remarks from the beginning of the play, the way he blackmails the

prefects becomes his most daring display of power. This moment can be interpreted as an official declaration of Bennet's changing sides.

In the English public school tradition, in addition to army practices, sports were also regarded crucial for character formation and for preparation for adult life. Values such as manliness, "allegiance," "the team spirit," "discipline, obedience, and self-control" were believed to be acquired at school in early life through sport activities (Toda 136; Chandler 24; Ndee 883; Mangan xxiii). "When team games were introduced" into the public school curricula in the 1850s, they were used initially "as a means of controlling upper and middle-class boys" and as a way of sustaining "imperial masculinity" (Ndee 883). Regarding sports activities as a boost for manhood became especially important in the 1930s as the society was undergoing a homosexual panic due to past scandals such as Oscar Wilde's, and the growing medical interest in homosexuality (Adut 213–48). Through educational policies, English public schools became instruments by means of which this idea of manliness was distributed throughout the Empire till the 1940s (Mangan and Walvin 3). Prioritising sports in public schools was not only a result of the stereotypical assumptions that homosexual desire, associated with femininity, was not agreeable with athletic strength but also it was related to the idea that regarded sports as the stimulant of heterosexual interests. Alec Waugh writes about this common assumption in 1922 and claims that schools promised

> the athletic cult as a preventative, in the belief that the boy who is keen on games will not wish to endanger his health, and that the boy who has played football all the afternoon and has boxed between tea and lock-up will be too tired to embark on any further adventures. (qtd. in Holt 189)

Despite this common perception of sports in the public schools, however, the students' participation in sports events is not directly related to their masculinity or sexual activity in the play. There is mention of long hours spent on the cricket field three afternoons a week (30). It is stated openly that Delahay, who is one of the prefects known to be indulging in same-sex relations, is a great sportsman; and Bennett's contribution or lack of participation on the cricket field is significant as his performance is crucial to the team in changing the fate of the game.

Although the students' sexual activities are not presented as a barrier to their involvement in sports activities, their intellectual and literary interests is regarded as important signs of their homosexuality in the play. Interest in literature and intellectual activities were considered as indicators of homosexual inclinations in public schools. A famous literary critic of the early 20th century, Cyril Connolly, who attended preparatory school just before the First World War, exemplifies this tendency with his own experiences: "I was warned to be careful, my literary temperament rendering me especially prone to 'all that kind of poisonous nonsense'" (193). Mangan also refers to the existence of a similar attitude and states that "intellectuals came to be seen as essentially unmanly" and supports it with the words of a literary man from 1872 who calls well-read men "effeminate, enfeebled" (xxiv). This idea of the relationship between literature and homosexuality is presented in the play through Bennett's love of literature as well as through the visit of the literary enthusiast Vaughan Cunningham, who also is Devenish's uncle, pays to the school (55-67).

Cunningham's visit challenges the ideas of masculinity at school in two ways. First of all, Cunningham is referred to by the boys as a "conchie," that is to say, a conscientious objector (12). During the tea party at the library, he talks about how he was "expelled from" his nationalist upper-class family as a result of his pacifist stand and speaks of "the people who sent" him "white feathers" during the war (61-62). As Mangan states, the military ideology that had been created by the powerholders was challenged after the First World War. At the beginning, the war was regarded as a means to fulfil the heroic ideal created in the 19th century through public schools; however, during the war, the soldiers who had been brainwashed with ideas of heroism, nationalism, actually faced the brutal realities of the war in the muddy and bloody trenches (Mangan xxv-xxvi). Set in the aftermath of the First World War, *Another Country* reflects these conflicting ideas towards war and fighting. Although the boys were subjected to an effective military and colonial discourse at school, through figures like Cunningham and Judd, these ideals were challenged.

More importantly, Cunningham challenges the masculine ideals of the public with his sexual inclinations. He is referred to as "pink" at the beginning of the play by the students as an indication of his dissident sexuality (12). Over the afternoon tea prepared

for his visit, Cunningham's conversation with the students is also full of remarks with homosexual undertones. Chatting with students, he refers to a long list of writers such as Paul Verlaine, Tennyson, Lord Byron, Walter Pater, Swinburne and insinuates their homosexual inclinations (58-60). While referring to Swinburne and his work, Cunningham mentions Swinburne's years at public school and says: "[H]e never got over being swished at Eton. Obsessed with it all his life;" evidence of this can be found in some of his letters, "hot stuff" (58). On the surface level, by swishing, Cunningham seems to be referring to the corporal punishment in public schools, and following this remark, the students start to discuss their ideas on and experiences about corporal punishment, which is a significant part of the repression at school (59-60). But, in fact, swishing refers to homosexual relations as the word "swish" also refers to an effeminate homosexual man in slang ("swish"); and through this reference to Eton and Swinburne, the existence of homosexual acts in this school stops being an oddity and is connected to the long tradition of public schools.

The accounts that mention the existence of homosexual activity in public schools are as old as the history of the schools itself, and they can be traced back to the tradition of homosociality in which sexual intimacy between boys of a certain age was allowed and even encouraged as it was believed to contribute to masculine bonds in adulthood (Holt 188). It was believed that the sexual desires of younger boys lacked a fixed target till their maturation was complete at the age of twenty, after which boys were expected to channel their desires towards the opposite sex (Holt 188). Homosexual relations were regarded as the temporary acts of a growing generation; however, from the 1850s onwards, with the development of interest in the studies of sexuality, adolescent sexuality and homosexuality also became topics of investigation and the public school system developed ways of regulating homosexual activities it embodies (Cocks, "Secret, Crimes" 135; Adam, *The Rise* 13-17). This conflicting issue can be best observed in public school fiction. Public school fiction, on the one hand, presented the stereotype of the homosexual schoolboy as an indispensable part of public school life; on the other hand, with its moralising tone, it aimed to guide students to the right path and discourage them from homosexual activities (Mangan and Walvin 3; Holt 70-71). With its detailed public school setting and the representation of homosexual relations,

Another Country can be regarded as a continuation and a subversion of this late Victorian genre. As the play, "exploit[s these] old familiar trappings of the public schools" to reveal their hypocrisy (De Jong, *Not In Front of the Audience* 156).

As it is already discussed, with its rules, regulations and traditions, the public school system, presented in *Another Country*, seems to instil masculine ideals that condemn homosexual activities; however, the events following Martineau's death reveal that this condemnation is quite hypocritical. In these events, Fowler seems to be the main prosecutor of discipline and punishment, the two critical imperatives of repression. In every discussion he is in, he declares "beating and bullying" should be the main precautions of "indulging in immorality," and whenever he has the chance, he does not mind beating the boys (15, 16, 24, 79-81). In the Twenty Two meeting following Martineau's death, he makes it clear that he regards homosexuality as an immoral act which needs to be stopped through radical measures. He holds Barclay, the leader of Twenty Two, and his free rule responsible for the events leading to Martineau's death also implies that the homosexual acts which were clearly exercised by some members of Twenty Two as well, such as Delahey, set a bad example for the juniors (21-24). Fowler is also presented as the person responsible for the events leading to Judd's humiliation and Bennett's disillusionment at the end of the play. It is Fowler's frequent acts of physical violence that make Judd give up his principles and volunteer to become a member of Twenty Two (92). In Bennett's case, again it is Fowler who catches Bennett's note to Harcourt and ruins Bennett's plans for his last years at school (87). Nevertheless, the complicated structure of the play prevents Fowler from being simply the antagonist of the play. He only acts as an operator of the oppressive system as someone who believes in discipline and corporal punishment and implements it frequently.

As Foucault argues, repressive hypothesis relies on a deeper form of control than punishment, which is repression. While punishment only punishes the deed, repression operates as "a sentence to disappear, but also an injunction to silence, an affirmation of non-existence, and by implication, and admission that there was nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, and nothing to know" a great reflection of "the hypocrisy of

our bourgeois societies" (*History of Sexuality* 4). In this sense, Fowler does not represent the hypocrisy of the system; he "believes in the principles underlying the school's code of discipline. He believes in the right and wrong rather than the appearance of right and wrong" (Clum 185). Hence, he also differs from the other prefects of the school. While Fowler wants to bring all homosexual affairs to the attention of the House Man and drive all the participants out of the school, as a way of arriving at a clean start (21), Menzies suggests confession, the old technique to control sexual dissidence, as a way of dealing with the matter in secrecy (25-27). Oddly enough, despite his opposition to the idea, Fowler is persuaded by the others to be the person to conduct the confession. While the other members of Twenty Two, especially Menzies, plan everything, Fowler becomes the person to carry out the plan as the representative of discipline and control (27).

Moreover, as a result of his visible position as the disciplinarian, Fowler is marginalised at school as all "the students are united in scheming to keep" him "from attaining authority" (Clum 185). So, rather than being the oppressor, it can even be argued that Fowler is also among the ones marginalised by the hypocritical system. While Fowler is the punishing tool that gets the blame, the bourgeois system and the student leaders who try to maintain it through their hypocrisy become the cause of the repression in the play. Both in the play and according to the concept of repressive hypothesis, hypocrisy is presented as the leading force behind repression. As it is not easy to prevent an indiscernible act like homosexuality, the best way seems to be to silence it in a hypocritical manner.

The Twenty Two meeting following Martineau's death is one of the key moments in the play where the hypocrisy of the public school system is clearly visible. It is a system that tolerates homosexuality as an adolescent misbehaviour as long as it is kept in the dark. Hearing the story of Martineau's death, Delahey reacts: "Silly bloody fools! What did they want to go and get caught for?" (23). So, it is not the existence of homosexual intimacy that bothers him but the way it is discovered. He argues that the appropriate punishment for Martineau and Robin was to make "them run the gamut with gym shoes, for being so bloody stupid" for "letting themselves caught" (24) In this case, the

punishment does not aim at the homosexual act itself, but what Delahey sees worth punishing is Martineau's being caught at the end. It is strongly argued by the members of the group that the matter should have been dealt with in secrecy both by the boys who participated in the act and by the master who caught them. Hence, the scandal is also regarded as the mistake of Master Nichols, as he "turned the lights on" a matter that was supposed to remain in the dark both literally and metaphorically (22). Hence, with its emphasis on the hypocrisy of the public school system, *Another Country* does not discuss the difficulties in the life of homosexual students as a reflection of their medical or psychological condition but holds the public school system responsible for causing victimisations.

Another Country's criticism for homosexual repression is not only limited to the public school system but it is implied in the play that the hypocrisy in the school is a reflection of the hypocrisy of English society in general. Brayne argues:

> British society is dominated by a small elite of men with public school backgrounds, many of them haunted by memories of their early homosexual experiences. *Another Country* treats public school as a microcosm of [English] society. It is an environment where homosexuality is common - the opposite sex is excluded at precisely the age when puberty is hastening sexual development - and yet which is intensely homophobic, perhaps as a result of this homosexual undercurrent. (288)

Although homosexuality was an evident part of English society, there was a continuous attempt to ignore it, to silence it in a hypocritical manner. Therefore, this hypocritical denial can be interpreted as a reflection of the homophobic attitudes in society general.

Another Country's presentation of the public school as a microcosm of England is also supported with its presentation of the hierarchical structure of the school system (De Jong, *Not in Front of the Audience* 158). Just like the class division in the class-conscious English society, the school system divides the students into ranks according to their seniority, and this hierarchical structure revolves around the student society, Twenty Two. The competitive election process of Twenty Two forms one of the key conflicts of the play as being a member of this group brings many privileges to the students, such as liberal dressing, flexible sleeping hours, organising special tea parties, and most importantly a chance to control the other students at school. Twenty Two

members are given extensive rights in the school management, such as the right to administer corporal punishment. The election system of Twenty Two, with all the plotting and planning, echoes at a national level the political manoeuvres of the country. Mitchell admits that Twenty Two is not the product of his imagination, but it is a combination of the "fury and anger" that he felt during his years at Winchester and his knowledge of Eton College's exclusive student club, Pop, which provided England with 19 prime ministers till 2011, its 200th anniversary (Gore-Langton; Coles). Through such a connection, *Another Country*, once again relates the repression of homosexuality to the hegemonic ideology of British society.

Additionally, *Another Country*'s presentation of the hierarchical school system also shows that the repression in the school does not only affect its homosexual students but it also makes life quite painful for the heterosexuals. Like every hierarchical system, the system of this public school also requires the existence of a low rank along with a high one. The lowest rank is usually held by the youngest students named as fags. Fags are expected to show a strict subordination to their elders and to do their chores (32, 34, 56). The school, in its systematic way, aims at teaching boys the different ends of the command structure. Being the school fag in the play, Wharton is one of the characters who experiences the oppressive environment of the school to its fullest; however, he is not conscious of his subordination. The scene below takes place as Wharton waits at the wash-stand to pour some water for elder boys to wash up before they go to bed. When no one is around, Wharton makes a move to wash himself first, and at this moment, Judd enters:

> JUDD. After you, Wharton.
> (*At once* WHARTON *stops pouring and starts to take water over to* JUDD*'s basin*)
> I said, after you. (WHARTON *stops uncertain.*)
> You really must learn that whatever anyone else does in this horrible place, when *I* say something, I mean it.
> WHARTON. Sorry, Judd.
> JUDD. What for?
> WHARTON. I — I don't know. Sorry. […]
> JUDD. Don't assume that just because you're a fag you must be in the wrong. Resist the tradition! (*He pours water out for* WHARTON) […] [S]chool practice is simply designed to make people like you say 'Sorry' the whole time.
> WHARTON. Yes, Judd.
> JUDD. Yes, because you understand what I'm saying and you agree with it? Or because I'm a fourth year and you're a first?

> WHARTON. [thinks] I would like to get on and wash now, if you don't mind.
> JUDD. Hopeless! (28-29)

The anxiety and the feeling of subordination Wharton experiences are so great that even when Judd encourages him to speak up for his rights and resist the oppression of the system, Wharton is unable to respond to this encouragement and voice his ideas. Wharton becomes a representative of the boys who are numbed by the system and who have internalised oppression and subservience. In a way, he becomes a foil to Martineau whose internalisation of the hypocritical school rules led to his suicide at the very beginning of the play, and he did not ever have the chance to be seen on the stage. However, different from Martineau's example, Warton's internalisation of oppression works both ways. Wharton is not only a passive recipient of repression but a potential source. While he is at the service of the other boys during the day, in his dreams, he is heard giving orders to his dog (54). It is signalled in the play that once he gets the chance, he can quickly become the oppressor.

In addition to the hierarchical public school system and British ruling classes it stands for, *Another Country* also points at the roles of other institutions in the creation of the repression circling homosexuality. Throughout the play, religion is presented as an indispensable part of public school life. It is a system that subtly accompanies the school regulations. The play opens and closes in the chapel with the choir boys singing. Although the 1980s is can be regarded as a time of secularisation because of the support the church provided to the gay law reform (Weeks, *Coming Out* 173-4) and the more inclusive stance it took towards the homosexual subjects in the 1970s and 1980s (Morgan 206), in general, there is an "assumption in the history of homosexuality that religion is a sexually repressive force, that religious liberty and sexual liberation are incommensurable" (Jones 197).

Foucault also stresses the importance of religion in the creation of the discourses about homosexuality in his *History of Sexuality*. However, rather than focusing on the church as a source of repression, Foucault uses the relationship between church and sexuality to defy repressive hypothesis. He argues that instead of silencing sexuality, many church practices in the past, especially confession, helped the transformation of sexuality into a

discourse (*History of Sexuality* 56-58). In *Another Country,* the Catholic practice of confession is used by the prefects as a way of handling the scandal (25-26). However, the way religion is represented, and confession is employed in *Another Country* do not point out to the discursive capacity of confession as Foucault suggests. In the Twenty Two meeting following Martineau's death, Menzies suggests confession as the best plan to save the house's reputation and abate the crisis:

> MENZIES. What about a voluntary knees-down?
> DELAHAY. Don't be barmy.
> MENZIES. Look, at times like this, people go religious and want to confess. Well, I think a God's much better person than the House Man. Apart from anything else, the confessions are silent. All it needs is a few prayers, a lot of pi-haw, some long pauses for thought, and a couple of cheerful hymns at the end. (25-26)

It is clear that Menzies regards confession as an easy way to relieve the tension. Confession is not considered as a gate to the truth or the revelation of the self. It is merely another institutional tool that is used to suppress sexual desires, instead of more liberal methods to deal with the students' feelings and desires.

Another point in the play that presents religion as a source of repression is the way Martineau died. Limited information on his death tells us that Martineau hanged himself with a chapel bell rope. The use of a chapel bell rope as a death-rope is symbolically important in showing how far religion was from bringing relief to Martineau's suffering. Although Martineau was not sentenced to death by religious authorities, like many other "sodomites" in the past, it is still the chapel rope, or, in other words, religion that killed him. By choosing the chapel rope as his suicide weapon, Martineau implements the rules of the church on his own.

In addition to religion, the family as an institution is also criticised in the play as it supports the repressive and hypocritical attitude towards homosexuality. In the play, homosexual acts and the hypocritical attitude towards them are presented as an experience shared by different generations of public school students. While Judd complains about his parents' insistence on keeping him at school, Bennett says: "if our parents knew what actually went on here!" and Judd responds: "They do know. The fathers, anyway" (35). In a way, homosexuality is reflected as a pattern experienced by

both upper-class fathers and their sons. The fathers are aware of the sexual quests at school, and just like the school system, they try to repress their son's homosexual affairs. So, homosexuality and hypocritical attitude towards homosexuality are not presented in the play as uncommon occurrences particular to this public school but as an indispensable and notorious part of public school experience continuing through generations.

The common experiences shared by fathers and their sons do not make fathers more understanding. Just like the former soldiers who had less tolerance towards homosexuals following the war as they reminded them of their own intimacies during the war (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 142; Ferris 156), the fathers of the students also show the utmost reaction to the rumours of homosexuality at school. Following the scandal of Martineau's death, Devenish's father decides to make him leave the school; a similar intention is also expressed by Bennett's mother and her new husband. Yet following the hypocritical tradition of silence, neither family voice their concern openly. Bennett's family uses the excuse of a world tour to broaden his horizon (40), while Devenish's family gives his involvement in the family estate as the reason behind their decision to take him away. In Devenish's case, the hypocritical attitude of the family takes on a further level as the father decides to overlook the scandal after Devenish ensures his place within Twenty Two (92).

The hypocritical attitude of the fathers towards homosexuality is also expressed in the Twenty Two meeting in which the prefects discuss the gravity of the scandal following Martineau's death. While talking about the risk of jeopardising the school's reputation, Sanderson suggests that "[e]veryone knows everything. Everyone who counts. My pater won't have anyone from Harrow in the firm, because of what he has heard" (27). This example both reflects the hypocritical attitude of the fathers who defy their own experiences and also signals the difficulties the openly gay students like Bennett are likely to encounter later in their lives. With this duplicitous stance of the fathers towards homosexuality, the family becomes an important source of repression in the play.

When negative repressing conditions surrounding homosexuality in the play and the role of institutions such as public schools, religion and family in creating the repressed state of the homosexual are compared to the conditions of homosexuals in the Britain of the 1980s, the time the play was written, there seems to be a great contrast. Because when the history of homosexuality in Britain is examined, the period preceding *Another Country*, the 1970s, is considered as the peak of homosexual liberation (Grey 219). Many sources focus on the energy resulting from the legal acceptance of homosexuality in 1967 and the endeavours of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) to move the gay community towards an awareness (Sullivan 29-31). However, despite these forward movements, in the period following the law reform related to homosexuality, there were many setbacks for the homosexuals in terms of liberties and recognition which would make the bleak atmosphere presented in the play a much more familiar experience for the homosexual readers/audiences of *Another Country*.

The Sexual Offences Act of 1967, which was the only legal improvement that enhanced the conditions of the homosexual community till the 1980s, had its many shortcomings. First of all, this law reform decriminalised homosexual acts between two adult men in private; however, this only applied to England and Wales. Secondly, the definition of "private" in the act was problematic as "a locked hotel room" could be regarded as a public area. Moreover, the age of consent for homosexuals, which was specified in the law as twenty-one, was still higher than the heterosexual age of consent of sixteen (Jivani 153; Cook, "From Gay Reform" 185). All things considered, the reform left gay men disappointed rather than feeling victorious (Jivani 153). After the bill was passed, the final statement of Lord Arran, a representative of the homosexuals in the Parliament, also depicts the negative conditions awaiting homosexual men (Robinson 41):

> Lest the opponents of the Bill think that a new freedom, a new privileged class, has been created, let me remind them that no amount of legislation will prevent homosexuals from being the subject of dislike and derision, or at best of pity. We shall always, I fear, resent the odd man out. That is their burden for all time, and they must shoulder it like men—for men they are. (Hansard, 21 July 1967 vol. 285 col. 522-6)

At one of the most important moments in the history of homosexuality, Lord Arran underlines "being the subject of dislike and derision, or at best of pity" as an indispensable part of the homosexual experience. In this sense, the reform was not a

turning point that left the past in the past, but the homosexual "burden" was one "for all time" that carried past traumas into the future.

It is a fact that the GLF demanded to challenge these traumatic experiences and the established discourse on homosexuality, which focused on the pitiful aspects of homosexual experience, such as loneliness, misery and depression. It attacked the politics of low-key organisations such as the Homosexual Law Reform Society which wanted to gain the sympathy of the mainstream culture by focusing on the sad and lamentable side of being a homosexual "as an isolated individual who needed protection" (Robinson 42). The front was determined to convey its message both to the heterosexual society and to the homosexual community by organising protests, attending public events dressed in drag, instilling the feeling of being "proud" and "unapologetic" in its group meetings (Godiwala 2; Jivani 157, 164). Hence, the newly-established homosexual community attempted to concentrate "on the lighter side of life;" with their events and publications they wanted to redesign homosexual experience as being "fun" (Jivani 154). However, despite this air of change, the feelings that shaped the lives of the greater part of the homosexual community were still very much influenced by the pessimistic discourses of the earlier decades.

The GLF meetings were revelatory for many of its members; their provocative protests caught considerable public attention, but the GLF's impact was still very limited when the homosexual community in the UK was considered. As Cook argues, "[d]espite the open-door policy operated by the GLF, many felt unable to embrace its radical and visible politics," and for the communities away from London, this spirit of freedom was still less effective ("From Gay Reform" 186-7; Weeks, *Coming Out* 190-5; Jagose 72). For a gay person who did not have a direct connection with the newly-emerging gay community and tried to come to terms with his homosexuality through literary, theatrical and cinematic productions which were full of broken hearts, suicides, abandonments were still familiar experiences (Spiby 33; Dorney 37, 40). Therefore, *Another County*'s presentation of homosexuality as an ordeal did not only belong to a distant past but also reflected the sensibilities of gay people at the time.

The feeling of homophobia was still strong in the society. As a report conducted by the Campaign for Homosexual Equality between 1977 and 1980 stated, there were "dozens of violent homophobic attacks across the country, from Belfast to Winsor;" another survey conducted in 1984 revealed that twenty-five percent of gay teenagers living in London have "experienced homophobic verbal abuse at school, whilst sixteen percent [have] been beaten up" because of their sexuality (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 193-192). One of the reasons for this hostile environment was that, although gay activism was considerably striking in the 1970s, as mentioned in the Introduction, there were not many social improvements for the gay people in terms of legal rights. As Jivani states:

> GLF taught gay men and lesbians not to be fearful and to ask for what they wanted. It seems that what they wanted was hedonism. What characterised gay culture throughout the rest of the Seventies was the pursuit of pleasure. The number of gay clubs, pubs and restaurants grew with such speed that it was difficult to keep pace. Gay men no longer wanted to demonstrate — they wanted to dance. (172)

This hedonism might be regarded as one of the reasons why "[u]ntil the mid-1980s there was no agenda in government, education or business for protecting championing or — at school — nurturing gay men or teenagers" (Cook, *"*From Gay Reform*"* 193). Therefore, there were very little practical changes that improved the conditions for homosexuals at the time the play was written. In this sense the criticism the play directs at the institutions for the repressed state of the homosexuals in *Another Country* can be valid for the 1980s and the presentation of the homosexual in distress can be interpreted as a reflection of the fresh memories of the closeted times or the latent homophobia that still existed in society.

In addition to all these, at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s there was an attempt in the homosexual community to use the repression of homosexuality to develop social and political consciousness. This attempt especially showed itself in the form of historical works that were devoted to telling the untold stories, the silenced hardships of earlier decades "to reclaim history" (Brayne 277). John M. Clum calls this tendency a "historical impulse" which aspires to use "the collective past of gay men" as a setting "to affirm a sense of identity and solidarity and to educate the dominant culture about the brutality of its homophobia" (169). "Major plays" such as John Osborne's *A Patriot for Me* (1965), Noel Greig and Drew Griffith's *As Time Goes By* (1977), Martin

Sherman's *Bent* (1979) still looked back to the past either to "recover" from it or to "reconstruct history from a new perspective — to consider the damage done, the deconstruction caused by the persecutions meted out to homosexuals" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 5). Similar to *Another Country*, the past is used in these plays as a common reference point to make a meaning of the present (Clum 170-71).

In this sense, *Another Country*'s connection with the present state of homosexuality in the 1980s' Britain can be interpreted from two perspectives. On the one hand, as it is stated above, Another *Country* touches upon the darker realities of the time through the themes of homosexual repression, homophobia, and suicide and uses the past to comment on the present; on the other hand, it includes the liberationist ideas of the 1970s and the 1980s hidden in the insubmissive attitudes of its characters. In many places in the play, the lines of Bennett, Judd and Cunningham are used to reflect the modern outlook towards homosexuality that celebrates individual rights and freedoms.

The first example of this modern approach hidden in *Another Country* comes out with the visit of the pacifist, gay intellectual Cunningham. As it is mentioned above, in the talk he gives to the students, Cunningham mentions a wide range of writers and intellectuals from the Victorian and Edwardian periods and most of them have been associated with same-sex activities in their personal lives and through references to such activities in their works for the last fifty years. Cunningham's remarks on these writers and his mentioning these names, however, prove to be anachronistic. During their lifetimes and in the following decades the sexual desires of these intellectuals were not reflected in the critical works on them. Most of the literary criticism that concentrated on the homosexual references in their works and their lives were written in the period following the Gay Liberation Movement, as a result of the academic curiosity towards homosexual writing (Winyard). Cunningham's reference to the homosexuality of these writers and intellectuals was for the readers/audiences of the 1980s, who were familiar with their decadent lifestyles, a result of the recent literary studies.

While Cunningham presents the outlook of the post-liberation period by relating Edwardian and Victorian literary figures with homosexual desires, Judd directly

becomes a spokesperson of liberationist politics. The dialogue between him and Wharton in Act I scene iii is a direct example of this. Wharton tells Judd how in his very early days he could not cope with the life at school and wanted to die. Judd listens to him, and tucks him in as he tells him never to surrender to the system:

> JUDD. (*letting him cry, patting his back*) We all want to die sometimes. It's because other people have power over us which they have no right to. Power to make us miserable. To stop us being ourselves. Into bed now. (WHARTON *gets into bed*.) What *you* have to do, when they make you feel like that, is to say yourself —they've no right, no right at all. I'm *me*. I *won't* be what they want me to be. And keep on saying it till you're really angry.
> WHARTON. Yes, Jud.
> JUDD. They can beat our bottoms till they're purple and blue. But if we keep our anger up, they'll never get *us*. They'll never get our souls. They'll never succeed in making us really want to die. (38-39)

Judd's speech bears much similarity to the pride speeches delivered by the gay liberationists of the 1970s, or to the modern analysis on the sources of oppression which argues that sources of oppression are alike in the way they "prohibit or make it exclusively difficult for persons to exercise the sorts of functions that are constitutive of personhood" (Barkty 1).

Bennett's views on homosexuality is also far beyond the views prevalent in the early 1930s. While other boys in school are ashamed of their homosexual activities, Bennett is the only openly gay boy at school. He is proud of his feelings for Harcourt and categorises them as love (70). As Clum argues, "[g]ay history dramas typically posit love, not sex, as the forbidden, dangerous impulse" (186). In this way, Bennett's emphasis on love brings *Another Country* closer to the 1980s, distinguishing it from historical plays which focus on homosexual sex rather than love. In addition to that, the use of the word "love" also carries Bennett's sexuality on to a different stage than the homosexual activities carried out by the rest of the boys. Making love to a boy turns into *being* in love with a boy. An activity turns into an identity; different from the other boys at school Bennett's homosexuality goes beyond a mere sexual imperative and becomes a part of who he is. The extract below is taken from a scene where Bennett confesses his feelings for Harcourt to Menzies, but Menzies avoids any comment on that confession. As the dialogue proceeds, it becomes apparent that the two also had a past which Menzies chooses to keep silent about:

MENZIES. I said, I don't believe in talking about it. (Pause.) Besides, I think we're a bit old for that sort of thing now. We're supposed to be grown up.
BENNETT. Supposed by whom?
MENZIES. It is only a passing phase. All the books say so.
BENNETT. You have been reading! Worried, were you?
MENZIES. Weren't we all? (BENNETT just looks at him.) As a matter of fact I met a girl last hols.
[…]
BENNETT. May I have the binos back now, please?
MENZIES. (handing them back) Just try to be sensible.
BENNETT. Thanks. (looking out) I think perhaps I'll be a spy when I 'grow up'.
MENZIES. You couldn't keep a secret for two minutes.
BENNETT. You'd be surprised. (Pause.) You can't beat a good public school for learning to conceal your true feelings. (71)

This dialogue further increases the degree of separation between Bennett and Menzies, or between Bennett and the system Menzies stands for. Menzies responds to Bennett's declaration of love with a refusal to speak on the matter. Homosexual love, which is something to be celebrated for Bennett, is something to be suppressed, silenced and left behind for Menzies. As a reflection of the conviction that real sexuality starts with adulthood, Menzies believes that one's sexual orientation changes as one grows up. This talk, in which Bennett defines his feelings as love, also signals the change in his attitude towards the school, the country and his own future. With the realisation of the depth of his feelings for Harcourt and the way his feelings are belittled by his best friend as a "passing phase," Bennett gives the first sign of the transformation in his future plans from being a diplomat to being a spy. Although this idea of being a spy is uttered by Bennett as a passing remark in this scene, with the crisis he faces further in the play, it develops into a more permanent decision.

The conversation between Bennett and Judd at the end of the play can also be interpreted as a part of the discourse of the 1980s. Bennett once again confesses his love for Harcourt, this time to Judd, in a more decisive manner:

BENNETT. […] I *love* him!
JUDD. Guy —
BENNETT. (*sitting up*) You still don't believe me, do you?
JUDD. I think you may *think* you're in love with him.
BENNETT. Look — I'm not going to pretend any more. I am sick of pretending. I'm — (*He can't find a suitable word.*)— I am never going to love women.
[…]
BENNETT. It does not come as any great revelation. It's more like admitting to

> yourself — what you've always known. Owning up to yourself. It's a great relief. In some ways. (*Pause.*) All this acting up — making a joke of it even to myself — it was only a way of trying to pretend it wasn't true. But it is.
> JUDD. Of course it's not.
> BENNETT. Tommy, when you come down to it, it's a simple as knowing whether you like spinach. (88-89)

Bennett seems to be ahead of his time and unburdened by all the perceptions of homosexuality throughout the 20th century that regard it as a sin, as an illness, as a passing phase, as a choice; with a very modern perspective, he views homosexuality as a way of being, a mere desire of humanity. As De Jong also argues, Bennett's consciousness belongs to the 20th century more than the 1930s. Having, realised that he is homosexual, he does not suffer a crisis of conscience or become consumed with guilt;" he possesses "the confidence of a modern gay man" (*Not in Front of the Audience* 288).

Bennett's modern perspective also reflects itself in his defiance of the traditional values concerning the sanctity of family. According to Foucault, it was the bourgeois Victorian family and its "conjugal" values that were responsible for confining sexuality to behind the closed doors of the bedrooms. It was the legitimised couple which was responsible for the "norm"alisation of reproductive forms of sexuality and made the parents' bedroom a "safeguarded," silent and secretive locus of sexuality (*History of Sexuality* 3). In *Another Country*, the parents' bedroom becomes the target of Bennett's jokes and this secretive territory is ridiculed by him as he makes up a story in which he narrates the death of his father during intercourse with his mother (13-15). So, Bennett's resistance to the heterosexual culture and its impositions is carried to a new level with this attack on the sacred sanctuary of Victorian society, the bedroom. The only respectable form of sexuality according to the bourgeois ideals is married sex, and it is ridiculed in the play through Bennett's story.

However, along with this modern confidence, Bennett is also aware of the difficulties that he is likely to face in the future as a result of his dissident stance. He realises that, in a homophobic society, being a homosexual "is also a life sentence" (90). He thinks a similar realisation might also be the reason behind Martineau's death:

> BENNETT. […] Poor Martineau! He was just the sort of pathetic dope who'd have got caught the whole time. Spent his life in prison, being sent down every few months by magistrates called Barclay and Delahay.
> […]
> Think of that for a life time. (*Pause.*) Think of the names. Pansy. Nancy. Fairy. Fruit. (*Pause.*) Brown nose. (90-91)

Foreseeing what the future holds for him and realising he is no longer on the same side with Barclay and Delahay and their likes, working for the system, Bennett makes a choice for the future and instead of being defeated by the system like Martineau was, he decides to fight the system and "fool it" with the cover of "a secret agent" (92, 94). Bennett's decision to become a secret agent is used in the play as a foreshadowing rather than as a boy's speculation about his future, as it gives the audience a clue that Guy Bennett's character is loosely based on the public school years of a famous English spy, Guy Francis de Burgess whose homosexuality was also associated with his betrayal of his country (Burton 31). This connection, on the one hand, "imparted a stinging contemporaneity to the play" as "Anthony Blunt, Keeper of the Queen's pictures, had recently been exposed as a Soviet agent of the 1930s" and his homosexuality and betrayal were still issues discussed in the media (De Jong, *Not in Front of the Audience* 157). On the other hand, Bennett's realisation of the hypocrisy of the system, his being stigmatised, betrayed and cast out in the end, are emphasised in the play as formative experiences leading to his potential betrayal of his country in the future. Mitchell also supports this interpretation with the following words:

> I wrote it . . . immediately after Mrs Thatcher's denunciation of Anthony Blunt, who was in hiding with some friends of mine . . . Blunt was an absolute lizard, but I thought all the journals missed something. I thought that the roots of this betrayal might be found in the public-school life. (Gore- Langton)

Be it Bennett, Blunt or Guy Francis de Burgess, treason can be studied as a form of aggression towards the oppression of the society. All the characters in the play are, in fact, the products of the same hypocritical system. However, by creating such a likeable character in Bennett, it is signalled in the play that sometimes "the homosexual traitor has more integrity than the supposedly principled men" of the system "around him" (Clum 181). As Brayne also argues, *Another Country* makes "it is easy to understand why revolutionary solutions attracted people who had been made into outsiders in their own land" and in this play, the reason is given as the sexual oppression (289).

Evidently, *Another Country* can be regarded as a journey which ends in an awakening. On this journey, Bennett, like a *Bildungsroman* character who undergoes a process of maturation, takes a big step towards adulthood. The two parts of the poem "The Two Fatherlands" by Sir Cecil Spring-Rice that opens and closes the play epitomises this change Bennett goes through. Spring-Rice is a British diplomat who served Britain during the First World War and wrote the poem during that time as an expression of his feelings for the sacrifices made during the war (Doughty). Commonly known as "I vow to thee, my country," the hymn is composed of two parts; however, it is the first part that is frequently sung, cited and remembered (Sheppard 89). The hymn juxtaposes the ideas of militarism, nationalism and religion. While the first part depicts the sacrificial and unconditional love felt for one's country, a perfect love which justifies even the final sacrifice, the second part promises another country for this sacrifice which is a reference to heaven.

However, when the hymn is analysed in line with the theme of homosexual love in *Another Country*, all the promises of the hymn seem ironic. In the play, Martineau dies with a chapel bell rope, so his death is also associated with love and religion; however, the way death comes with love and the role religion plays in it are presented in a very different way than the sacrificial love and death described in the hymn. In a way, Martineau also sacrifices himself for love, but his death is not celebrated as a heroic action. Through the hymn at the beginning and the end of the play, *Another Country* displays that while love for one's country is regarded as quite "heroic," same-sex love is viewed as "undignified," a betrayal of the principles preached by national and religious discourses. Thus, in Martineau's or Bennett's case, homosexual love is equated with spies rather than heroes.

Moreover, a political reading of the hymn and the play together is also similarly ironic. "I vow to thee, my country," with its notions of sacrifice, war and unconditional love for one's country, is mostly equated with conservative ideologies. It was even known as one of the favourite hymns of Margaret Thatcher and sung at her funeral in April 2013 (Deacon). The hymn places "the two fatherlands," one's country and heaven, side by

side and promises that the sacrifice made in one is balanced with reward in the other. Mitchell, however, adds another alternative to this promise that disrupts the balance ensured by the hymn. The other country he proposes, with the emphasis on the socialist ideas in the play and with the union of Bennett and Judd, is not a place of sacrifice but one of freedom and equality. In this way, in *Another Country*, the hymn opening and closing the play becomes the signpost of the journey Bennett takes. As in the hymn Bennett's journey starts with a devotion to one's country and ends with a yearning for another country; however, in his case, the other country at the end is different than what the hymn signifies.

With all its political undertones *Another Country* can be interpreted as a reflection of the change in the second half of the 20th century regarding the relationship between the left and homosexuality. Around the 1950s, there was a long tradition in the left that understood homosexuality "as bourgeois, consumerist and feminised, as an anathema to the presumed heterosexual masculinity of the working class" (Robinson 1). At the beginning of the play, Judd passionately equates Bennett's keenness on same-sex activities with Devenish's imperial ideas and calls them both "incurably bourgeois and decadent" (7). However, with the realisation that comes with Martineau's death, and facing the hypocrisy of the prefects in dealing with homosexuality, Judd moves away from the idea that links homosexuality with the decadence of the bourgeois and regards the homosexual as another victim of oppression. Such a realisation also took place in the leftist politics through the second part of the 20th century. In the 1950s, the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) "condemned 'homosexuality as a bourgeois vice'. In the 1970s, it made public proclamations of support for gay liberation" (Robinson 24). In a wave of change, the Labour Party also moved "away from class and production" politics and focused more on personal liberation, and this shift played a significant role in the introduction of homosexual law reforms (Robinson 36).

Similarly, the homosexual community also moved towards the left from the 1960s onwards. Under the influence of the liberation movements around the world, the Gay Liberation Movement also became increasingly politicised around the early 1970s. The Gay Liberation Front openly supported leftist groups in their protests. In 1971, the front

joined strikes and marches against the Industrial Relations Bill to support the trade unions (Robinson 82-83). Moreover, in 1972, they joined the Troops Out Movement to show their support for Northern Ireland's liberation with posters declaring "'Gay Solidarity with Irish Liberation struggle' and chanted 'Police out of gay bars – troops out of Ireland'" (Robinson 81).

This transformation in the history of the gay movement can be traced in *Another Country* with Bennett's transformation. While he ridicules Judd's political stand at the beginning of the play (8), Bennett's personal victimisation leads him to criticise the bourgeois order as a whole. The way the play ends becomes a perfect example of the hopeful appeal to a liberated future that governed the politics of sexuality till the late 1970s and the early 1980s. As Robinson argues, "[l]iberational politics" of the Gay Liberation Movement

> developed a common three-point approach. Come Out, Come Together, Change the World. The first of three stages gave an individual's subjectivity a political identity, the second took this into a collective form, and the third recognised the significance of this for the outside world. This third and ultimate object of gay liberation was meant to place lesbian and gay activists alongside other oppressed groups in order to liberate all of society. (2)

In that sense, the solidarity between Bennett and Judd and their collective attempt to avert the suppression in the play can be read as the reflection of the reconciliation between the left and the homosexual community in the 1970s and onwards.

The way Judd and Bennett unite also exemplifies the connection Foucault builds between homosexuality and leftist politics while explaining repressive hypothesis. According to the repressive hypothesis, the suffering, oppression and punishment imposed on sexualities were so fundamental that freedom would not come easily from "a medical practice, nor from a theoretical discourse, however rigorously pursued" (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 6). A quiet liberation could not be expected; a liberation was not possible "except at a considerable cost: nothing less than a transgression of laws, a lifting of prohibitions, an eruption of speech, a reinstating of pleasure within reality, and a whole new economy in the mechanisms of power will be required. For the least glimmer of truth is conditioned by politics" (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 6). As

Foucault supposes, sexual liberation could only be achieved through political revolution. *Another Country* ends with a yearning for another country in which political and sexual freedom can be achieved together. This ending is a reflection of both liberationist politics and their reliance on the repressive hypothesis.

As a conclusion, it can be argued that with its presentation of the ideas of repression and liberation together in a sophisticated manner, *Another Country* represents a turning point in the presentation of homosexuality in both British society and drama. First of all, the play marks the transition of gay plays from the fringe to the West End. With its intelligent storyline that distinguishes *Another Country* from "one-dimensional stereotyp[ical]" plays of the 1970s, it shows how quickly the gay drama moved towards established plays (Brayne 286). Moreover, with presentation of repression of homosexuality, it builds a bridge between the newly-emerging gay drama/theatre and the mainstream commercial drama/theatre. On the one hand, with its emphasis on the suffering of the homosexual, it manages to recreate a tone familiar to the mainstream readers/audiences; on the other hand, with its liberationist consciousness, it presents this suffering as a making of the repressive socio-cultural conditions and turns it into a social and political commentary and reflects the liberationist discourse of the post-liberationist gay drama.

Furthermore, *Another Country* also represents the transition in the perception of homosexuality from a repressed state to a liberated one in British society in the 1970s and the early1980s. As it is discussed in the Introduction, in this period, the society and the homosexual community were still trying to adapt to the newly-achieved rights of homosexuals; and the newly-created discourses on homosexual liberation existed side by side with the homophobic discourses and the darker experiences of homosexuals. Therefore, it can be argued that with its focus on repression and liberation together, *Another Country* reflects these conflicting discourses in society and becomes a representative of the transition both in society and in gay drama in Britain in the early 1980s.

CHAPTER 2

BEING GAY AND MOVING INTO THE MAINSTREAM: JONATHAN HARVEY'S *BEAUTIFUL THING*

The late 1980s and the early 1990s were times of conflict for the British gay scene. On the one hand, gay identity politics reached its zenith as it found its unified character, its name, its community and visibility. On the other hand, as a result of the reinforced prejudices in the society in the second half of the 1980s with the AIDS crisis and with Clause 28, the government act which banned the promotion of homosexuality, the gay community had to assert its position more strongly in the process of stepping from the margins into the mainstream (Clews, "Introduction"). Despite this steep road, at the beginning of the 1990s, the claim to identity seemed to be a battle won by the gay community as the "gay liberation movements evolved into" a "culturally concretised and elaborate" social movement (Jagose 58). Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* written in 1993 corresponds to this period in British society when being gay was no longer regarded as a part of a radical, political project that threatened to erase the boundaries of sexual identity categories established by the heterosexual system in a revolutionary way. On the contrary, gay identity itself was established as a confident sexual identity category which demanded a place for itself within the mainstream society. The aim of this chapter is to argue that Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* represents a new affirmative vision of gayness as a stable identity by presenting the process of gay identity formation both at the individual level through its characters' unproblematic self-discovery and coming out processes and at a communal level through the cultural symbols of gay community presented in the play, *Beautiful Thing*.

Jonathan Harvey is a gay playwright who was born in 1968 to a working-class background in Liverpool, England. He studied Education and Psychology at the University of Hull and worked as a teacher at a comprehensive school in Thamesmead, London which would later become the setting of his best-known play *Beautiful Thing*

(1993) ("Jonathan Harvey (playwright)"). In 1987, he wrote his first play *The Cherry Blossom Tree* at the age of nineteen and won the 1987 National Girobank Young Writer of the Year Award (Courtney). The next few years were quite prolific for Harvey; he wrote *Mohair* in 1988, *Catch* in 1988, *Tripping and Falling* in 1990, *Lady Snog the Blues* in 1991 and *Wildfire* in 1992 ("Jonathan Harvey: A Chronology"). By this time, Harvey was still a very young and little-known writer; nonetheless, the biggest success of his career came in 1993 with *Beautiful Thing* ("Landmark Gay Plays"). *Beautiful Thing* is Harvey's first play with a gay theme, and it won him the John Whiting Award (Harvey x; Jones).

The same year, Harvey was offered a residency at the National Theatre; this gave him the courage to quit his job as a teacher (Harvey xii). However, his experiences as a teacher helped him to write *Babies* (1993), the semi-autobiographical play on a young gay teacher; and the play brought Harvey the George Devine Award and the *Evening Standard* Promising New Playwright Award (Courtney). In 1995, Harvey wrote *Boom Bang-A-Bang* (1995), a comedy about a group of friends who gather to watch the Eurovision Song Contest ("Jonathan Harvey: A Chronology;" Jones). In 1995, he diverged from his light-hearted comedies for the first time with *Rupert Street Lonely Hearts Club* which is a melodrama on the strained relationship between a gay and a straight brother and won Harvey the *Manchester Evening News* Award, Best Play (Harvey xiii; Roberts 182). Harvey continued his productive career with *Swan Song* in 1997 and *Guiding Star in* 1998 (Jones). In 1999, Harvey wrote *Hushabye Mountain*, a play on AIDS which is compared to Tom Kushner's *Angels in America* in its positioning of AIDS as an experience between two worlds as the spirit of the main character struggles to pass on before resolving his relationships on earth (Roberts 182-3). With another heart-warming comedy about family, *Out in the Open* (2001), Harvey went back to his original style and managed to create humour out of the story of an ordinary gay man struggling to overcome the feeling of loneliness with the possibility of a new start after the death of his lover (Sierz, *Rewriting the Nation* 180; Clark, "Gay Play"). In 2001, Harvey wrote *Closer to Heaven*, a musical which challenged the conventional idea of musicals with its controversial approach to sexuality. Between

2004 and 2012, he wrote three more plays: *Taking Charlie* (2004), *Canary* (2010), *Panto!* (2012) (Watson; Hickling, "Jonathan Harvey").

In 1996, Channel 4 Films asked Harvey to write the screenplay for *Beautiful Thing* (Watts). The film brought Harvey worldwide success along with the Best Film Award at the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, and it was also selected by the British Film Institute as one of the thirty best LGBT movies of all time ("Jonathan Harvey: A Chronology;" Tensley). After this success at the cinema, Harvey started to get offers for TV. He wrote the sitcom *Gimme, Gimme, Gimme* for BBC which continued for three series from 1999 to 2001 (Watts). In 2004, he joined the team of ITV's long-running soap opera *Coronation Street* and introduced the series' first gay character. Harvey regards *Coronation Street* as "a brilliant opportunity to reach a massive audience," and although he reluctantly accepted the project only as a means of bringing sexual diversity to a mainstream show, he still continues writing for it (Watts). The other works Harvey wrote for TV includes *The Catherine Tate Show* (2006), *Lilies* (2007), *Beautiful People* (2008-2009), *Panto* (2012) and *Tracey Ullman's Show* (2016-2017) ("Jonathan Harvey").

As Laurence Watts states, in all his works, for theatre or TV, Jonathan Harvey is known for his "talent in writing extraordinary stories about ordinary people" based on his experiences as a gay man from a housing estate in Liverpool. ("Interview: Jonathan Harvey"). Harvey's main motivation behind writing *Beautiful Thing* was also related to his tendency to reflect his own background in his works. Harvey presented his own understanding of being a gay teenager from a working-class family to the play. While he was growing up, he was subjected to quite dark and stereotypical narratives on the experiences of gay men, and he thought those representations "got nothing to do with [his own] experience of being gay," and he wanted "to tell a story that shows what being gay and working-class is really about" ("Landmark Gay Plays"). This made *Beautiful Thing* the seminal play it is, as it provided British drama with a new perception of gayness which was missing from the gay writing of the time.

Beautiful Thing is the story of two teenage boys, Jamie and Ste, falling in love on the Thamesmead housing estate, a working-class area in South East London. Jamie is a self-conscious boy who is bullied at school and lives with his single mother Sandra and her ever-changing lovers. Ste, on the other hand, is an attractive and sportive teenager; he lives next door to Jamie with his abusive brother and father. One night, Ste is beaten badly by his brother as it often happens; and Sandra lets him sleep at their house with Jamie. In the following weeks, Ste is constantly beaten up by his father or brother and takes refuge in Jamie's room. These nights when Jamie and Ste have to share their bed bring the two boys together and inflame the love between them. This simple love story is enriched with other characters such as Leah, a black girl with a Mama Cass fixation, and also neighbour to Ste and Jamie, and Sandra's current lover, Tony, who becomes a witness to this developing love story. The play ends in a happy tone; the two boys come out and perform a slow dance in front of the whole neighbourhood as they are joined by Sandra and Leah (88-90).

The representation of gay identity in *Beautiful Thing* will be analysed through theories on identity politics, especially the ethnic model of identity. From the late 1970s onwards, leaving the revolutionary vision of an overall sexual liberation behind, the priority of gay and lesbian activists became "community building and winning civil rights" (Seidman, "Identity and Politics" 120; Jagose 58; Heyes). In his book *Homosexualization of America*, Dennis Altman defines this transition in gay politics with the phrase "gay ethnicity" and explains this new phase of identity formation in the gay movement with the ethnic identity model which was initially theorised to explain ethnic formations during the civil rights movements in the US (qtd. in Epstein 254-5). Following Altman's footsteps many theorists used ethnicity "as an analogy for comprehending gay and lesbian group identity" (Epstein 256-7; Jagose 61; Seidman, "Identity and Politics" 117).

The theory of the ethnic model of gay identity depends on regarding the gay community as an ethnic minority, "as a distinct, identifiable population," which defines itself in terms of same-sex object choice (Jagose 548, 61). In the ethnic identification, ethnic ties are usually established through "primary socialization" that happens in the family with

birth; in the theory of gay ethnicity, the identification is established through the "secondary socialisation" with coming out and entrance into the gay community (Epstein 274). Like the "archetypal" ethnic identities it is modelled on, the ethnic identity theory suggests that "gay ethnicity is" also "a 'future-oriented' identity linking an affective bond with an instrumental goal of influencing state policy and securing social rewards on behalf of the group" (Epstein 279). Although the target is the future, the original ethnic groups take their strength from the past; and the values such as "ethnic cuisine, ethnic costume" are preserved and celebrated as important elements of cultural heritage that unite the community. The ethnic identity model suggests that the gay community also turns to the past to claim history upon which it can build the present and the future; and similar to the cultural values of other ethnic groups, it develops cultural codes and symbols that can unify its members and provide them with a sense of belonging (Epstein 280). This theory both works as a metaphor to understand the development of the gay identity after the second half of the 1970s, and also reflects the historical development of the gay movement, because in practice, the gay community's claims to equal rights and recognition were also modelled on the successful campaigns of other minority groups in the society like blacks or Jews, who already had their minority statues recognised (Jagose 61; Epstein 243).

As it is discussed in the Introduction, the change from liberationist politics towards a community-oriented identity politics started in the theoretical and political sphere in the late 1970s and had its effects on the British society in the second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s. The change that affected the self-perception of the gay community and increased its visibility in the mainstream society began in the mid-1980s with the investments of certain local councils in creating a homosexual community with better living conditions and higher self-esteem. The Greater London Council under Ken Livingstone started a campaign to support "gay and lesbian initiatives" and allocated special budgets for "equal opportunities policies" (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 193). During this time, the London Lesbian and Gay centre opened, and the London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard started to offer "housing service" for homosexual community "which helped gay men and lesbians find safe accommodation" (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 193). In 1986, the Labour-controlled borough of Haringey set up the Haringey

Lesbian and Gay unit; it sent letters to the head teachers asking them to provide positive images of lesbians and gays in their classrooms. Similarly, the Nottingham council set up support groups for "elderly lesbians and gay men" (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 193; Buckle 101-102). These local groups provided gays and lesbians with means to improve their life quality so that they could grow out of their resentful state, reconcile with their sexuality and embrace it as an identity; gay and lesbian support groups also started the process of "community-building, offering gays and lesbians a culture to call home" (Spargo 30).

The gay community affected by these undertakings developed a more distinct group consciousness and expressed itself more with characteristics exclusive to the group (Herek 12; Spargo 29). As Epstein argues, it "succeeded in creating new institutional supports that link individuals" with "the community and provide their lives with a sense of meaning" to such an extent that gays became "more 'ethnic' than the original ethnic groups" (281). In 1993, when *Beautiful Thing* was written, being gay in British society meant being a member of a notable community. Hence, as a product of its times, *Beautiful Thing* can be interpreted as a representative of the newly-established gay identity in British society.

In the 1990s, the process started by the local councils resulted in the creation of a visible gay community which, as Jivani argues, was "probably Britain's most powerful and vocal minority group" with its own "political societies, trade union groups," newspapers clubs, discos and "phone in organisations which" would "help members finding anything from a gay pub to a gay plumber" (180). Also, on a national scale, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality helped "the promotion of 'positive' images of gayness" with its "criticism of negative, homophobic images in the media, including the popular camp stereotypes of sitcoms" (Spargo 30). In "the arts and the media," gay people started to "appear . . . in a way which they had never been portrayed before" with strong, athletic and charismatic representations (Jivani 180-1). As it is also stated in the Introduction, in the music sector, eminent musicians such as David Bowie, Mick Jagger, Marc Bolan, Freddie Mercury and Elton John became the representatives of the new perception of gay (and sometimes, bisexual) identity with their alternative but colourful

lives (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 190-1). Such figures not only reflected the change in the presentation of gay men but also contributed to the creation of a positive gay image in the society.

The existence of such gay role models showed that being both gay and cool was possible, and this helped ordinary gay men to develop a positive sense of self. Jeffrey Escoffier pursues the analogy of ethnicity and regards the creation of positive self-perception as an indispensable part of identity politics; he argues that the development of a social identity

> relies on the development of a culture that is able to create new and affirmative conceptions of the self, to articulate collective identities, and to forge a sense of group loyalty. Identity politics - very much like nationalism - requires the development of rigid definitions of the boundaries between those who have particular collective identities and those who do not. (qtd. in Mandle)

Like other theoreticians who analyse gay identity development through the analogy of ethnicity, Escofier also states that identity politics worked "like nationalism." However, in terms of the development of gay identity in Britain, there was nothing nationalistic about it. The boundaries of gay identity were drawn by the "new ideas of masculine beauty, personified by the 1980s'" American "clone culture" (Buckle 154, 169).

One reason behind the Americanisation of the gay scene was that the US was the starting place of the Gay Liberation Movement, and the ideas of liberation spread around the world from there (Jagose 30-33). Secondly, the US, with its federal system, helped the creation of autonomous and liberated areas in the early stage of the universal gay liberation:

> If anyone in 1982 were to walk thirty or so blocks south and a couple of blocks west from *The New Yorker*'s offices on Manhattan's West 43rd Street, they would have encountered the commercial gay scene of Greenwich Village, the 'West Village', centring on Christopher Street, with its bars, saunas (or 'bathouses'), sex-shops, pornographic cinemas, S&M clubs, gay bookstores, gay restaurants, and a sexual ambience so cruisy that the street itself was a place of close encounters of intimate kind, a place where you could depend on the kindness of the strangers. (Stevens 88)

This gay-friendly ambiance turned into a vision to be achieved in the homosexual communities as a result of the rapid globalisation of the world with developments in

communication and transportation. Apart from TV audiences and travellers, the gay reading public of Britain was also under the influence of the American scene. Till the 1980s, most literature with a homosexual subject matter was imported from the US since British gay publications were very limited as a result of censorship (Clews 81).

The effects of Americanisation can also be seen in *Beautiful Thing*. At the beginning of the play, as Leah and Jamie sit at the walkway, Jamie drinks his coke, one of the most significant symbols of American capitalism, while Leah sings songs from her idol, American singer, Mama Cass (5-6). Although these two examples are not directly related to the gay identity, the American model affected British gay identity in an invisible way. In his book *Homosexualization of America*, where he also proposes the theory of gay ethnicity, Dennis Altman states that "there is no doubt that if we can speak of the homosexualization of the US, we can also speak of the Americanization of the gay world elsewhere" (qtd. in Jagose 34). The American dominance of the gay scene contributed to "the emergence of clearly defined and binary sexual identities" and in the gay community the "hedonistic and overtly youth and beauty oriented" American model became the one followed by all; and being "'gay' went from a minority identity to a universally recognised one" and presented as such (Buckle 169).

Both in Britain and around the world, two sectors, in particular, reflected and encouraged this unified youth-oriented gay culture. The first sector was the gay publication scene. Magazines such as *Zipper, Mister, Vulcan* and *Him* provided soft-core porn to the British gay community and cultivated the beauty-oriented gay body image with the fit nude bodies that covered their pages (Buckle 125-6). However, on the positive side, the emerging "gay pornography and literature brought a new openness about sex which had hitherto been potentially dangerous and/or acutely embarrassing to discuss" (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 189). Along with gay pornography, magazines such as *Come Together, Arena Three*, the *Gay News* published articles on the gay community. The *Gay News*, especially, focused on the news and the issues that affected and reflected gay lifestyles and the gay social scene. Optimistically, the *Gay News* both reflected and advertised a positive lifestyle for the gay community and also contributed immensely to the creation of a confident gay communal identity (Buckle 111-112). In

addition to their contribution to the new gay image, the publication sector also played a great part in spreading the new gay culture to the rural parts of Britain.

The second sector that shaped the British gay scene in the 1980s and 1990s was the entertainment industry. Just like the 18th-century molly houses that had turned same-sex activities first into a group activity and then into an identity, the entertainment sector also helped the development of modern gay identity immensely with its commercialisation of gay bars and pubs that increased in number in the 1980s and the 1990s. These commercial spaces, first of all, provided gay people with "a retreat where they can feel 'comfortable' and 'safe' from the assaults and insults of the rest of the society" (Mandle). Moreover, they gave gay people the opportunity of having their own establishments where they could work as owners or workers without hiding their sexuality. Additionally, gay people regarded pubs and discos as places where they could meet people like themselves (Jivani 183-4). According to a survey conducted in London in 1984, twenty five percent of the gay teenagers had their first homosexual contact "in a pub or club" and this shows how gay bars and pubs were more than just "fun" places for the community (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 189).

In *Beautiful Thing*, the publishing and entertainment sectors also play an active role in Jamie and Ste's discovery of their gayness and developing it into an identity. In their process of self discovery, these two sectors can be regarded as one of the channels of "second socialisation" which lay the foundations of identity formation in the ethnic model of identity. A week after their sleeping together, Ste comes to visit Jamie in his room and Jamie gives Ste a copy of the *Gay Times* that he has been hiding under his bed:

> STE. (*flicks through then reads a bit*) Dear Brian, can you transmit the HIV virus via frottage? What's that?
> JAMIE. (tuts) Yoghourt. It's French.
> STE. Cor, thick git! (*Reads some more.*) Dear Brian, I am twenty-three, black and gay. The problem is that although I am happy being with a gay man and have a strong desire to live with a lover, I get that horrible feeling that people are going to talk about me behind my back, and that they won't accept me as I am. Also, my family don't know. Unhappy, North London.
> JAMIE. Get over that river mate, I'll make you happy! (*Ste whacks him on the head with the magazine*.) See Ste, you're not the only one in the world. (67)

This dialogue tells us a lot about Jamie and Ste's relation to the wider gay community and also the function of such magazines in gay lives in general. First of all, this encounter with the *Gay Times* marks Jamie and Ste's first encounter with the gay community. As they comment on the passages and read about the problems of gay people other than themselves, they realise that, as Jamie states, they are "not the only one[s] in the world" (67). Also, this dialogue starts their first casual conversation about being gay, and as the dialogue continues, they tease one another and make camp impersonations (67-68). In a way, the stories they read in the magazine encourage them to naturalise their situation and help them to be more relaxed and confident about their homosexuality. Also, as it can be seen from the advice column they read, the *Gay Times* and other similar magazines provide the members of the gay community with the guidance they need and enable them with a means to consult on the issues that they still keep hidden.

Through the *Gay Times* Jamie and Ste are also introduced to the second biggest sector in the commercial gay life, the entertainment industry. Seeing the advertisement of a gay pub called the Gloucester, they decide to go there (67). The visit they pay to the pub compels them to be more open about their gayness in an indirect way as it triggers the events leading to their coming out process. When Sandra learns about this visit, she confronts Jamie about it, and during this confrontation Jamie comes out to her (68-75). However, the confrontation does not lead to a bitter interrogation but a very emotional talk between Jamie and Sandra, and at the end of the play, the Gloucester becomes a meeting point for all the heart-broken characters of the play as Jamie, Ste, Sandra and Leah decide to go there all together (86-90).

Buckle regards "the growth of the commercialised gay social scene" as an indication of "the relative financial freedom enjoyed by gay men and lesbians" in the 1980s and the 1990s (152). Around this time, there seemed to be a visible improvement in the financial status of the gay community. This change, partly, was a result of the increase in the number of gay men coming-out from respectable business circles. Also, the new gay-friendly sectors such as the publishing and entertainment sectors provided job opportunities for the gay community. Moreover, the 1980s saw the "institutionalization

of lesbian and gay organizations;" being a gay activist became "a professional, paying job," and many people started to work in the newly-established organisations funded by local authorities (Bernstein 556-7).

This financial dynamism turned gay community into a new market to be explored by the industry. "Advertisers" came "to gay lifestyle magazines looking to find gay spenders;" gay men were regarded as potential customers "with similar needs and interests as other men, only with more disposable income" (Hicklin). This economic progress led to the creation of the concept of "the pink pound" which refers to the purchasing power of the gay community (Bengry, "Courting the Pink Pound" 122-148). As Bernsteins states, this commercialisation led "[i]dentity politics" to become "apolitical" and devolve "into a politics of consumption," and even the protests which were an indispensible part of gay politics became "commodified as a t-shirt or ribbon to be purchased and worn. Lifestyle or consumerism rather than political change" became "the goal" (533).

The effects of consumerist culture that influenced the formation of gay community and also took hold of the Western world on a bigger scale at the end of the 20th century can also be seen in *Beautiful Thing*. During their first physical contact in Act I scene iv, Jamie uses the Body Shop foot lotion, with its specific brand given, to sooth Ste's bruises (47); Ste and Jamie read the commercial lifestyle magazine *Hello* and, later, the *Gay Times*, and reading these magazines helps the boys to build a connection, first, between themselves, later, with the gay community (66-69). The reflections of consumerist culture in *Beautiful Thing* are not limited to gay identity building. At the beginning of Act I scene i, Jamie sits on the doorsteps of their house, drinking a can of coke; and all the characters in the play spend their days talking about popular TV shows or advertisements (16, 17, 40, 55, 61, 65, 84).

The rapid commercialisation of the gay scene and its association with the discos and bars in big cities like London and Manchester led to the conception that being gay was exclusive to the urban communities with money and means. However, as Cook states, "[e]ven for those who did not go clubbing or engage in new politics, there was a greater sense of self-possession and possibility, and a shift in terms of what it meant to be gay-

a term which now had as wide a currency as homosexual and also a defiant twist" ("From Gay Reform" 190). With these words, Cook not only emphasises the extensiveness of the gay identity but also the significance of gay as a label. As it is stated in the Introduction, from the 1960s onwards the word "gay" was introduced in as an alternative to the term "homosexual" "as a matter of pride, not of pathology; of resistance, not of self-effacement" (Saprgo 27-28). Although the use of the word "gay" in this context "caused so much consternation in the early 1970s" as some people "bemoaned the corruption of an 'innocent' word," through the end of the decade, it became "an accepted part of the language" (Jivani 180; Saprgo 28). Newspapers "like the *Guardian*, the *Observer* and even the conservative *Daily Telegraph* began using the word [gay] to describe homosexuals and increasingly . . . without quotation marks around it" (Jivani 180).

The use of the word "gay" also plays an important role in *Beautiful Thing* to mark the identity formation of Jamie and Ste. When he talks to Ste about his feelings for the first time, Jamie asks:

> JAMIE. Scared o'being called queer?
> STE. (*pause*) Are you?
> JAMIE. (*pause*) Dunno. Maybe. Maybe not.
> STE. And are you?
> JAMIE. Queer?
> STE. Gay.
> JAMIE. I'm very happy. (*Pause.*) I'm happy when I'm with you. (50)

The way the words "queer" and "gay" are used in alternation in the dialogue above offers the prevailing perceptions related to the two terms at the time. When Jamie asks Ste if he is "[s]cared o'being called queer," he uses the word "queer" in a negative sense, as a label at the service of the homophobic society. In the second part of the dialogue, when Jamie once again suggests the word "queer," Ste defies "queer" and chooses the word "gay" instead. This proves that *Beautiful Thing* still belongs to a time when being queer had not gained its positive value in everyday language, while being gay was regarded as a promise of happiness, as an affirmative label. Hall states: "'I am gay' is only possible as a statement in a world in which sexuality is perceived as having an identity-determining capacity" (*Queer Theories* 22). In a similar way, being queer only referred to the negative attributes surrounding it in a world where its theoretical

capacity was still not reflected in everyday life. At the end of the play, the word "gay" is used once again as Leah seems to be surprised at Ste's proposal of going to the Gloucester; she asks:

> LEAH. The what?
> STE. Gay pub.
> LEAH. I don't know any gay blokes.
> STE. Yes you do.
> LEAH. (*smiles*) Yeah. (85)

This time Ste seems to embrace the word "gay" with more confidence and uses it to define himself.

In identity movements, the members of a specific group develop a sense of belonging based on their "shared characteristics such as ethnicity or sex,'' and this sense of belonging is strengthened with their common goals, shared attributes and symbols (Bernstein 539). A symbol that is recognised by the gay community in general is the rainbow. For centuries, the rainbow existed in the myths and stories of many cultures as a symbol of gender, sexuality and also multiculturalism (Cage and Ewans 44). Its first use by the gay community was in San Francisco at the gay parade in 1978 (Maddux 8). The artist Gilbert Baker "designed the flag in response to a need for a symbol that could be used annually and with which gay men and women could identify and seek solidarity" (Cage and Ewans 44). It had eight stripes and each stripe stood for an aspect of gay life: "[H]ot pink for sex, red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sun, green for nature, turquoise for art, indigo for harmony and violet for spirit" (Cage and Ewans 45). Soon, this flag became the symbol of gay pride and was accepted as the original flag of the Gay Liberation Movement and, in time, rainbow symbolism became internationally recognised as it came to be used by the commercial industry of consumers' goods such as t-shirts, bags, jewellery (Moore 22-23). The rainbow is not openly recognised as a part of gay iconography in *Beautiful Thing*; however, it is used as a dramatic symbol to support the theme of gay identity. The characters spend quite a lot of time at the beginning of the play in the walkway, looking at the sky, watching a rainbow (5-10).

Shuttleton regards the use of rainbow symbolism in *Beautiful Thing* as an attempt of communication with nature. He argues that despite the urban setting of the play, the

rainbow "sentimentally signifies the 'naturalness' of same-sex desire" and turns the walkway into "a liberated pastoral space" (124). This idea of naturalness introduced into the play with the rainbow is also supported with other elements in the scene. While Lea and Jamie are watching the rainbow, Leah starts to sing the Mama Cass song, "It's Getting Better" with lyrics "holding you at night seems kinda natural and right" which is an obvious reference to same-sex desire and the essentialist arguments of identity politics that assume sexuality to be a natural and rightful part of one's identity (8). In the meantime, Sandra who is angry at Jamie for not attending physical education classes goes in and out of the house throwing away things Jamie has been keeping for his kids. She comes out once again and interrupts Leah's singing by saying, "It is not natural;" Jamie quickly asks, "What aint?," probably worried that Sandra might be implying himself but is relieved as Sandra replies, "For a girl of her age to be into Mama Cass" (9). The idea of naturalness is once again repeated at the end of the play by Tony who tries to console Sandra as she cries in the walkway after she learns about Jamie's being gay: "It's ok, I know. It's natural. (*Pause*) You like tomatoes I like beetroot" (73). In the late 20th century, the gay community met the heterosexual society's presentation of homosexuality "as unnatural, deviant or incomplete" with its own claim of naturalisation (Saprgo 28). Through gay identity politics gays "emphasized the immutable and essential natures of their sexual identities" and argued that "they were a distinctively different natural kind of person, with the same rights as heterosexuals (another natural kind)" (Heyes). Hence, *Beautiful Thing*'s emphasis on the naturalness of same-sex desire both contributes to and reflects this claim.

There are several reasons behind this perception of gayness as a natural force. First of all, as Jagose argues, "it is particularly hard to denaturalise something like sexuality, whose very claim to naturalisation is intimately connected with an individual sense of self, with the way in which each of us imagines our own sexuality to be primary, elemental and private" (17). Additionally, throughout the 20th century, Western culture was exposed to "biologically essentialist accounts of sexual identity, which look for a particular gene, brain structure, or other biological feature that is noninteractive with environment and that will explain same-sex sexual desire;" and although these accounts were criticised as the reflections of the medical labelling by the heterosexual society,

they were also strategically used by the gay community to fight homophobia as it would be harder to blame them for their same-sex desires if these desires were a result of a genetic or medical condition beyond their control (Heyes). Also, similar essentialist pleas were used by the gay community to legitimise their claims "to the trans-historical unity of homosexuals or their trans-cultural functional role" (Epstein 254).

All these caused the gay movement to be criticised "as crudely essentialist" by the constructivist branch of identity politics (Jagose 60). However, as Epstein argues understanding the gay identity through the ethnic model of identity reduces the dangers of its being dismissed as a rigidly essentialist viewpoint (289). First of all, perceiving gayness, consciously, as a group identification like ethnicity emphasises the function of the choice to belong and brings a vagueness "about where the essential 'core' of gay identity resides" (Epstein 256-7). Also the gay movement's shift towards assimilationist ideologies and its aim to change the perception of gayness in the society through the ethnic model of identity brings gay politics closer to the constructionist understanding of sexuality as such claims of changing the gay image emphasise "the malleability of gender" (Jagose 60).

Understanding gay identity as a formation, both at a personal and communal level, is undoubtedly another point that connects it to the constructionist theory which regards identity as something acquired rather than something intrinsically "entrenched in the psyche of the individual" (Epstein 266). The gay identity movement that was influential in Britain in the 1990s believed that to be able to go through the process of identity formation fully, identity first had to be recovered from the "closet" of the homophobic society with the process of "coming out." In this sense, the two terms, "being in the closet" and "coming out," played an important role in identity politics as "[f]or lesbians and gay men, being 'out' or 'in the closet' became a crucial marker of their sexual politics" (Spargo 30). Each step was regarded as a separate state of identity in itself with its own rules and regulations. For people in the closet, "avoiding suspicion and exposure . . . shaped a whole way of life," and being in the closet "functioned as a sort of hidden core identity" (Seidman, *Beyond The Closet* 10). For people who dared to come out "emerging from confinement and concealment into the open, a movement

from secrecy to public affirmation" meant a moment of re-creation of the self. Hence, coming out was regarded as a full step into the gay identity (Spargo 30).

In *Beautiful Thing*, however, the story does not focus on the stage of being in the closet. It is not indicated how long Jamie and Ste have experienced same-sex desire but kept it to themselves. Out of the two, Jamie seems to have developed a sexual awareness at an earlier stage. It is stated early in the play that he was bullied at school due to his lack of interest in sports, and the bullying was most probably homophobic in nature (7, 11-12). Also, in his relationship to Ste, Jamie is the one who makes the first move, kissing Ste for the first time (49). However, we are also informed that till Sandra's outbreak at the beginning of the play, Jamie kept items from his childhood to give to his kids in the future, which means he was holding on to the possibility of a heterosexual relationship in the future (7). Although *Beautiful Thing* reflects Jamie and Ste's coming to terms with gayness as an unproblematic process in general, such points in the play testify to the existence of an ambiguous state before they discover their same-sex desire and develop it into gay identity. Hall conceptualises the transition period from desire to gay identity in the following words:

> It is not that we have to have a name for our desires before they urge themselves upon us; desire may be there already for any number of reasons (though also hearing about different sexual pleasures and possibilities may, itself, generate new and different forms of desire). But certainly naming something and giving it a history (either within an individual life or over a great span of years) does make it available as a way of organizing one's identity and of seeing and proactively creating affiliations. (*Queer Theories* 22)

In *Beautiful Thing*, the process of facing gay desire and giving it a name develops in two stages. The first stage is self-discovery and the second one is coming out. Having almost no previous notion of their gayness, Jamie and Ste learn about their sexuality along with the reader/audience as they discover it on stage. As Hickling states, "the best moments" of this discovery are presented through the "faltering, soul-searching conversations on an embarrassingly small bed at 2 am" as Jamie and Ste are drawn to one another for the first time, and the dialogue is very natural and sincere coming from the fresh experiences of the author who had "only recently come out himself" ("*Beautiful Thing*;" Harvey, *Beautiful Thing* 48-50).

Following the discovery of gay feelings, the second step of identity creation for Jamie and Ste is coming out. As it is stated by Kenneth Plummer, in identity politics coming out is regarded as "the most momentous act in the life of any lesbian or gay person;" it becomes the point "they proclaim their gayness" and at this moment the "sense of identity or self is achieved" (82). This proclamation is even regarded as a political act because coming out does not only mean revealing yourself privately to your colleagues, friends and family, but it is regarded as a "transformative act" that requires gayness to "be avowed publicly until it is no longer a shameful secret but a legitimately recognised way of being in the world" (38). However, the coming out tales of the British gay society in the 1980s, mostly focused on this personal side of coming out; they were based on the struggles "many men experienced" in sharing their sexual identity with "their friends, relatives, community, church or work colloquies" but most importantly with their families (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 191), as family forms "the immediate surrounding of the individual, and the place where one often looks for tolerance and acceptance first" (Hanke 562). In *Beautiful Thing*, the coming out process of Jamie also starts with his coming out to his mother, Sandra (68-70). However, Ste's coming out does not start with a member of his family. Ste also talks to Sandra first (82), and then, opens up to Leah (85). Because coming out is a social experience, the way it is fulfilled depends on the relationship between the individuals at each end of the communication. Especially when coming out to a parent, the parent's ability to come to terms with their child's sexuality determines the intensity of the coming out experience (Rossi 1175-78). In that sense, *Beautiful Thing* provides its reader/audiences with two different parent-son relationships which may also be interpreted in relation to sexual identity development.

The first parent-son relationship that is presented in the play is the relationship between Sandra and Jamie. Sandra is depicted in the play as a foul-mouthed woman who swears a lot (6, 13), makes immature dirty jokes (43), and constantly changes boyfriends (23-24); however, in her relationship with her son, she is dedicated and caring. Even before Jamie comes out to her at the end of the play, Sandra is concerned that Jamie is having difficulty fitting in at school and she suspects that it might be because of his sexuality,

although she finds it difficult to express this concern directly (69). When she appears in the play for the first time, Sandra takes out "a black bin bag full of rubbish" as she passes by Leah and Jamie sitting on the doorstep (5). Later, in the same scene, the reader/audience is informed that the bin bag contains the things Jamie collected for his future children since he was little, and Sandra punishes Jamie for skipping the physical education class by throwing them away (6-7). Although Sandra avoids expressing it, the way she chooses to punish Jamie for not being sportive, in other words masculine, enough can be regarded as an implication of her suspicion of Jamie's non-normative sexuality. The way she tries to talk to Jamie about the bullying at school provides clues of her suspicion:

> SANDRA. (to Jamie) Anyone been calling you names?
> JAMIE. Like what?
> SANDRA. I dunno.
> JAMIE. No.
> SANDRA. Stumpy? Anyone called you that?
> JAMIE. No
> SANDRA. I told you it'd stop.
> JAMIE. I know.
> SANDRA. I told you you'd grow. You never take the blindest bit o' notice to me. (7)

This questioning does not lead Sandra to the right answer, yet her consoling Jamie by saying that it will stop when he grows reminds the reader/audience of the conventional view of British society on teenage homosexuality as a passing phase.

Sandra's concern for Jamie develops into a tension in their relationship and at the end of Act I scene iv, a simple argument turns into a physical fight between them. They slap one another, roll on the stage and fight "*like cat and dog"* (45). But in the end, this fight proves how emotional their relationship is, and they try to comfort each other as soon as the fight ends:

> JAMIE. Am I like my dad?
> SANDRA. No. You're like me.
> JAMIE. How am I weird?
> SANDRA. Oh, give it a rest Jamie Christ.
> JAMIE. You said it.
> SANDRA. You're all right. Okay, so you got me for a mother, but who said life was easy? You are. You're all right. (45-46)

In her battle with life, Sandra always seems to have tried to put her concern for her son first. Out of the three teenagers in the play, Jamie is the one who has the best relationship with his parent. As she leaves for work, Sandra asks Jamie to eat his salad as a part of his "well-planned diet" (15) and warns him to do his homework (16), though, after she comes from work and Jamie wants to show her the homework, she is too tired to check it as she promised (25). It is suggested in the play that Sandra does her best, although being the only parent and earning a living at the same time make her struggle.

The absence of a steady father figure is given as a major theme in the play. It is stressed that each man in Sandra's life takes some part in Jamie's growing up process, and being without a real father Jamie builds a connection with them. When things do not work out between them and Sandra, Jamie not only feels deserted and disappointed, but also watches his mother left behind heartbroken (Townsend). In the play, Sandra is once again in the early stages of a new relationship with a younger man, Tony. Tony gets involved in Jamie's life, as he volunteers to look after him when Sandra is at work (26). Although Tony adopts a friendly approach towards Jamie, buys him a football to help him resolve his problems in physical education classes (20-21), tries to talk to him about his problems, Jamie tries to keep a certain distance from Tony and tries be cautious as a result of his previous disappointments. Jamie also warns Tony about his mother's previous relationships by saying "[y]ou aint the first. She's not a slag or nothin', but you aint the first […] There was Colin the barber, Alfie the long-distance lorry driver, and Richard the barman" (22-23). Despite the distance he tries to keep, a sniff he takes from Tony's joint makes him open his heart about these men and the place they occupied in his life:

> When I was ten, me mum met this bloke called Richard. He was a barman like her. I used to . . . pretend he was my dad. Didn't realise he was only about eighteen. I used to tell people . . . and that. (*Pause.*) And then one night. I went in the kitchen for a glass of water. And there's me mum, sat on the floor, tears pouring down her face. Two black eyes. I never saw Richard again. (*Pause.*) I used to sit on his knee. He used to put his arm around me when we walked down the street and that. Called me trouble. And then . . . it's weird, innit? When somin' can stop like that. (24)

All these reminiscences about different men in Sandra's life and Jamie's intense emotional engagement with these stories make them formative experiences in shaping

his relationship with Sandra, and his suspicious stand to the new men coming into her life.

The way Jamie talks to Tony about these men with teary eyes, and the way he insistently questions his mother about his father (16, 45) present the absence of a steady father figure as another important point of struggle in Jamie's life, along with his dissident sexuality. Connecting these points of instability in Jamie's life brings to mind the clinical studies at the beginning of the 20th century that connected the lesbian and gay sexual orientation to dysfunctional family relations. These studies conducted by psychiatrists regarded absent fathers and overbearing mothers as "a toxic combination" which caused in the offspring sexual dissidence at adulthood (LaSala 267; Cook, "Families of Choice" 3). However, Jonathan Harvey does not build a cause and effect relationship between the problems in family life and homosexuality. The absence of the father figure is only presented in *Beautiful Thing* as another difficulty in Jamie and Sandra's life. Single parenting, the disrupted family unit are presented in the play as common realities of working-class life. Jonathan Harvey rather focuses on the positive aspects of Sandra and Jamie's relationship and employs this parent-son relationship as an example of tolerance and acceptance in the play. As Jamie comes out to Sandra, Sandra clearly states that she does not judge Jamie and only tries to make sure that he is not hurt (71). In a similarly loving way, she talks to Ste the same night (82-84), and at the end of the play, she accompanies them to the gay pub (88). Harvey says that he himself was "fortunate to have an accepting family that "could cope with this camp thing dancing around the living room" and "they just accepted" him for who he was and he wanted to reflect this positive experience in *Beautiful Thing* (qtd. in Rattigan).

From the late 1980s and the 1990s onwards, family-oriented research also started to focus on the family as an "important source of social support" for lesbian and gay youth that "enhances psychological well-being and feelings of closeness" and buffer against "the possible detrimental psychological consequences of coming out with an LGBT identity" (Hanke 563). The role the family played in the coming out process also changed drastically in the society; with this "societal tolerance, young people" started to realise and disclose "their sexual orientations at progressively younger ages, often in

their mid to late teens while still financially and emotionally dependent on their parents" (LaSala 269). Harvey wants to illustrate this positive change in the society through *Beautiful Thing*, but in order to present the significance of family support in a more complete manner, he also offers the relationship between Ste and his family as a negative example.

As it is stated above, although in the 1990s the perceptions related to the relationship between gay and lesbian youth and the family changed considerably, some parents still struggled "to 'come to terms' with having gay sons, [and] many still viewed their [sons'] 'choice' as tragic and/or abhorrent" (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 191). Especially the fathers were more susceptible to "society's distaste for cross-gendered behaviour" and "would distance [themselves] from his developing gay son, repelled by his feminine mannerisms" (LaSala 268; Rossi 1177). Studies also showed that the fathers' negative reactions to their sons' coming out were also affected by "the family dysfunction – disease model of sexual orientation" still prevalent in the society; fathers who were blamed by this model as the cause of the "problem," would respond more aggressively to their sons' sexuality with the bitterness of being blamed (LaSala 267-68). In the British society of the 1990s, these existing biases prevented coming out from becoming "a defining moment," a step that could be taken all at once; and most people had to do it "gradually- telling some but not all family members, or friends but not work colleagues" (Cook, "From Gay Reform" 191-92). In Ste's case, although he comes out to Sandra and tells Leah about his gayness, he still keeps his new identity as a secret from his father and brother at the end of the play.

Harvey presents Ste's family and his relationship with them as an alternative to Sandra's parenthood. While Jamie lives with Sandra without a father, Ste lives with his father and brother. However, rather than enjoying his childhood Ste takes on all the responsibility of the house. While the other characters of the play chill out in the walkway, Ste always has chores to do, such as cooking (11) and washing (36). If one of these things goes wrong or if he upsets his brother or father for some reason, Ste is beaten up violently and takes refuge at Sandra's house (29, 33). Harvey says that during

his years as a teacher and also as growing up, he was familiar with such stories of violence and he reflects these observations in Ste's story (Courtney).

Beautiful Thing provides no real reason for the violence that is directed at Ste until Leah tells Jamie and Ste towards the end of the play that Ste's brother Trevor is suspicious of the relationship between them. Leah says that she covered up for them and tried to convince Trevor that there was nothing going on between the two boys, and this is one of the reasons why Trevor had not been beating Ste for the last few days (60-61). After Leah's testimony, the violence Ste is subjected to is presented as the result of his brother's homophobia, only at the very end of the play.

Despite the negative attitudes of his father and brother, Ste is not presented as a victim in the play. He tries to fight his way through life. While talking about their attitudes towards him, Ste tells Jamie that "[t]hey think I 'm a wimp […] A wimp wouldn'a come around here. I done somin'. Wimps don't do nothin'. (*Pause*.) I am gona work at the sports centre. Do me shifts in the fitness pool, do me shifts in the leisure pool. Up and down. I know I can do it" and Jamie agrees and says that his mother also thinks that he is a wimp from time to time, although he is not (48). The two boys, who are depicted as very different from each other throughout the play with regard to both their appearances and interests, come closer in their isolation.

Although the reader/audience is informed about the abuses Jamie experiences at school and Ste at home, the tension resulting from these abuses is not reflected in the play directly as they do not take place on stage. This is regarded by some critics as a weakness in *Beautiful Thing* which disturbs its reality as the play speaks "more about the painfulness of coming out as a gay rite of passage than the realities of parental and sibling homophobic brutality which" are hidden with "the absent characters of Ste's family" (Roberts 182). However, excluding the scenes of physical violence in the play is a deliberate choice made by Jonathan Harvey. As it will be discussed in detail, in *Beautiful Thing*, Jonathan Harvey tries to present this gay love story in the most positive and optimistic way, and by excluding the scenes of physical violence in the play, he

tries to preserve the dignity of the characters and the feel-good atmosphere of the play as much as possible.

Although coming out plays an important role in this story in relation to gay identity formation, Ste's coming out process is also left incomplete in the play to minimise the tension in the play. When Ste learns that Jamie talked to Sandra about their affair, he is terrified that his father will find out about it as well. Although Sandra repeatedly tells him that she is not going to tell, he does not stop crying:

> SANDRA. Jesus, Ste, will you stop crying? I don't believe in secrets. I like people to be straight up and honest. But I'm no fool. D'you think I want these flats to be infamous for child murder? No. So, I don't be telling your dad.
> STE. He'd kill me!
> SANDRA. Yes. I've just said that.
> STE. No, he would.
> SANDRA. I think we've established that already actually , Ste.
> STE. They all would, all of 'them.
> SANDRA. I'll bloody kill you in a minute if you don't stop snivelling and shut up! You're a good lad. That's what counts. And . . . somewhere else you'll find people [t]hat won't kill you. (82-83)

With the decision to keep it a secret from Ste's father and brother, Harvey avoids the possibility of a negative confrontation between Ste and his family. Also with Sandra's witty and light-hearted tone, even at this moment of tension, the creation of a gloomy atmosphere and the association of coming out with negative feelings are avoided as much as possible.

In the period preceding *Beautiful Thing*, the bleak representation of the homosexual in literary works and on TV and cinema screens was quite common. Homosexual characters were "firmly" placed "within the cultural space inhabited by unhappiness, murder, despair, freakishness, and invisibility, a cultural space long-familiar to queers" (Peele 6). As John D'Emilio argues, this perception of the suffering homosexual was a myth created because of the lack of a homosexual history:

> When the gay liberation movement began at the end of the 1960s, gay men and lesbians had no history that we could use to fashion our goals and strategy. In the ensuing years, in building a movement without a knowledge of our history, we instead invented a mythology. This mythical history drew on ~ personal experience, which we read backward in time. For instance, most lesbians and gay men in the 1960s first discovered their homosexual desires in isolation, unaware of others, and without sources for

> naming and, understanding what they felt. From this experience, we constructed a myth of silence, invisibility, and isolation as the essential characteristics of gay life in the past as well as the present. (467-8)

This bleak stereotypical image of the homosexual was challenged in the 1980s with the increasing visibility of homosexuals in social life. However, diverse literary and dramatic examples that could challenge the clichés of fictional representations were still very rare.

Indeed, with *Beautiful Thing*, Jonathan Harvey aims to fill this gap and challenge this myth as he states:

> When writing the play, I wanted to challenge the myth that if you're working class and gay man, you get kicked out of the house and end up selling your body for twenty Woodbines down Piccadilly Circus. Yes it happens, but it never happened to me, and I suppose I wanted to tell my story. I'd seen several images of people on TV and film as I was growing up, and although I felt excited and empowered by them, I never fully identified with them. I also wanted to give young people who'd see the play some hope. (xi)

Harvey takes his own experiences during gay adolescence as the basis in creating *Beautiful Thing*; and as argued by Tensely, he successfully manages to depart "from the tired and tiring depictions of gay people as outcasts, seedy sexaholics, and victims" and builds a positive world with relatable and "complicated characters" ("*Beautiful Thing*").

In *Beautiful Thing*, the most important thing that marks this departure is how the coming out process of Jamie and Ste is dealt with tolerance and acceptance. Other than a few emotional tears shed as they talk to Sandra, Ste and Jamie's gayness is recognised in an affirmative manner. Additionally, Jamie and Ste's exploration of their sexuality enhances their confidence. Stepping into a gay identity is presented in the play as an empowering experience, a "complex process of moving from a heterosexual (and confused) identity . . . to a strong, positive and accepting sense of identity as gay" (Plummer 84). Once they are together, Jamie and Ste feel stronger against the pressures of verbal and physical violence at home and at school. In *Beautiful Thing*, "the gay . . . lifestyle is posited as a better, less destructive way of leading one's life than conformity with the constraints imposed by heterosexual patriarchy" symbolised by Ste's abusive father and brother and "the useless male lover[s]" of Sandra (Wyllie 107).

The positive tone of the play is reinforced with songs from the 1960s, mostly by Mama Cass of The Mamas and the Papas (Rattigan). *Beautiful Thing* opens with "It's getting Better," (5, 9) and as the play progresses, the songs change in relation to the scene and its theme: "Sing for Your Supper" (17), "California Earthquake" (33), "I Can Dream Can't I" (62), "Dream a Little Dream of Me" (88) by Mama Cass and "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" from *The Sound of Music* (50). The songs that are incorporated into the play exhilarate the audience, give the play the feeling of a musical and conjure "up a sort of escapist synergy with counterculture, and optimism" of the 1960s (Tensley).

Harvey's use of the songs and their lyrics to support his messages do not make the play a musical, but they are woven into the play as a part of the plot. As a big fan of Mama Cass, Leah continuously sings and plays her songs, and in this way songs are integrated into the play in a realistic way. In addition to providing background music for the play, Mama Cass fits perfectly with the theme of gay identity in *Beautiful Thing*. During her short life time, her songs such as "Different" celebrated diversity; singing "[d]ifferent is hard, different is lonely/Different is trouble for you only/Different is heartache, different is pain/But I'd rather be different than be the same," Mama Cass was regarded as an important gay icon (Wolfe 239; Steele). Thus, Mama Cass songs that are used in the play such as "It's getting Better" (5, 9) with its emphasis on the naturalness of love, "Sing for your Supper" (17) with its stress the freedom of choice, "I Can Dream Can't I" (62) and "Dream a Little Dream of Me" (88) with the possibilities they offer can easily be reinterpreted within the context of gay love.

Moreover, Mama Cass and Leah's eccentric fixation on her is used as an element of comedy in *Beautiful Thing*, and contributes to the creation of a more uplifting atmosphere in the play. While talking about a new school she plans to apply to after she was expelled from her previous school, Leah mentions that the school has only twenty-two students. Ste turns this into a joke and says, "There'll be twenty -two if you go. You and Mama Cass" (38), and everyone on stage bursts into laughter. The urban myth on Mama Cass's death which supposedly occurred by her choking on a sandwich is also told in the most exaggerated way by Sandra and Tony, and they laugh at Leah's simple-minded reaction to the story (39-40). Later on, another famous story about Mama Cass

is used in the play as an element of comedy. Leah starts to head-butt things like Sandra's flower baskets and asks Jamie and Ste to find a lead pipe and hit on her head hard with it hoping that it would improve her voice, and as she waits for the blow, she makes Ste read the following story from the cassette cover:

> STE. (reads) Cass Eliot fallowed them there, but the group initially resisted her repeated requests to join them, arguing that her range wasn't high enough for Phillip's new styled composition.
> (*As* Ste *reads,* Jamie *approaches* Leah *slowly, from behind, hose in hand.* Sandra *stops him by grabbing his arm and takes control of the hose. Jamie steps back.* Sandra *now approaches Leah slowly.*)
> However, a lead pipe struck Cass on the head during a bout of interior decorating and having recovered from the resultant concussion, she discovered that her voice had changed.
> LEAH. (*bewitched*) She discovered that her voice had changed.
> (Sandra *pulls the hose over* Leah*'s head and pulls it round neck, head strangling her.*) (58)

Sandra uses this as a chance for revenge as Leah had talked to Tony about her previous affairs behind her back. As Sandra lets go of the hose, Leah collapses. Jamie and Ste panic, but when Leah, fully concentrated on her mission, tries to sing a proper la note, they also laugh at her dedication and faith in the experiment (59). As it can be observed from these examples, Mama Cass is used by Jonathan Harvey to create a humorous tone in the play and challenge the notion that homosexuality should only be discussed in serious plays in a sober manner.

With the light-hearted outlook of its characters to life, with the constant jokes, and through the use of humorous language, in *Beautiful Thing* Harvey manages to balance comedy with the tough realities of life, such as harsh working-class conditions, homophobic bullying, family dysfunction. Serious and emotional exchanges among characters are followed by moments of comic relief. The use of comedy in the play received conflicting criticism; on the one hand, *Beautiful Thing* is celebrated as a "seminal" play for combining the representation of gay identity with comedy and defying homophobia with its "light-hearted tone" ("Landmark Gay Plays"); on the other hand, it is criticised for reducing the impact of issues like "parental and sibling homophobic brutality" and the anxiety of coming out with comedy, and leaving out the serious issues of the age such as the AIDS crisis (Robert 82).

As it has been stated above, from the middle of the 1970s onwards, the interest of the gay community moved towards "creating, building, reflecting a growing lesbian and gay subculture," and the aspirations of the liberationist politics for "political, cultural and social change" were replaced with mainstream acceptability (Buckle 120-121). In this context, following the common approach of the age, the serious problems of the gay community are not presented in the play in a confrontational manner. *Beautiful Thing* focuses on the "beautiful" side of being gay as it is stated in the title, but as Tensley argues, "life in the early 1990s was anything but pretty" ("*Beautiful Thing*"). The darker times reappeared for the gay people in the second half of the 1980s both as a result of the "AIDS backlash" that "led to a hardening of public attitudes towards gay men and lesbians" and also as a result of the policies of the Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher's leadership that led to the introduction of the notorious Clause 28, which ordered affirmative representations of homosexuality to be banned from schools (Jivani 194-95; Buckle 104-109). This triggered an "increasingly reactionary and homophobic" public response which challenged "the visibility and existence of a subculture that was still in its infancy" and renewed many dated associations between gayness and "disease and paedophilia" (Buckle 144-5).

As Tensley states, "It was here — in the immediate aftermath of the Thatcher era, and while the world was grappling with the AIDS crisis — that *Beautiful Thing* was born" ("*Beautiful Thing*"). In the play, there is only a touching reference to AIDS, in Act II scene iv, after Sandra confronts Jamie, Jamie worries that his mother might be associating his situation with all the negative stereotypical views of homosexuality at the time and says: "You think I am too young. You think it's just a phase. You think I'm . . . I'm gonno catch AIDS and . . . and everything!" However, Sandra bypasses the issue and responds: "You know a lot about me, don't ya? Jesus, you wanna get on that Mastermind. Specialised subject — Your Mother. Don't cry" (71). In *Beautiful Thing*, Jonathan Harvey does not give direct messages on the homophobia triggered by Clause 28 or reflect the turmoil created by the AIDS crisis; with its mild and light-hearted tone the play belongs to a period in the history of the gay community that aims towards mainstream recognition rather than conveying the radical political ideas of the Gay Liberation Movement. However, this does not make *Beautiful Thing* an apolitical play.

Harvey describes *Beautiful Thing* as "political with a small 'p;'" he says that among the things that motivated him to write the play were his outrage at Clause 28 and his anger about the age of consent which had once again become a topic of discussion with John Major's Conservative government (Harvey qtd. in Marshall; Watts). This anger is reflected in the play in a subtle way. Although it is not overtly political, *Beautiful Thing* was "subversive for its time and place" (Tensley). "[A]t a time of parliamentary deliberation about lowering the age of homosexual consent" Harvey wrote the coming out stories of two "under age" boys of sixteen and seventeen (Roberts 182). He describes this decision in the following words:

> [T]hey were having all sorts of discussions in the House of Lords about lowering the age of consent, and the conversations they were having . . . which were broadcast every night on the telly, on the news, said nothing for me about my life or reflected anything about me. [They] went on and on about buggery, which is a word I've never really used . . .. They were just obsessed with anal sex, and it was clear to me that they'd all been to boarding school and probably got buggered by their prefects, and they thought that's what being gay was about, so of course they just wanted to clamp down on it. But that reflected nothing for me to do with being gay, so I wanted to write a story in which being gay was about falling in love and about emotions and having a laugh and finding your soul mate, but [not] about being at boarding school and being scared. (qtd. in Rattigan)

He wanted to challenge the current judgements on gayness by reflecting his own version of them in *Beautiful Thing* in the most casual manner.

Harvey also enriches his treatment of homosexuality with equally subtle social commentary on the issues of class and race. As it is stated in the quotation above, Harvey did not want to repeat the ingrained public school associations, but intended "to tell a story that shows what being gay and working-class is really about" (Harvey qtd. in Marshall). In that sense, *Beautiful Thing* compares to Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* (1958) as it also deals with the themes of being young, being gay in a poor working-class environment (Townsend).

The most prominent element of *Beautiful Thing* that reflects the working-class conditions is the presentation of the council estates which is the only setting of the play. In the social polarisation of British society, different neighbourhoods represent different

kinds of stigmatisation and "working class residents of the council housing estates" are regarded as symbols of "backwardness within a national discourse of progressive British multiculturalism" (Watt 777). These residents are subjected to negative stereotyping as dysfunctional, morally, spiritually, economically-corrupt "underclasses" (Reay and Lucey 411; "Estate Life;" Watt 777). The Thamesmead council estate of East London where *Beautiful Thing* is set is known as a notorious place, a centre of extreme poverty and deprivation especially after it became "a sink-estate" from the 1970s onwards "where local councils sent trouble families and individuals and new immigrants desperate for housing" (Klettner). This notoriety of the neighbourhood also turned Thamesmead into a iconic setting in the British literary scene[ix].

In *Beautiful Thing*, the Thamesmead estate is deliberately chosen to reflect the social and economic difficulties the characters suffer; apart from a few scenes in Jamie's bedroom, all the scenes take place in the landing walkway opening to the flats. In the stage directions at the beginning of the play, the place is described as "quite run-down" with the exception of Sandra's flat which is "a rose between two thorns" with her recently painted door, tubs of flowers and nice curtains (4). Sandra's endeavour to beautify her share of this neglected place symbolises her yearning and struggle for improvement in life. By working day and night, she tries to rescue herself and Jamie from this deprived environment, and at the end of the play she announces that she managed to find a new job at a brewery as its "temporary licensee" which "has a little beer garden […] [where] you can watch the boats go up and down on the Thames," and "a nice flat" a suitable place "for a family" (80). However, Sandra's announcement makes the Thamesmead estate even darker for the ones that will be left behind. Next morning, Leah complains to Ste:

> I wished I was the one that was going away. […] I wished. I hate it around here […] These flats. Them pubs. […] I gets up in the morning, bake me face in half a ton o' slap. Tong me hair wi'yesterday's lacquer . . . and that's it. Same every bleedin' day. Fuck all to look forward to except Mama Bloody Cass. Nothing ever happens. Nothing ever changes. (85)

With such a depiction of the misfortunes and hardships of working-class life, Harvey challenges the positive atmosphere he created for the gay identity. However, in this case he offers Sandra's success story as a way out, as a possible and positive alternative.

Except for Sandra, all the adults in the play seem to have surrendered to their conditions. It is not stated in the play what Leah's mother or Ste's father do for a living, if they do anything. Sandra's boyfriend Tony, the only middle-class character of the play, is introduced as an artist, but he does not have money to buy paint or is never in the mood to paint (42-43, 64). Sandra is the only character with a proper job and the only one who strives for a better life. Ste also shares Sandra's ambition for a career; he dreams of working at the sports centre one day, and he earns Sandra's sympathy for this vision (11, 48).

In this world of despair, Leah seems to be the most underprivileged and maladjusted character in the play as she is expelled from school, uses drugs, spends all her days doing nothing but listening to or singing Mama Cass songs (34). In addition to all these, Leah also happens to be the only black character in the play. The issue of race is not addressed in *Beautiful Thing* "as fully as it could be," but the "simple presence of Leah" as a black girl adds to "the diversity, even intersectionality, of its characters — a quality often still missing from newer portrayals of LGBT life" (Tensley).

By avoiding direct engagement with social and political issues, *Beautiful Thing* reflects the primary focus of the gay community as identity creation and being able to express this identity in the mainstream society. In the transition period from the politics of liberation to the ethnic identity model, the gay movement shifted its priority from "resistance to the hegemonic systems of the dominant social order" towards finding itself a visible position in this order (Jagose 60). In this new model, the most important way of attaining mainstream visibility and acceptability is regarded as "[t]he promotion of images and narratives of self-worth, pleasure and style" (Spargo 30). In the twenty years' time span from the 1970s to the 1990s, there was an increase in the positive representation of the gay image in the media as a growing number of public figures from different fields such as "politics, sports, and entertainment" came out in the 1990s (Freeman 234). A gay singer could find a place on the cover of *Vanity Fair*; drag queens became faces of mainstream cosmetic brands; and gay iconography became a part of the public scene from Benetton advertisements to the music videos of great stars such as

Madonna (Jivani 206). This positive visibility both helped the members of the gay community to come to terms with their sexuality in the process of identity creation and also made it easier for them to fit "in with straight mainstream culture" (Spargo 30).

With the positive image of gayness it provided, *Beautiful Thing* makes a great contribution to the gay community's claim to mainstream visibility in the Britain of the 1990s. However, the play's creation of this positive and mainstream gay representation also depends on the literary and cinematic representations before its time which prepared the public opinion in Britain with many distinct representations of newly-created gay identity. As it has been stressed above, with the cultural transformation that took place in the society "over a comparatively short time," and with the "triumph of capitalism" the political radicalism that was also influential in the representation of gender politics in drama left its place to more mainstream representations (Wyllie 22). *Beautiful Thing* plays an important role in this transition; the *Guardian*'s drama critic Alfred Hickling regards the play's first production at the Bush theatre in 1993 as "the moment that gay drama entered the mainstream" ("Beautiful Thing").

One of the main factors that make *Beautiful Thing*'s classification as a mainstream play possible is the way it appeals to the sensibilities of the mainstream reader/audience. Harvey states that he did not intend *Beautiful Thing* to be a gay play essentially, but he wanted to create a good play that spoke to all people, even "homophobic and prejudiced" (Hickling, "Jonathan Harvey;" Jones). With this intention in mind, the play depends on the popular formula that once people "know better, they will change their views" (Peele 2). Harvey explains his vision of changing the perception of the society with this play in the following words: "I always hoped that if you were 'homophobic and prejudiced' and saw *Beautiful Thing* you'd be surprised how much you enjoyed it: you get to know the characters and get to like them, and then the rug's taken from under your feet" (Jones). In the play's 2013 premiere, the director of the Official London Theatre also stressed the same intention in following words: "I'd like everybody and anybody to come and see the play because whether gay, straight or whatever it's a play of our time and it's about the world we live in. Without sounding cheesy or theatrical, I

think it should challenge people but they should essentially come away feeling that life is better for having this play in the world" (qtd. in Marshall).

To be able to create this intended mainstream appeal, *Beautiful Thing* does not specifically focus on the problems of the gay community but only presents the process of gay identity creation in the most positive and non-assertive manner. Although it is highly criticised for its "undemanding optimism," Wyllie regards such an optimistic attitude as prerequisite for the play's popularity and success in the following words: "Had the play offered a more radical and serious critique, and been less humorous in its affirmation of the benefits of gay and lesbian lifestyles, it might have been altogether too indigestible for a West End audience, and hence an insufficiently commercial proposition for cinema, as well as too risky for television" (108). In that sense, *Beautiful Thing* not only provided the gay community with the positive and affirmative story it lacked, but also created a presentable version of gayness for the mainstream British society of the 1990s.

The strategies employed in *Beautiful Thing* to achieve a mainstream appeal suggest a parallelism with the ethnic identity model's categorising "lesbian and gay subjects" into a minority position in their search for acceptability in the mainstream (Jagose 62). In the ethnic identity model, being confined to a minority position also means accepting the rest of the society as the majority. This way by seeking acceptance in the heterosexual world, the gay movement also assents to "heterosexual culture's exclusive ability to interpret itself . . . as the elemental form of human association, as the very model of intergender relations, as the indivisible basis of all community, and as the means of reproduction without which society wouldn't exist" ("Introduction*"* xxi). Hence, *Beautiful Thing*'s demand for mainstream appreciation can be regarded as a reflection of this assent to the heterosexual order.

Furthermore, the gay community's relationship with the mainstream is also discussed within the framework of its similarities to and differences from the heterosexual society; and this issue of similarities and differences has been a long-debated point in gay identity theories. While essentialists regard homosexuality as the result of an undeniable

and unchangeable desire that makes it different from other forms of sexualities, constructionists think that all sexual categories are similarly created by social conditions, and the difference only lies in the labelling (Epstein 241-242, 251; Spargo 34; Hall, *Queer Theories* 131). Epstein argues that the ethnic model of identity renders the sameness-difference quarrel of the essentialists and constructionists "an unhelpful analytical distinction" to understand the gay community's relationship to heterosexual society (Epstein 282). First of all, "the adoption of a neo-ethnic form of social closure combined with a civil-rights political strategy" depends on "asserting difference . . . as a way of gaining entry into the system" (Epstein 282). That means gays or other "ethnic" groups need to prove their difference to be able to claim a minority status; and also "the more coherent an ethnic group" is in expressing their uniqueness "the greater its cultural influence upon the larger society" (Epstein 28). However, this claim to difference only reflects one side of the sameness-difference balance of the ethnic identity model. The assimilationist side of the ethnic identity model requires asserting legitimacy in the homosexual society by proving one is not too different to fit in the heterosexual world, and "to stress similarities with the majority" becomes an important strategy for gaining mainstream acceptance (Bernstein 539). In this way, as Epstein argues, the ethnic model features politics of difference alongside of sameness, as it requires the gay community to consolidate "their sense of difference and" assert "their legitimacy" at the same time (Epstein 285).

In order to achieve a mainstream appeal, *Beautiful Thing* uses both the similarities and the differences between the gay community and the heterosexual society in a balanced way. First of all, the originality of the topic of a gay love story helped to create a sense of curiosity in the reader/audience. Jivani relates this to the unfulfilled need for novelty in the heterosexual society and states that "the heterosexual world" went "through a crisis of imagery" in the 1990s and representations of "lesbian and gay love" provided "an enticing and luring way of renewing desire" (206). In other words, gays appealed to straight taste with their difference (Epstein 284); and providing an unusual love story to readers/audiences made *Beautiful Thing* a revitalising force in/on mainstream drama/stage.

In this way, *Beautiful Thing* uses the difference of gayness to satisfy the heterosexual audience's/reader's need for an undiscovered love story, but it also stresses the similarity to ease off the prejudices towards gay identity by presenting it in a familiar and unthreatening way. As a method of creating familiarity, *Beautiful Thing* presents many "relatable and humane moments" that tell mainstream readers/audiences "something they hadn't heard much before: Gay people are just people" (Tensley). *Beautiful Thing* presents gay identity as an organic part of ordinary life familiar to all, and this combination of ordinariness and gayness makes *Beautiful Thing* an extraordinary play for its time.

The most important element that establishes the feeling of familiarity in *Beautiful Thing* is the way the theme of love is presented. The play is essentially a homosexual love story that echoes conventional suburban heterosexual love stories of classic Hollywood (Shuttleton 124). The process in which Jamie and Ste's love "evolves into a gay romance" (Tensley) is similar to conventional and clumsy falling in love scenes of young heterosexual lovers. The first night Ste spends in Jamie's room, in Act I scene iii, is quite romantic; two boys talk casually, laugh at the simple jokes they make on the piece Jamie reads from *Hello* magazine, complement one another for their appearances, question one another on the possible crushes they might develop on the opposite sex (28-33). A few days later, Ste comes to Jamie's room once again, this time in bruises. His lamentable condition brings the boys closer. Jamie massages Ste's back with his mom's foot lotion, rests his head on Ste's back and when it is time to sleep, he refuses to sleep "top to tail" and gives Ste a kiss on the lips and in the dark they lie together as "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" from *The Sound of Music* plays (48-50). These lines constitute some of the many "charming and poignant moments" of the play "that could" easily "be found in any romantic dramedy" (Tensley).

The ending of *Beautiful Thing* turns this romantic comedy or "romantic dramedy" as Tensley chooses to call it, into a "Cinderella story" as it was regarded as too good to be true for the beginning of the 1990s (Hickling, "Jonathan Harvey;" Holden). The play ends with Jamie and Ste slow dancing to Mama Cass's "Dream a Little Dream with Me" and Sandra and Leah join them leaving their play-long quarrels aside; "a

glitterball" appears and "spins above the stage, casting millions of dance hall lights" (90). Roberts calls this final scene "an unashamed piece of theatrical artifice . . . projecting a powerful wish-fulfilment, not just of 'if only' . . . but also of 'why shouldn't it be like this?'" (183). This scene provided the most hopeful ending the gay drama had seen till that time. The dance scene between Jamie and Ste is acknowledged as one of the first examples of a set scene that became "a staple of popular culture" where gay couple's dance symbolises social acceptance (Boucai 150-1).

Beautiful Thing as a play written in 1993 is affected by the identity politics of the time very much. With the love story between Jamie and Ste, the play reflects the ethnic model of identity that was adopted by the gay community at the time, and exemplifies this model through the process of identity creation of in main characters. In addition, in its presentation of gay identity, *Beautiful Thing* both represents the progress the gay community made in proving and stabilising its place in the society and also contributes to the ongoing process of moving the gay image towards the centre. With its optimistic approach to gayness, *Beautiful Thing* sends positive messages both to gay and mainstream communities. While it provides a confident version of gayness to the gay community through painless and empowering coming out stories of Jamie and Ste, the play attempts to show the loving, lovable and unthreatening side of gayness to the mainstream society, thus, redefines it through developing a new discourse of gayness.

CHAPTER 3

THE DECONSTRUCTION OF GAY IDENTITY AND THE CREATION OF QUEER CULTURE: MARK RAVENHILL'S *MOTHER CLAP'S MOLLY HOUSE*

At the beginning of the new millennium, "[in] many of the most developed capitalist countries, lesbians and gays" were "heading towards winning full civil rights, including anti-discrimination legislation, the recognition of same-sex relationships, legal marriage and an unprecedented cultural visibility" (Sears 92). However, this recognition and acceptance of gay and lesbian people by the mainstream society caused many people with marginal sexualities who did not belong to the well-defined gay and lesbian communities to be further alienated and othered. Queer theory, with its resistance to this normalisation and domestication process, aims to provide an "open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically [emphasis in the original]" (Sedgwick, *Tendencies* 7). This ambivalent space created in and through queer theory both accommodates undefined sexualities and also creates a space for the discussion and problematisation of the hegemonic and binary system that causes their exclusion in the first place. Mark Ravenhill's play *Mother Clap's Molly House* (2001) provides an important example to the queer vision in British drama with its vivid representation of queer culture and its ability to see "life in queer terms," presenting "queer solutions" and – most important of all – subscrib[ing] to a queer morality" (De Jong, "Interview" 125). The aim of this chapter is to argue that Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* introduces a queer perspective to British drama with its presentation of a fluid and varied queer culture and challenges the idea of stable gay identity and community. The play's presentation of queer culture depends on the numerous examples it provides for queer sexualities, while the way it challenges the gay identity and community depends on its problematisation of the process of identity construction and its criticism of commercialised gay community in Britain at the beginning of the 21st century. In

addition, *Mother Clap's Molly House* also adopts a queer approach in its criticism of heteronormativity and homonormativity, and its questioning of concepts such as the past and the present, urban and rural, being in "the closet" and "coming out." The theoretical framework of this chapter will be queer theory, and concepts from the works of numerous queer theoreticians including Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Halberstam, Michael Warner and Lisa Duggan will be used throughout the chapter. Before starting a detailed analysis of *Mother Clap's Molly House* as a queer play, it will be useful to understand its position in Ravenhill's dramatic career.

Born in 1966 in Sussex, England, to a middle-class family, Mark Ravenhill completed his university education at Bristol University in the department of English and Drama (Lawrence; Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 403). After his graduation, he worked as an assistant administrator and director in London fringe theatres (Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 403). Ravenhill's playwriting career started with a ten-minute play called *Fist* which he wrote for the Finborough Theatre in 1995. With this play, Ravenhill caught the attention of Max Stafford-Clark, the director and the founder of Out of Joint theatre company and a very important name for the British theatre who would later be acknowledged, along with Stephen Daldry, for his contributions to the new writing in British theatre as he commissioned and directed many of the first plays by the writers that shaped the contemporary British drama (Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 403; Sierz, *Modern British Playwriting* 55). With Stafford-Clark's encouragement, Ravenhill wrote *Shopping and Fucking* (1996) which brought him national and international fame as well as providing him a space among the young representatives of new writing that took the British theatre by storm in the 1990s (Billington, *State of the Nation* 358-9; Svich, "Commerce and Morality" 89; Urban 140; Rebellato, "Commentary" xii; Sierz, *Modern British Playwriting* 57-58).

After *Shopping and Fucking*, Ravenhill was recognised as part of "in-yer-face theatre" (also known as "New Brutalism," "Cool Britania," "theatre of urban ennui"), along with Sarah Kane and Anthony Neilson; these playwrights were distinguished by their use of violence, sex, explicit language presented in a provocative manner on stage (Sierz, *In-Yer-Face Theatre*; *Modern British Playwriting* 57-58; Billington, *State of the Nation*

358-9; Svich, "Commerce and Morality" 89; Rebellato, "Commentary" xii). The main criticism of Ravenhill's plays of the 1990s, such as *Shopping and Fucking* (1996), *Faust Is Dead* (1997), *Handbag* (1998) and *Some Explicit Polaroids* (1999), focus on in-yer-face qualities, with the exception of Dan Rebellato's analysis of them as new examples of British political drama ("Introduction" ix-xx).

Saunders regards the criticism on Ravenhill's early plays as partial and stresses the importance of their queer nature: "In a short period of time between *Shopping and Fucking* (1996) and *Some Explicit Polaroids* (1999), Ravenhill has quietly brought about a transition from . . . gay drama to . . . queer theatre" (164). Ravenhill also recognises the queer vision of his own work and states that he refuses to use the word "gay" to define his own sexuality, and through his plays, he aims to challenge the pieties of gay politics and narratives which turned gayness into a style and made it fashionable (Ravenhill qtd. in Sierz, "Mollygamous;" Rebellato, "Commentary" xxxvii). With his depiction of gay sexuality in its most explicit and crude form in these early plays, Ravenhill challenges gay stereotypes through the gay heroin addict Mark, and the teenage rent boy Garry in *Shopping and Fucking* (1996), with the criticism of irresponsible gay parenting in *Handbag* (1998), and through the dependent relationship between Tim and his sex slave Victor in *Some Explicit Polaroids* (1999). In these plays, Ravenhill problematises the idealised presentation of gay identity. Yet, it was his presentation of a wide spectrum of queer sexualities in *Mother Clap's Molly House* that led to his being classified as "the first true queer writer" (De Jong, "Interview" 125).

The initial sketches of *Mother Clap's Molly House* were drawn as part of a project with drama students at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in 2000, and later the project developed into a professional play which opened at the National Theatre in 2001 (Ravenhill, "Living Writer's" 00:05:40). The play was Ravenhill's first play at the National Theatre, and it was also regarded as a stimulant for the National Theatre which was under criticism for staging "too many 'safe' and commercial plays" at the time (Robbins). Although the play received quite positive reviews, its high production demands, a live orchestra and "a cast of fourteen-plus playing multiple roles," caused

Mother Clap's Molly House to be one of Ravenhill's least performed plays "on the global theatre circuit" (Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 410-12).

Mother Clap's Molly House is a defining moment in Ravenhill's long career which shows how Ravenhill evolved from "a youthful *agent provocateur*" into "an established figure in British theatre, an associate of the National Theatre, a mentor of young playwrights" (Saunders 164; Alderson 878; Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 403). *Mother Clap's Molly House* is also regarded as a turning point in Ravenhill's career both in terms of its break with in-yer-face theatre, and as his last play that focuses on the interactions between sex and commerce. In the following works, such as *Product* (2005), *The Cut* (2006), *Pool (No Water)* (2006), *Shoot/ Get Treasure/ Repeat* (2008), *Over There* (2009), Ravenhill "became more concerned with the effects of globalisation on local and immediate lives, figures of authority and how they wielded power to corrupt their citizenry, and the role of art and how it speaks to culture, if at all" (Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 419). In 2007, in an article in the *Guardian*, Ravenhill wrote that he would focus on creating heterosexual characters in the future, and his plays *The Experiment* (2009), *Ten Plagues* (2010) are products of this new sensibility (qtd. in Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 404).

Ravenhill is regarded as "the best" among the new writers of the 1990s to capture the mode of the decade, but also as the one with the longest and the most diverse career (Saunders 163; Billington, *State of the Nation* 360; Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 405). This long and diverse career bears the traces of many writers and theatrical traditions before him. Billingham regards Ravenhill's "subversive social and political" commentaries as a continuation of the gay writers before him such as Oscar Wilde and Joe Orton and relates his "uncompromising sensationalism" as an in-yer-face writer to Edward Bond (np). Also, the ironic and cynical tone Ravenhill uses in reflecting the sensibility of modern times is viewed as an influence of the novels of American blank generation, such as Bret Easton Ellis's *Less than Zero* (1985), *American Psycho* (1991) and Douglas Coupland's *Generation X* (1991) (Rebellato, "Commentary" xxi; Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 406). Ravenhill admits that he is influenced by David Mamet's dialogue, as well as Caryl Churchill's theatricality (qtd. in Sears, *In-Yer-Face Theatre* 124). In

addition to all these influences, he also uses techniques from theatrical traditions such as epic theatre, Greek theatre and Restoration drama, all of which can also be observed in *Mother Clap's Molly House* (Saunders 163).

Ravenhill defines *Mother Clap's Molly House* in its introduction as "a fantasia on historical themes" which, he hopes, "asks fresh questions about sexuality and the market place" ("Introduction" x). The play shifts between two stories which take place in London in two different centuries. The first part opens in the 18th century in a dress shop which hires dresses, mostly, to prostitutes. The owner of the shop, Stephen suffers from lustful thoughts and dies of pox. His wife, Tull, is left intimidated by the responsibility of running the dress shop as a woman in a highly capitalist environment. After a few unsuccessful attempts to hire dresses to the prostitutes, the conflict between desire and commerce that brought her husband's end becomes Tull's saviour as she transforms the business into a molly house. The second part of the play takes place in 2001 at a sex party hosted by wealthy gay men. As the party progresses, it becomes more evident how lives of most contemporary characters are devoid of feeling and emotion, and how their desires are commodified.

The first element that distinguishes *Mother Clap's Molly House* from the gay plays of the previous decade, which focus on the creation of a single model of gayness "reifying difference of homosexual and heterosexual" is its presentation of "new pluralism of queer" (Stevens 83). Queer theory made it its core responsibility to encourage proliferation of desires, and to give voice to sexual identities, such as bisexuality, transsexuality, transgender, sadomasochism and many disputed and undefined sexualities, "that are not represented in the dominant gay identity constructions" (Spargo 30-1; Seidman, "Identity and Politics" 122; Salih 67), and regarded as "threatening" to the respectability of gay and lesbian communities as a result of their "abject abnormality" (Hall, *Queer Theories* 12). This all-encompassing queer vision is reflected in *Mother Clap's Molly House* with its rich catalogue of sexually diverse characters. With its cast of fourteen-plus people playing multiple roles, *Mother Clap's Molly House* is Ravenhill's "largest cast play" (Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 410), in addition to being the most colourful and sexually diverse. This diversity of *Mother*

Clap's Molly House, which allows the presentation of a rich queer culture, is established around its dual plot structure with each plot contributing to the queer vision of the play in its own way.

The 18th-century part of the play belongs to "a period in history where sexuality hadn't quite yet been defined, but was very active" (Ravenhill, "Interview" 99). Conforming to "the notion that sexuality may bridge social divisions," the molly house opened by Tull becomes a merging point that brings characters with various undefined desires together and creates a diverse group which can only be defined as queer. While all other sexual labels group people according to their similarities, queer, as an undefining category, brings people together around their differences (Davidson, *Queer Commodities* 25). Different sexualities that make up the queer community of the 18th-century plot include a promiscuous heterosexual male character called Stephen; his wife Tull; a group of female prostitutes who appear as their customers and represent the heterosexual but commercialised end of sexuality; Stephen and Tull's apprentice Martin and his friend Orme, who make a transition from being curious "wanderers" of "Sodomites Walk" to the first mollies in the molly house; Princess Seraphina who comes to the dress shop as a virgin heterosexual male tailor in a dress; Lawrence, a married "pig man," who claims to have come to the molly house out of economic necessity (84), and lastly, a group of unnamed mollies. The polymorphous nature of the "play's bawdy rapturously Hogarthian first half," as it is defined by Svich ("Mark Ravenhill" 411), owes this queer atmosphere mostly to Tull's non-judgemental business ethics, which turns the molly house into a land of possibilities where "each finds his own pleasure" in a different shape (87). The characters who are not tainted with the knowledge of well-defined sexual categories can only express themselves in their difference, which leads to the creation of a queer picture.

In the second part of the play, the sex orgy organised by Will and Josh also brings different people together around the notion of sexuality. Yet, the atmosphere is less colourful, and the libertarian philosophy of Tull seems to have disappeared. The hosts Will and Josh are a modern gay couple who no longer have sex with each other. Among their guests are Edward and Phil who are gay and interested in sadomasochistic

activities,Tom, a newly out gay man, and a heterosexual drug-dealer couple, Tina and Charlie. With their personal differences, these contemporary characters contribute to the diversity that creates the general queer vision of the play; however, they represent a stage in the history of sexuality where fluid and unstable experiences of the self are fixed. The "most basic, queer controversies . . . battles over identity and naming (who I am, who we are)," (Gamson 397), which govern the first part of the play, are given up; the vibrant energy coming from exploration is lost. The following quote by Sedgwick can be used to illustrate the change observed between the two settings of the play:

> What *was* new from the turn of the century was the world-mapping by which every given person, just as he or she was necessarily assignable to a male or a female gender, was now considered necessarily assignable as well to a homo- or a hetero-sexuality, a binarized identity that was full of implications, however confusing, for even the ostensibly least sexual aspects of personal existence. It was this new development that left no space in the culture exempt from the potent incoherences of homo/heterosexual definition. (*Epistemology of the Closet* 2)

So, the tension that governs the 21st-century part of the play can be explained by the confused sexual state of the characters whose ontology is shaped by the homo/hetero binary imposed on them by the heteronormative system. In this sense, while the first part of *Mother Clap's Molly House* can be interpreted as an example of queer culture, the second part can be regarded as a representation of the more normative and limited positioning of the gay community. However, this classification of the two sections of the play is not a definitive one. As it will be further discussed below, while the 18th-century part also provides examples to limited identity formations, the 21st-century part may manifest instances of resistance to a normative understanding of sexuality, and together, these two parts contribute to the problematisation of normative, binary, commercial identity forms and the creation of a queer vision in *Mother Clap's Molly House*.

Notably, the two of the sexual desires *Mother Clap's Molly House* exemplify are given a special place in queer theory with their potential to disturb the hetero/homo binary regime. The first one is the bisexual orientation of Lawrence, the pig-men from the 18th century, and the second one is the sadomasochistic interests of Edward and Phil from the 21st century, though neither of these labels are used in the play to describe these men. Lawrence is introduced in the play as a customer brought from Moorfields, the

cruising area otherwise known as the "Sodomites Walk," to the molly house (30, 69). Different from the other mollies in the play, he finds it difficult to adapt to the workings of the molly house with his unwillingness to dress up (70), take a molly name (73), and have sex in public (88). Lawrence comes to Tull's room to ask for the keys to a private parlour. There, he makes a move at Tull, and after he is turned down, goes to have sex with Martin, dressed as Kitty Fisher (93). Lawrence describes himself as a married man and says that he "fuck[s] lads" nowadays "cos woman's needy and whores want paying" (89). Lawrence, with his acknowledgement of being attracted to more than one gender, provides an example for "the bisexual critique" of queer theory of homo/hetero division in modern sexual categorisations (Seidman, "Identity and Politics" 122).

In her seminal book, *Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick criticises the heterosexist system's tendency to accept "gender of object choice" as the main criteria for determining one's sexuality and regards this view as one of the main sources of "the long crisis of modern sexual definition" (1-2, 8-9). With its resistance to specify a single gender of object choice, bisexuality cannot be explained through homosexual/heterosexual division, and it is regarded as a further deviation of sexuality (Hemmings 24). This way, bisexuality not only poses a threat to the heteronormative system as a reminder of "the possibility of legitimating desires other than gender preference as grounds for constructing alternative identities, communities, and politics" but also it is regarded as a "threat" by gays and lesbians, as it disturbs their privileged position in the system established on "the hetero/homo divide" (Seidman, "Identity and Politics" 121-122; Beemyn and Eliason 6). So, Lawrence is presented in the play as an example of "true sexual dissidents" who resist both subcultural and also "societal" constraints and categories (Sinfield qtd. in Saunders 183).

In a similar way to bisexuality, sadomasochistic practices, presented in the contemporary setting of *Mother Clap's Molly House* through the characters Edward and Phil, are also matters of special interest in queer theory with their ability to disturb heterosexual and homosexual identity categories. Sadomasochism "represent[s] a site of cultural conflict" on a theoretical basis because it cannot be situated on solid ground as an identity (Duncan, "Identity Power and Difference" 88). Many of the acts that form

sadomasochism change constantly depending on imagination and fantasy; its participants do not assume fixed positions, and power constantly changes hands (Duncan, "Identity Power and Difference" 88). All these issues make it difficult to categorise sadomasochism as a sexual identity. In addition to these definitional problems, sadomasochism also challenges "the inclusive ideal of assimilationist politics" in society (Spargo 31). In the mainstream heterosexist society, sadomasochists are diminished into an abject position as their practices are regarded "as sick, perverse, and abnormal" (Duncan, "Identity Power and Difference" 87). In their media representations, they are either depicted as "bleak and dangerous . . . impoverished, ugly . . . psychopaths and criminals" or as individuals who suffer in the hands of "conflict and guilt" (Duncan, "Identity Power and Difference" 92). Besides, they are also declared "dangerous and unwanted" by the mainstream gay and lesbian communities as a threat to their respectability (Park 15).

In the queer context of *Mother Clap's Molly House*, sadomasochism is presented in an uncomplicated and casual way. Even Tina, the excessively homophobic character of the 21st century, does not single out Edward and Phil as sadomasochist in her attacks. On the contrary, in the insensitively hedonistic atmosphere of the 21st-century, the only human connection is established between Tina and Edward at the end of the play, when Edward saves Tina's life by giving her a mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (103). This moment is not presented in *Mother Clap's Molly House* in a sentimental manner, as there is no place for sentimentality in the consumerist 21st-century setting, but it challenges the prejudices concerning sadomasochism in the heterosexual and homosexual society. As stated, all these different characters from two different historical periods represent the wide spectrum of sexual practices and orientations of queer culture; thus, they are presented in the most sexualised way possible without having any privileged status over another.

While commenting on queer's function as an umbrella term for various kinds of different sexualities and desires, Gamson argues that "[a]n inclusive queerness threatens to turn identity to nonsense, messing with the idea that identities (man, woman, gay, straight) are fixed, natural, core phenomena, and therefore solid political ground (399).

By proposing queer as a concept that can cover all gender identities, queer theory posits a resistance to definitions and labels which present identity as a coherent part of the self. Judith Butler regards this resistance as one of the most important tasks of gender studies; she argues that only by "mobilization of identity categories" their functioning as the instruments of "regulatory regimes" can be prevented (*Gender Trouble* xxvi, 21-22).

The queer resistance to stable gender categories can be best explained with Butler's theory of performativity. Butler introduces the idea in her book *Gender Trouble* where she defies the existence of an essential force that leads to the creation of stable gender; she problematises the concept of gender and focuses on the process of its construction. According to Butler, the gendered body "has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality" (*Gender Trouble* 136). So, rather than being a natural part of the self, gender is performatively produced as the result rather than the cause of repeatedly practised acts. These acts eventually create the illusion of "a natural sort of being;" however, this illusion is not created as a result of free choices made by the subject (it is not a performance), but rather it depends on "a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal[s] over time" (performative) (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 33). In queer theory, exposing the process of identity construction, that is, bringing the performative nature of gender into the light is regarded as the first step of challenging the heteronormative system. In its queer vision, revealing the performative nature of the gender identity plays an essential role in *Mother Clap's Molly House* and this issue will be discussed around three characters from the play: the drastic change in Tull's gender roles, Amy's transition between genders and Princess Seraphina's struggle to define himself with one gender category.

With her roots in the feminist theory, Butler starts her questioning of gender categories in *Gender Trouble* with the category of woman. Similar to Butler, Ravenhill also starts problematising the concept of an unchanging and stable identity through the changes in Tull's perception of her gender roles as a woman. Rather than abiding by a single version of womanhood, throughout the play, Tull redefines herself both through her actions and through the names she chooses for herself. At the beginning of the play, Tull appears as an oppressed woman whose perception of herself is strictly defined "by

gendered social limits" of her time (Harvie 165). Being at the counter as a result of her husband's illness comes to her as a very peculiar experience because her role has always been mending the dresses at the back of the shop (6-7). She seems to have internalised her role as a submissive and ignorant woman so much that when her husband tries to convince her of his "lustful deeds," she shows resistance to believe him in the most exaggerated manner (11-12).

According to Butler, such an insistence to adhere to "the gender hierarchy" of "a masculinist signifying economy" also positions the subject "within the framework of an emergent collation" which requires her adherence to heterosexist matrix of power as well (*Gender Trouble* 18-19). As Butler further argues,

> The heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between "feminine" and "masculine," where these are understood as expressive attributes of "male" and "female." The cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of "identities" cannot "exist"—that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which the practices of desire do not "follow" from either sex or gender (*Gender Trouble* 22-23).

Therefore, Tull's position as a docile, conformist woman also creates her hostile reaction to Princess Seraphina, who comes to the shop as a man in a dress at the beginning of the play and asks for a job. Tull sends him away with the following words: "See—good Lord made two natures. Him. Thass man. And then—bit of his rib—woman. Thass me. There in't no room for third sex. You're against Nature" (9). Because her vision is limited by her binary understanding of masculinity and femininity, Tull refuses the existence of a gender outside this binary structure. Her acceptance of conservative gender roles not only shapes her perception of herself but also her perception of Princess as well. Hence, Tull becomes a proof of the queer view that regards identity as "an effect of identification with and against others: [an] ongoing, and always incomplete . . . process rather than a property" (Jagose 79). Although she starts her journey with a patriarchal and heterosexist understanding of the world which makes her deny the existence of a third gender, at the end of the play, as a result of this constant process of identity formation, Tull becomes the guardian of the queer world which moves beyond the category of a "third sex" (Saunders 181). Tull's drastic

transition from one attitude to the other lays bare the very subtle process of identity construction, which would normally go unnoticed.

The way Tull's changing gender roles is presented in *Mother Clap's Molly House* also coincides with Butler's argument that the performative construction of gender starts at a linguistic level. Butler argues that the moment the sex of a baby is announced as "It's a girl!," she leaves the pronoun "it" behind; through the domain of language, the "interpellation of [her] gender" begins, and throughout her life, her gender is "reiterated by various" other acts (*Bodies That Matter* xvii, 176). In Tull's example, her transition from one performatively constructed gender to another also happens at a linguistic level. Each change in Tull's life comes with a new name. The moment she decides "moving out of whores" and "moving into mollies," Tull also declares "In't Tull no more. Tull's dead and buried see. From this day on all shall call me Mother" (54-55). Later, as an indication of her involvement with the molly life, she also accepts being called "Mother Clap," despite its negative meaning as a sexually transmitted disease ("Clap"). Lastly, when she leaves for the country at the end of the play, Tull feels that "none of the previous [names] can actually account for the complexities of her new self" (Monforte "Witnessing, Sexualised Spectatorship" (158). She sheds off her former identities by saying, "Away from this world. And on to the new. Whatever we are. Just the four of us. Princess, Kitty, Susan and … Lord, who am I? […] If I in't Tull and I in't Clap, who am I?" (105-106). These declarations are performative statements that show Tull is about to start a new a sequence of acts which will "do" her a new identity in a performative manner (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 33).

Through Amy and Princess Seraphina's transition from one gender identity to another, *Mother Clap's Molly House* provides two more examples that challenge the performative identity creation; this time, with a more visible change on the gendered body. Amy is introduced into the play as a new prostitute in town who is very much aware of the power of her body as a commodity. Both as a result of this awareness and as a result of her youthful beauty, she is presented as the most sexualised female body in the play. She is so seductive and attractive that her temptation of Stephen causes his death at the end of scene i (18). Additionally, the discovery of her pregnancy becomes

the proof of her reproductive capacity and strengthens her heterosexual position in the play (37). However, this stylisation of the heterosexual female body, which congeals over time through her repetition of rigid heteronormative acts such as temptation and pregnancy, is disrupted in Act II when she enters the stage "dressed as a man," named Ned (70). The play shows the reader/audience how performative gender creation can be interrupted. By chopping her/his hair and slipping into breeches Amy/Ned's behaviour code also changes. She is transformed from being a prostitute to being the errand boy for the molly house. At the end of the play, when Tull is moving to the country, Amy/Ned volunteers to be the man to protect the group from the dangers of "thieving and raping in the country" (108). Hence, by shifting from one side of the binary opposition to the other, Amy' s example exposes the arbitrariness of binary oppositions.

While in Amy's case, her transition from one gendered body to the other disturbs the performative process of identity creation, Princess Seraphina's defiance of an unproblematic gender performance results from the "convergence of heterosexuality and homosexuality in [one] person" (*Gender Trouble* 31). Butler uses that expression while theorising on the medical case of Herculine Barbin, a French intersex person whose diaries were discovered and published by Foucault in 1980 (*Herculine Barbin*). Rather than being interested in Barbin's anatomical state, Butler problematises hermaphrodite condition as the evidence of "the sexual impossibility of an identity" as it proves "the notion of an abiding substance . . . a fictive construction" (*Gender Trouble* 31-32). Princess Seraphina's story in *Mother Clap's Molly House* is also presented as the evidence of such an impossibility. Princess comes to the dress shop asking for a job, and he introduces himself as a man in a dress (8). Later, as he develops feelings for Tull, he takes off his dress, wears "men clothes" and "goes back to his real name. William" (97). However, his attempt to alter his gender performatively by impersonating a male identity through wearing male outfits and adopting a male name fails. When Tull kisses this new Princess dressed as William, with each kiss, she feels someone different: "Man. Woman. Hermaphrodite" (99). Tull, who used to react even to the possibility of another gender outside the categories of man and woman at the beginning of the play, this time, embraces, both figuratively and literally, the impossibility of a coherent gender category by accepting Princess as a man, a woman and a hermaphrodite in one body. At the end of the play, Princess also relinquishes the idea of limiting himself to

one specific outlook and decides to go "someday skirts, someday breeches" (103). In Princess's case, maintaining a stable gendered-self is presented as an illusion, and *Mother Clap's Molly House* shows how sexuality is intrinsically unstable despite the heteronormative system's imposition of the contrary.

Tull's move between different versions of womanhood, Amy's abandonment of one gender identity for another, and Princess's Seraphina's defiance of all categories by being everything at once are only the most explicit examples of resistance to a coherent and stable gender identity formation in *Mother Clap's Molly House*. In the 18th-century setting, sex is joyfully enjoyed in various forms by all mollies as Tull's words suggest: "Tonight rules left at the door. What do you wanna be today? Maid or man? You decide. Husband or wife? You choose. Ravished or ravisher. Thass for you to say. Cos there in't no bugger here gonna tell you what to be" (74). Hence, as they discover their sexuality in this playful atmosphere, every molly can be regarded as an example to the fluidity of sexuality, therefore a challenge to the well-defined and coherent gender formations. In the 21st-century setting, the more stable and limited sexual positioning of the characters also reveals the constructedness of gender identity when viewed alongside the shifting gender roles in the background. Moreover, as Alderson suggests, in the 21st-century setting, the play avoids labelling its contemporary characters with a "distinct category," except for one time where Charlie and Tina refer to the hosts of the party as "poofs" (60); instead, it allows the readers/audiences to make their own deductions about the gender identity of the characters (876). This cautious attitude towards the use of labels also can be regarded as an indication of the queerness of the play which "is not concerned with definition, fixity or stasis, but is transitive, multiple and anti-assimilationist" (Salih 9).

In queer theory, attempts of "denaturalizing, proliferating and unfixing identities" always depend on the hope of challenging the hegemonic and binary system that gives heterosexuality a privileged position over dissonant sexualities (Salih 67). According to Warner, the privileged position of heterosexuality depends on "heteronormativity," the perception that regards heterosexuality as the only original, natural and normal form of sexuality, and a heterosexual culture which is ruled by a heteronormative vision

develops an "exclusive ability to interpret itself as society" ("Introduction" xxi-xxv). The rights granted to marginalised sexualities within a heteronormative system only creates "a safe zone for queer sex," while the overall society is still governed by a heterosexual perspective which in every decision, whether it is sexual, social or political, only honours the heterosexual couple (Warner, "Introduction" xxi). Therefore, as much as it is interested in proliferating queer identities, queer theory also aims at replacing the heteronormative system with a queer culture in which social, political, and sexual equality will be guaranteed for all types of identities in all different fields of life (Berlant and Warner 548).

By prioritising a queer way of life, *Mother Clap's Molly House* challenges the heteronormative system in many different ways. First of all, in a queer attempt to reverse "the hetero/homo binary" which "serves to define heterosexuality at 'the center'" (Richardson and Seidman 8), the play places heterosexuality in a marginalised position in both the 18th and 21st-century settings. In the 18th century, the patriarchal and heterosexual system that opens the play gradually surrenders to the queer climate. Tull's heterosexual husband dies defeated by his lecherous lifestyle, and prostitutes who controlled the sex industry till that time are overpowered by the molly house. As Saunders argues, in the play, the streets of "Hogarthian London" are associated with impoverished "whores and backstreet abortions," while molly house is presented as a hedonistic place of merrymaking (178).

In the second part of the play, drug dealers, Charlie and Tina also maintain a minority status at the party as the only heterosexual people in the group. Especially, Tina is reduced to a "marginalised position as a displaced heterosexual woman in a queer world" as a result of her excessively homophobic stand and animosity against the luxurious and hedonistic lifestyle (Saunders 182). Her extreme homophobia can be observed in the way she bursts out to Will as he tries to move her away from the sofa while she bleeds: "Get your hands off me. You fucking poof! I hate you. I hate you all. I hate your money. I hate your big houses. And I hate your sofas. Fucking sticking your fists up each other. Fucking disgusting. /Fucking sick (65). While Tina's utterance can be interpreted as a sign of her dislike of consumerist gay culture that governs the

modern part of the play, it can also be regarded as a sign of Sedgwick's concept of "homosexual panic" which she uses to define heterosexual culture's and closeted homosexual's paranoid response to the diverse, fluid and indeterminate nature of non-conformative sexualities ("The Beast in the Closet" 182-212). This confused and nervous state of mind also reflects itself in Tina's personal life as an obsession with piercing her body, which she describes as: "It is always you chose, babe, you decide. But I can't choose. I just wanna pierce myself. To pass the time. And it doesn't mean anything. Nothing means anything, does it?" (102). However, this pastime almost kills her when the last piercing she had on her vagina bleeds most of the time she is on stage till she loses her consciousness and stops breathing. Her transformation from a hostile woman to a physically and emotionally vulnerable person makes her one of those characters of queer literature who "aggressively present themselves as straight, straightforward, singular and stable," to the point they cannot hide their instability and underlying "queerness" (Salih 9).

The degradation of Tina's heterosexual body through her continuous vaginal bleeding in the play is structured in a parallel way with Amy's bleeding as a result of her abortion, and this parallelism is strengthened by the fact that both characters are played by the same actress. While Tina's futile attempt to resolve her confused and angry heterosexual state by mutilating her body with piercings problematises a steady heterosexual representation in the play, Amy's disillusionment with her sexualised body, which makes her abandon it and become Ned, also stresses heterosexuality's instability. Moreover, this similarity between Tina and Amy helps to structure another parallelism between two settings that challenge the secure position of heterosexuality. While Amy triggers Stephen's death in the 18th century by tempting him (18), Edward, the HIV positive and sadomasochistic character of the 21st century, also played by the same actor who plays Stephen, saves Tina's life (103; Borowski 140). With this ironic twist, Stephen's role as the defeated heterosexual is given to Tina and by saving Tina, Edward, a member of the queer world she despises, gains a superior position.

Tina and Charlie's relationship in *Mother Clap's Molly House* also disturbs the heteronormative idea of presenting "the heterosexual couple" as the referent or the

privileged example of sexual culture" (Berlant and Warner 548). Tina and Charlie lead a dysfunctional relationship which is devoid of real connection and communication. While Charlie tries to fill the emotional void in Tina's life by buying her things, he does not seem interested in how she feels. As soon as they appear in the play, Charlie starts complaining about Tina in the most offensive and disrespectful manner, calling her "disturbed" and a "fucking headcase" (58). On the other hand, Tina is also not concerned about Charlie's aspirations, his dreams about having kids, quitting dealing and retiring to the country; Tina interrupts and refutes him constantly (58). Thus, Charlie and Tina are presented in *Mother Clap's Molly House* as a challenge to the prevalent idea of a respectful, reproductive, concordant heterosexual couple.

Mother Clap's Molly House's challenge to heteronormativity is not limited to the problematisation of the privileged status of heterosexuality; also, some concepts that are naturalised and presented as norms by the heteronormative system are brought to attention and questioned in the play. The first concept that is queered in the play as a challenge to the heteronormative system is motherhood, one of its most celebrated and sanctified norms of the patriarchal system. According to Park, motherhood and queerness have a problematic relationship, in that, queerness is viewed as incompatible with motherhood both theoretically and practically: "[t]heoretically, queerness resists narratives of reprosexuality," and practically, "heteronormative and domestinormative practices, schedules, routines and concerns" that comes with motherhood do not agree with queer lifestyle (Park 18, 1). However, with its resistance to clear-cut identity categories, queer theory also leaves room for queer forms of mothering that comes with previous marriages, bisexual relationships, or adoption possibilities (Park 1-19). As a result of this complex relationship between motherhood and queerness, the concept of motherhood is questioned in *Mother Clap's Molly House* from different perspectives. This multi-layered questioning can be observed in relation to four different characters.

Tull can be considered as the most important character in the problematisation of motherhood, whose relationship to the concept is also reflected in the title of the play. As the 18th-century setting follows Tull's transformation as a woman, her relationship with motherhood also changes steadily. At the beginning of the play, as a reflection of

her conventional, patriarchal and hegemonic worldview, Tull feels burdened by not having been able to fulfil her reproductive responsibility: "Heart said kid. Head said kid. Just Body could never hold on for more 'an a month […] Oh, I wanted to hold on to 'em. Wanted that more than the world. Just my body never could" (16). This unfulfilled desire governs Tull's relationship with the (first heteronormative, later queer) world from the beginning of the play till the end. After her husband's death, Tull tries to find the courage to take over her husband's business in spite of the gender roles assigned to her. At the end of scene ii, Martin makes use of Tull's motherly sentiments to manipulate her into maintaining the business: "Mrs Tull, you gotta . . . I'm looking to you. I in't Man, I'm Boy. Boy needs protecting, guiding, boy needs . . . Look after me. Thass your duty" (25). Tull's fascination with motherhood also affects her first business interactions after she opens the shop. Amelia cunningly uses Amy's pregnancy for a discount (38-40) and leaves Tull defeated both financially and emotionally after Amy aborts the child despite the deal. With this defeat, Tull leaves her search for biological motherhood behind, and her journey as Mother Clap starts.

Clearly, the first phase of Tull's relationship with motherhood is governed by a reproductive understanding of the concept. It revolves around Tull's and Stephen's inability to reproduce (with a focus on Tull's body) and Amy's ability to reproduce despite her decision to abort the baby. Meanwhile, the second phase, which encompasses Tull's time as Mother Clap, is the queer phase of motherhood, and it is based on the performance of motherhood: "Oh, it's all games here. Mother Clap? Thass a game. Princess? Game? We are all playing, in't we? Best we'll ever have" (78). At the end of the play, Tull also leaves this playful motherness behind. As they leave for the countryside, Martin comes carrying the wooden baby used in the birth scene and asks if Tull wants to take it with them. Tull tells him to leave it behind as she leaves behind all "games" (105). The move to the country can be interpreted as the start of a new life, more free of heteronormative imitations and conceptions. Tull and her companions form a family-like unit where "Princess Seraphina will be a man, a woman and a hermaphrodite for" Tull, and Tull, "although biologically a woman, is the one assuming the male social role providing for her family through the rent of her house in London" (Ciudad 494). Therefore, it can be argued that in this new unit, it is not

possible to talk about strictly defined social roles, and Tull leaves motherhood behind both as a reproductive yearning and a playful performance.

In the play, Tull's close connection with motherhood and her unfulfilled maternal desires contradict with Amy and Tina's refusal to become mothers despite their reproductive potential. Tina does not want to become a mother despite Charlie's wish to start a family (58), and it is suggested that because of her piercings that extend to her vagina, she is "alienated from any natural capacity for childbirth" (Alderson 876). While Tina builds a metaphorical barrier between herself and motherhood through her piercings, Amy cuts her ties with motherhood by aborting "her child in order to stay profitable" (Alderson 876). This way, through Tina and Amy's resistance to become mothers, *Mother Clap's Molly House* queers the traditional concept of motherhood which "resides at the intersection of patriarchy with its insistence that women bear responsibility for biological and social reproduction" (Park 7). Also, Tull's yearning to become a mother despite her inability to reproduce and her incorporation of this desire in her life in different ways facilitate discussion on "queering motherhood" which questions "biocentric theories of motherhood" and celebrates possibilities of mothering "outside of heteronormative contexts" (Park 1-19).

Another version of motherhood presented in *Mother Clap's Molly House* is the appropriation of motherhood into the molly culture. As Warner suggests, "Familial language deployed to describe sociability in race- or gender-based movements (sisterhood, brotherhood, fatherland, mother tongue . . .) can either be a language of exile for queers or a resource of irony (in voguing houses, for example, one queen acts as 'Mother')" ("Introduction" xviii). For mollies in *Mother Clap's Molly House*, deployment of familial language fulfils both functions mentioned by Warner. First of all, the concept of motherhood (and also fatherhood) is introduced to the molly world by Orme. After he follows Martin to the dress shop for the first time, Orme talks to him about the life of "sodomites;" he says they are forced to wander in the dark as they have "[n]o home. Mother and Father wun't have 'em. So—out into the night and…grope away. Give 'em a home and that'd all be different. Let your molly be a family. Let your molly be Father or Mother" (31). Soon after this nostalgic remark, which can also be

interpreted as the idea behind the molly house, Orme addresses his masters Philips and Kedger, who come to look for him, as: "Mother. (*Philips*) And Father. (*Kedger*) Because my real father was a beater of children and animals. And my mother was transported long ago her wickedness. So now we must play at families" (33). Orme's longing for a mother and father and his starting the game of mothering because of this need make his appropriation of the terms mother and father into the molly culture an example of, what Warner calls, "a language of exile" ("Introduction" xviii). However, after this first introduction, the way these words are used by Philips and Kedger, and later, by other mollies in various games, turn them into "resources of irony" using Warner's terminology, or into "gender parody" as Butler describes them ("Introduction" xviii; *Gender Trouble 175*). The irony or gender parody, especially, arises from the conflict between the physical sex of the mollies and the adoption of the term "mother;" this conflict helps to denaturalise the notion of gender identification and "reveals that the original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin" (Butler, *Gender Trouble 175*).

Another parodic and problematic appropriation of the concept of motherhood into the molly culture can also be seen in the birthing scene in Act II scene vii (74-77). The idea of recreating a birth scene in the molly house is introduced by Tull as a way of resolving the problems in Orme/Susan and Martin/ Kitty's relationship. Hence, it can be analysed as the heteronormative act of imposing a heterosexual norm (the idea that marriage bonds strengthen with the birth of a child) into a queer environment by a heterosexual rule maker, that is Tull. However, the ironic and exaggerated way the birthing scene is enacted on stage and the refusal of the role of motherhood and fatherhood first by Orme/Susan and then by Martin/ Kitty turn the birthing game into a subversive and parodic performance of heteronormative gender roles and prevent it from becoming a homonormative appropriation of heteronormative idea.

Another incident in *Mother Clap's Molly House* where heteronormative gender roles are recreated in a parodic manner is the practice of drag. Drag occupies an important role in *Mother Clap's Molly House*. First of all, it is an essential characteristic of the molly culture that defines being a molly and separates it from the sodomites of the Morefield

Moors. Moreover, it functions as an important plot device that transforms the "tally house" into a molly house and establishes Tull's connection with the queer culture. Lastly and most importantly, on a theoretical level, drag serves as a subversive strategy to challenge the claims that heterosexual identity is authentic.

The practice of drag, as it is expressed in the play through the representation of molly house culture, has a crucial place in queer history. This historical practice gained a new recognition during the Stonewall riots as a result of the active contribution of transgenders and drag queens to the demonstrations (Clews 89). During the liberation movements, drag was associated with "the concept of 'gender fuck'" which meant a provocative political challenge to the expression of the gender division in the patriarchal system through dress and behaviour codes (Clews 89). However, in these early stages of resignification, drag was still a disputed topic, criticised by the assimilationist side of the gay movement as a way of reinforcing the stereotypical camp image, and by feminist theory as a bad imitation of stereotyped femininity (Spargo 58, 61). Butler challenges these viewpoints by insisting that drag is "not an imitation or a copy of some prior and true gender," or "the putting on of a gender that belongs properly to some other group" but it is a way of showing that "[t]here is no 'proper' gender, a gender proper to one sex rather than another" ("Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 312). By making use of the disjunction between "the anatomical sex" and "the gender performance" of the performer, drag draws attention to the constructedness of heterosexual identity creation. So, rather than asserting the notion of priority or originality, *"*[i]*n imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency* [emphasis in the original]" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 175).

Along with other gender parodies in *Mother Clap's Molly House*, drag is also used to subvert the dominance of heterosexuality over homosexuality in the binary understanding of heteronormativity. The mollies' imitation of female attributes are presented side by side with the identities which seem to develop in a more natural way, such as Tull's imitation of different models of being a heterosexual woman; Amy's imitation of, first, a young and sexy prostitute, then, protective young men; Pill's, Will's

and Josh's imitation of modern, urban, middle-class gay identity, and this paralell presentation reveals how being a molly, being a woman, a man, a gay or heterosexual person are equally constructs. Just like Tull establishes her identity as Mother Clap gradually, through repetition, at first by not protesting being addressed as "Mother," then, by using it as a name, and finally, by embracing it in its full form, Orme and Martin in drag also do their mollying in a performative manner; at first, with hesitation, then, with more confidence. By situating Princess Seraphina and mollies side by side, *Mother Clap's Molly House* also uses drag to proliferate the idea of cross-dressing by showing different versions of it. The play provides an alternative to drag with Princess's attire which is a form of cross-dressing that is not sexual in intent. Numerous times in the play, Princess Seraphina asserts that he is a heterosexual man in a dress, and he only dresses like this to be a character (23, 54). This way drag becomes one of the elements in *Mother Clap's Molly House* that is used both as an instrument of deconstructing, diversifying and resignifying gender identity as queer.

As it is stated above, *Mother Clap's Molly House*'s challenging of heteronormativity rests on its subversion of heterosexual privilege by disputing the stability of heterosexuality through the heterosexual characters and its questioning of motherhood as an undisputable heteronormative concept. While queer theory defies heteronormativity for its treatment of heterosexual values as the norm, it also holds homosexual community responsible for appropriating heterosexual norms into homosexual lives. Accordingly, this homosexual appropriation of heterosexual norms is defined by Duggan as "homonormativity" (50). In this sense, *Mother Clap's Molly House*'s questioning of queer community's attitude towards monogamy or its criticism of contemporary gay community's positioning within commercial society can be regarded as the examples of queer discussions about homonormativity in the play.

Queer theory problematises the concept of monogamy from two different angles; on the one hand, it rejects monogamy as a homonormative appropriation of heteronormative lifestyles enforced through the institutions of family and marriage. On the other hand, it problematises monogamy by arguing that sexualised relations between two people should not develop in a way that limits a wider circle of human connection; the

emotional ties between people should be sustained within diversely formulated kinship relations "beyond the heterosexual frame" (Butler, *Undoing Gender* 26). In *Mother Clap's Molly House*, homonormative modelling of monogamous attitudes in queer relationships is presented as complicated in the 18th century through Martin/Susan and Orme/Kitty's relationship and in the 21st century through Will and Josh's relationship. In the 18th century, Martin/Susan cannot tolerate Orme/Kitty's having sex with other mollies and throws himself in a jealous fit. Orme/Kitty, on the other hand, refuses the idea of an exclusive relationship: "what's the point of a molly house? Might as well be Man and Wife like rest of the world" (71). In a way, with these words, Orme/Kitty resists transforming the relationships in the molly house into a heterosexual marriage. Although at some point, his resistance falters as Orme/Kitty also feels jealous of Martin/Susan's having sex with Lawrence and declares his love to Martin/Susan (96), in the end, Orme/Kitty still chooses independence over monogamy. While Martin/Susan leaves for the country with Tull and Stephen, Orme/Kitty finds an excuse to stay in the molly house for a little more (107-108).

In a similar way, in the 21st century, Will is discontent with the complicated nature of his relationship with Josh. He resentfully talks about how they do not have sex anymore, and while Josh starts and ends affairs with others, Will finds it difficult to be attracted to people (84-85). In the strictly hedonist atmosphere of the 21st century, Will cannot express himself openly about his desire for a monogamous relationship as Martin/Susan does. Only at the end of the play, after Josh and Phil leave for another party, he asks Edward: "Don't you ever want to say: You're mine. And I want you to myself and I can't stand this fucking around. It's killing me" (102). However, Edward answers "Oh no. No fun in that at all, is there?" (102). Will also feels obliged to say "No, suppose not" and directs his attention to the stains on the sofa by saying "Oh fuck. Look at this sofa" (103). In this sense, Will's unfulfilled need for an emotional connection is directed to a commodified object.

In an interview, Ravenhill says that he does not "know how to get over the contradiction between monogamy and freedom" and neither does his characters (qtd. in Sierz "Mollygamous"). He presents queer community's relationship with monogamy as a

complicated one. On the one hand, with both the 18th and 21st-century examples, he suggests that a monogamous relationship does not have a place in a queer world. On the other hand, with the last dialogue of 21st-century setting part of the play, where Will directs his attention to his sofa when he is left behind by Phil, Ravenhill seems to suggest that a relationship without commitment can lead the individual to a lonely, consumerist state. These two conflicting readings can be resolved by comparing the endings of the two parts of the play. While at the end of the 21st-century part, Will is left behind with the stained sofa, unable to receive an emotional support from Edward as well, at the end of the 18th-century part, Martin/Kitty goes to the country, accompanied by a group with whom he has a healthy and "ethical enmeshment" (Butler, *Undoing Gender* 25), and he accepts a new life without Orme/Kitty and does not show any sign of bitterness. Hence, it is possible to assume that the play does not suggest a homonormative affirmation of monogamous relationships. It only makes a criticism of a world where the subject fails to form an emotional connection with his community and develops a dependent relationship with consumer products, because while Martin/Kitty gets over his unfulfilled desire for monogamy with support of the company he has, Will is not only burdened by Phil's affairs with others but he is also overlooked by Edward in his search for an emotional support. Therefore, he directs his attention at stains on the sofa.

Duggan regards homonormativity as an extension of the neoliberal philosophy and argues that "it is a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (50). This relationship Duggan builds between homonormativity and consumption becomes the main focus of *Mother Clap's Molly House*'s "queer deconstruction of a commodified, bourgeois gay identity" (Monforte, "Witnessing, Sexualized Spectatorship" 155) as the relationship between these concepts combines the play's criticism of consumerism and unified gay culture.

Ravenhill builds the play around the question how and why queer desire "hardened into a culture" and "became assimilated into the market place" (Ravenhill, "Interview" 99).

To guide the reader/audience towards an answer, he structures his play by shifting the plot between two similarly commercialised settings, the 18th-century and the 21st-century London which mark "first the rise and then the final triumph of capitalism in the western world" (Ciudad 489). To emphasise the predominance of commercial ideology in the 18th-century setting, the play opens up with God publicising commercial values as the guardian of the enterprise in the following words: "Enterprise, shall make you human/Getting, spending—spark divine/This my gift to you poor human:/Pure celestial, coin divine" (5). The characters of the play also abide by this divine call and extoll "the virtues of competition, individual choice, entrepreneurialism" and regard "the making of Money" as "a moral [and religious] duty" (Rebellato, "Commentary" xvi) as it is expressed by Tull in following words: "It's the makers, it's the savers, it's the spenders and traders who are most blessed. In't no love like the Lord's love of business" (10).

This privileged position of enterprise, however, is challenged by pleasure, which occupies a similarly central place in the 18th-century life as it can be seen from Stephen's example. Stephen suffers from pox, a symbol of his lustful desires, and as his death approaches, he feels more strained by the conflict between pleasure and industrial morality. With the arrival of prostitutes, this conflict materialises as a struggle between Amy, who wants to tempt Stephen, and Tull, who tries to keep his thoughts on business (16-17). Finally, this conflict overwhelms Stephen so much that he dies. However, the encounter between business and pleasure which kills Stephen becomes key to success for Tull. When she "decides to suppress her moral objections and hire her clothes to the mollies" (Alderson 875), God and Eros, who "frame the play's mercantile and Dionysian nature" (Svich, "Mark Ravenhill" 411) are "reconciled" and the chorus announces this union as the "marriage/ Of purse and arse and heart" (56).

The molly house is set up as a result of this reconciliation; the barriers between "capital accumulation" and "sexual expression" are lifted, and the molly house becomes a vibrant meeting place where different people with different desires come together and "explore, act out and celebrate" their desires (Drucker 19). Capitalism is transformed into the force behind Tull's non-judgemental position which is expressed in the following words:

> For that is the beauty of the business. It judges no one. Let your churchman send your wretch to Hell, let your judge send him to Tyburn or to colonies. A business woman will never judge—if your money is good […] And if your sodomite is a good customer, then that is where I shall do my business […] I shall turn my head away when prick goes into arse. And I shall look to my purse. And all will be well" (54-55).

In the 18th century, *Mother Clap's Molly House* presents capitalism as a facilitating energy, rather than a homonormative model in which oppressive industrial morality takes over queer desire and shapes and controls it.

The reconciliation of pleasure and market is also one of the promises of neoliberalism that is the ideology governing the second part of the play. While the welfare state was regarded as a regulatory regime that controlled reproduction with its funds and benefits (Sears 102), neoliberal economy, introduced to Britain with the Thatcher government, proposed the market to be the "the final arbiter of all . . . values" and this way, all demands of people, including those for pleasure, can be provided by the market "in their consumer choices" (Rebellato, "Commentary" xvi). This close connection between market and desire was especially effective in the formation of homosexual communities which, at the time, were in the process of being hardened into subcultures.

However, the relationship between the gay community and the commercial industry did not start with neoliberal politics; it was there at the earliest stages of the creation of liberated homosexual communities. Warner argues that although its results are criticised a lot, this initial interaction between the gay community and the commercialised industry developed organically not as a "result of" a conscious "evil intent" ("Introduction" xvii). Homosexual identities that emerged during and after the liberation movement grew around institutions and enterprises such as bars, bathhouses, cafes, shops, restaurants, cinemas and sex clubs which were commercialised and class-organised facilities (Davidson, *Queer Commodities* 6; Sears 105; Adam, "From Liberation" 17; Berlant and Warner 561; Badgett 473). As a result of this initial contact, the new gay subculture consisted of people with money and the means to go to these urban and commercialised spaces.

In the 1980s, the emerging gay community attracted the attention of the advertisement industry, and major corporations "came to view gay and lesbian communities as underexploited sources of consumer buying power," referred to as "the pink dollar" or "the pink pound" (Adam, "From Liberation" 17; Bengry, "Courting the Pink Pound" 122-148). As Danae Clark states, this interest was both promoted and noticed by the American printing press. America's leading gay magazine, *The Advocate*, revealed a survey conducted between 1977 and 1989 and stated that "70% of their readers aged 20-40 earned incomes well above the national median;" this statement attracted the attention of big companies such as Paramount, Seagram, Perrier, and Harper & Row which started to advertise in gay magazines or prepared advertisements specifically for gay customers (*Commodity Lesbianism* 187). *The New York Times Magazine* also announced this interest in 1982 with an article titled "Tapping the Homosexual Market" stating that "top advertisers are interested in 'wooing . . . the white, single, well-educated, well-paid man who happens to be homosexual'" (qdt. in Clark, *Commodity Lesbianism* 187). Hence, the corporate scene both started to promote "fashionable and expensive 'gay lifestyles'" for the gay community, and also, devised and sold "signifiers of gay and lesbian identity" to the mainstream market (Adam, "From Liberation" 17; Davidson, *Queer Commodities* 1). This commercial interest was celebrated by "so-called mainstream gay and lesbian community" as a way of mainstream recognition (Davidson, *Queer Commodities* 1); however, as Adam argues, with the passage of time, commercialisation erased the political consciousness of the liberation movement from the gay community and replaced it with a consumerist lifestyle ("From Liberation" 17).

As Davidson states, "consumption . . . shapes identities" (*Queer Commodities* 10), and it shaped gay identity as well. However, this potential power of consumption is not limited to the commercial sector's ability to shape people's styles or its capacity to provide communities with means to express themselves. As Sears argues, in consumerist societies, consumption shapes identities because market values that regulate consumption penetrate into "every corner of social life" (107). The market's ability to put an economic value on everything, including things that can not normally be valued in economic terms such as human life, art, love, happiness leads to the

creation of a society in which "our relationship to ourselves and others" is also judged by "neoliberal barometers of" gain and "success" (Rebellato, "Commentary" xvi; Winnubst 81). Any human interaction that does not provide the individual with economic gain, "pleasure, selfgratification and personal satisfaction" is rendered meaningless (Drucker 124).

Mother Clap's Molly House's criticism of consumerist gay society depends on these dehumanising effects of the consumerist ideology. The atmosphere of reconciliation in the 18th-century setting, where queer energy finds its own way to express itself freely within a capitalist frame, is replaced with a homonormative design in the 21st-century setting, where the resourceful queer energy is replaced with a gay community which appropriated the consumerist values of the heteronormative neoliberal system into its lifestyle without any resistance. As Billington states, in this homonormative system "innocent games have turned into fetishistic rites and that a onetime celebration of otherness has now led to a world of pink pounds and commercialised sex in which love is a precarious survivor" ("Dirty Work from Mark Ravenhill").

As Ravenhill describes it himself, the 21st-century setting is a representation of "ironic, easygoing times, where any hierarchy of values has melted away" (qtd. in Alderson 867). The characters of this new environment are devoid of any human connection that is not sexual, and they are incapable of deriving pleasure from sex while their desires are also highly commercialised. As a result of the gay community's intense exposition to commodification, the "experience of [their] bodies, eroticism and intimacy" is also framed by "consumer desire" (Sears 107; Davidson, *Queer Commodities* 34). In *Mother Clap's Molly House,* Will refutes Tom's advances saying that he is not his type, and he points at the TV screen where porn is being shown and tells how these bodies have become his type now but the attraction lasts "[u]ntil [he] actually meet[s] them. And then they open their mouth and it's a total turn off" (84-84). This remark illustrates how the pornography and film and print industries' constant supply of hot, fit, sexy images replace real human contact with the search for perfect bodies.

In addition to exemplifying how the homonormative enforcement of market values into gay lifestyles reduces gay relationships to mere sexual encounters and causes sexual

desire to be framed with market standards, *Mother Clap's Molly House* also shows how the human connection is replaced with dependence on consumer products in the contemporary gay community. Rebellato explains this dependence as an effect of the neoliberal economy: "For a fully functioning market to operate, everything must be assigned a monetary value, and the final result of this is to turn all values into economic values. Things that are hard to assign a monetary value to," such as human connection, are replaced with "things that are easily bought and sold" ("Commentary" xvi). This process is explained with the concept of "fungibility" in the free market economy which "refers to those goods and products on the market that are substitutable for one another," and according to Winnubst, the internalisation of this ideology in people's social lives leads to important changes in the social ontology of the society. People get used to substituting their needs and desires with fungible units also get used to substituting their emotional and human needs with commodities (92-94). Gay subcultures, especially, during their highly commercialised process of identity creation, develop a habit of "communicating through commodities;" hence, the transformation of desire from relationships to commodities manifests itself as a bigger problem (Davidson, *Queer Commodities* 20) as it can be seen from the examples of the highly consumerised contemporary characters in *Mother Clap's Molly House*.

In the 21st-century setting, characters who fail to establish strong human connections try to compensate their need to connect by getting attached to different objects. The most obvious example of this attachment, prevailing throughout the whole play, is Will's connection with his sofa. In a way that coincides with the stereotypical assumptions on the aesthetic tastes of gay people, Will regards their meticulously decorated, luxurious apartment as a means of self-expression, and the attention he pays to the sofa in the living room becomes an indication of that. Many times in the play, he tries to keep bleeding Tina away from the sofa (65,66); also when he sees Josh and Phil having sex on it, he interferes and suggests putting a cover on the sofa (81). As it is mentioned above, at the very end of the play, when his attempt to talk to Edward about his feelings for John fails, he immediately turns his attention to the material world, and says "Oh fuck. Look at this sofa" (103). As Edward leaves the room, Will stands alone over the sofa cursing "Oh, fuck it. Fuck it. Fuck it. Fuck it" (103). This ending, on the one

hand, contributes to Ravenhill's questioning of the clichés of gay lifestyle; through Will's fixation, Ravenhill satirises the perception of gay life as "fashionable" and "enviable" (Sierz, "Mollygamous"). On the other hand, Will's lonely and desperate image at the end serves as a powerful comment on the gay community's desolate consumerist state where damage done to a commodified object, such as a sofa, arises a greater response than the sight of suffering individuals such as Tina or Tom.

Mother Clap's Molly House's emphasis on the relationship between characters and commodities also demonstrates how the commodified products have a "mediating and alienating influence" on sexual interaction (Alderson 877). The first pair of characters who control sexual desire through objects are Phil and Edward. When they come to the party, they bring along a large bag which contains Edward's large "collection" of dildos, but plugs, poppers, a harness and a video camera (62-63). Edward, who does not have sex because he is HIV positive, enjoys himself at the party by recording other people having sex, providing props to them, and later, recreating these moments through editing the film he has shot. Rather than the act of sex itself, his bag of objects become his primary source of pleasure.

In addition to sex toys, drugs are also presented in the play as commodities that mediate desires. Seeing that Charlie has come for an early "[d]rop[ ] of supplies," Will depicts their extraordinary drug consumption rate in following words: "I thought we had enough for a week and then these silly queens came over for supper and—hover, hover—you would have thought Colombia was about to fall into the fucking ocean" (59). While these words present the general state of drug consumption by the attendees of the party, Tom's example transforms the issue of drug consumption to another level in the play. In the first few minutes he introduces himself to the party, Tom relates his restless and hyper state to his drug intake: "Sorry. I'm probably talking too much. I just did a couple of E. I always feel better. New people, new situations an E. Because naturally I'm sort of introverted but with an E . . ." (61). After this introduction, he also takes from the cocaine Charlie delivered and continues: "Oh, that's good. Bit of charlie's good after a couple of E, isn't it? Cos sometimes with the E . . .Well, I find it hard to connect with people so I take the E and I connect with them and I go to bed with

them and I can't always perform. You know. Which is the downside of E" (61). This dialogue becomes another important example in *Mother Clap's Molly House* which shows that in consumerist societies, emotions and insecurities which cannot be healed through human contact are suppressed and controlled with consumer products.

Throughout the scene, Tom continues to take more ecstasy and cocaine (62), and while others carry Tina to the bathroom, "Tom *stands lost. Enter* Eros," and Eros starts singing: "Feel Eros chasing through your veins/ Through heart and head and skin/This feeling's all, this chemistry/So let the game begin," and Tom, seeing Eros, complements his beauty, and they "*swarm around*" as the scene changes to the molly house (66). The way the two Es, Eros and ecstasy, that run through Tom's veins, mingle shows how the consumption-oriented minds of the contemporary gay community easily confuse the product (Ecstasy) with pleasure (Eros). At the end of the part that takes place in 2001, after Josh, Phil and Tom leave for another party, Charlie tells Will that whenever he needs some drugs, he should let him know, and Will answers: "Of course. Always going to need a bit of gear, aren't we? Got to be something, make this bearable" (102). This becomes another indication that for the consumerist characters of the 21st century, drugs or other products will always be the easiest things to turn to when they cannot deal with their confused emotional states.

*Mother Clap's Molly House'*s criticism of the consumerist culture is not limited to the gay community's unquestioning appropriation of the economic values of the heteronormative system. The heterosexual characters are also equally governed by consumerist ideologies. In Charlie's case, the lack of human connection in his life leads to oversharing. The moment Charlie walks into the apartment, he starts talking to Josh about their intimate lives with Tina, and, despite Josh's discomfort and disinterest, he keeps talking (57-59). This uncontrollable need to share reaches a higher level as his stress increases. As he waits for Will to get some towels for the bleeding Tina, he "stands awkwardly watching Phil and Josh fucking" and starts talking to them: "I try and understand her. I really do. Every other bloke she's been with has knocked her about. All I've ever done is buy her whatever she wanted but still she . . . The only time she's happy is after she's done a piercing. Then next day she's all moody again" (81).

His words do not detain Phil and Josh from having sex and do not invoke a reply. This not only presents consumerism as a problem for the bigger part of the society but also depicts how the system set up by the heterosexual majority is equally troubling for heterosexuals as well.

The allegiance between the mainstream gay community and the commercial sector depends on the idea that the economic interest of the mainstream market in queer consumers may lead to "coalition or bridge building" and promote "more contact with heterosexuals" (Badgett 474, 475). However, as Drucker states, the gay community's expansion within the mainstream does not turn the community into a "model of diversity" (21). While the commercial market provides the gay community with a chance to become visible, this visibility renders many people with disabilities or economic difficulties more invisible as they are not given a place "in the glamorous contemporary media representations of subcultural life" (Davidson, *Queer Commodities* 24). Also, in the highly commercialised gay culture, it is "the spending power" that defines identity (Ravenhill, "Interview" 92). "[T]he queerer you are," the further away you are pushed in the economically and socially exclusive structure of the gay community (Sears 105).

This divisive and exclusive structure of the commercialised gay community is also reflected in *Mother Clap's Molly House*. The two hosts of the party, Will and Josh, represent "the bourgeois layer" of the gay community with the "comfortable" life they lead in their luxurious house (Drucker 21). As it has been stated above, in the sterile atmosphere of the party there is no one represented from the more marginalised sections of the queer community. The members of the party show, what Berlant and Warner depict as, the gay community's tendency to "think of" anyone with less money, less taste, with wrong haircut, clothes, and accessories as "sleazy" (563). This attitude can be observed in Tom's exclusion from the group; despite being gay, white and young, his inexperienced position in the gay community, his insecure personality, his constantly apologetic manners (60-62) cause him to be treated by others with disdain.

Tom's marginalised position in the group further increases, when Will forces him to perform an oral sex act and invites everyone else to be spectators of this forced act. Finally, Tom manages to break free and reacts: "I was really looking forward to this evening. This is all I ever wanted […] People doing what they want to do. People being who they want to be. So why …? Why do you have to make it wrong?" (85–6). This reproach, however, does not elicit any sympathy from the group. In contrast, Phil and Edward discuss whether to keep him on the camera "for a laugh" later (86). The scene becomes an example of how consumerist society not only suffers from the entanglement of desire and commodity but also from "reification, the treatment of humans as mere things" (Drucker 167). Tom is treated as an object that can be laughed at, edited or discarded.

Through Tom's stigmatisation and marginalisation, *Mother Clap's Molly House* shows that in the contemporary consumerist society, the gay identity became an economically-structured identity model "that alienate not only many women, people of colour, working-class people, but many middle-class white men as well" (Adam, "From Liberation" 17). Duggan argues that this judgemental attitude of the gay community is both a result and a sign of homonormativity. First of all, homonormativity causes a fragmentation in the gay community as it introduces a hierarchical system where gay people are also judged among themselves according to their respectability and recognition in the mainstream society. Secondly, it shows how the gay community mimics the judgemental attitude of heterosexual society (50-55). Additionally, what makes Tom's being abused more tragic is that at the end of the play, he comes back to the room yielding and apologetically connects his outburst to ecstasy rather than his misconduct (100-101). While analysing economically-structured and consumption-based organisation of the gay community, Drucker argues that this homonormative model can only be challenged by "younger LGBT working-class and marginalised people with lower incomes and less economic security" who are willing to start "a queer rebellion against the new gay normality" (21). However, in Tom's case, such a change seems impossible as he is ready to consent to the position he has been given in this world of "exclusiveness and exclusivity" (Saunders 182).

Another point that connects *Mother Clap's Molly Hous*e's criticism of the contemporary gay society's consumerism to its homonormativity is the ending of the play. As it has been stated above, although both the 18th-century and the 21st-century parts of the play are set in similarly commercial environments, Tull's commercial ideology in the 18th century is much more "humane" and "queer" than the consumerist gay lifestyle of the 21st century. However, in the 18th century, there are also examples of harsh, consumerist approaches to sexuality, observed in the institution of prostitution. While the molly house charges its customers only for the dresses and the beer, the business of prostitution depends on commodified bodies. The commodification of heterosexual sex is presented in the play vividly. At the beginning of the play, Amelia tells how disappointed she was with the coaches from the country which only delivered "lame girls, starved girls, girls with fingers missing, girls with hair on their chins and breath like a fart" till she managed to get her hands on her "new stock," Amy (12). This depiction becomes an exaggerated example of the objectification of bodies and the reification of people under the harsh capitalist system (Drucker 167). Moreover, it is not only Amelia who adopts this attitude but Amy also perceives her body as a commodity. Upon learning that her maidenhead is twenty guineas worth in the market, Amy cries in excitement: "It's a grand day when a girl finds her body in't just eating and shitting in't it? Day when a girl discovers she's a commodity" (14). Saunders regards this moment as "one of the funniest, yet at the same time chilling moments in Ravenhill's works to date" and interprets "Amy's perception of herself" as "the clearest example in Ravenhill's work of a character whose selfhood is defined wholly in terms of being a marketable commodity" (180).

In the play, Amy's "very self-knowledge of [her] body as a commodity" creates a drastic contrast with the "innocent licentiousness within the molly house" (Saunders 180). While the heterosexual business presents a consumerist attitude to sexuality, the molly house, which is queer culture's first contact with commerce, has not yet been taken over by the culture of consumption. This contrast between the two establishments also connects with the 21st-century setting of the play. At the end of the play, when Tull hands over the molly house to Amelia, it is signalled that Amelia's harsh, money-obsessed, heterosexual outlook to sexuality will take over Tull's queer molly culture

where commerce and pleasure can exist in harmony. Additionally, as Ravenhill himself states, the characters remaining at the molly house are the ones who "haven't got the flexibility or the openness that the characters who manage to escape to a pastoral existence have. They are trapped in a rather fixed idea of themselves" ("Interview" 100). Thus, this transition becomes the first step towards the commercialised and normative gay culture on the horizon. Hence, it can be argued that Ravenhill's criticism of the 21st century is not a criticism of the commercial ideology; it is a criticism of the contemporary gay community's inability to establish a queer relationship with capitalism and the gay community's homonormative acceptance of consumerist values to the point that it dehumanises itself and marginalises others.

Along with its problematisation of the gay community's homonormative relationship to the market, *Mother Clap's Molly House* also challenges what Winnubst describes as neoliberalism's "contorted rhetorical strategies of amnesia and repression" that work through its implementation of "selective historical narratives that feed feel-good multiculturalism" (95). As Rebellato also argues, the market economy "by reducing the individual to the far narrower role of consumer . . . separates off and obscures . . . [his/her] immersion in historical process" ("Commentary" xvii). With his 21st-century characters, who live in a "cultural amnesia" along "with ghosts of their past but somehow cannot claim them" (Svich, "Commerce and Morality" 93), Ravenhill, on the one hand, lays bare this numbing effect of neoliberalism; on the other hand, through the shifts between 18th century and 21st century, rebuilds the connection of the gay community with history.

Ravenhill takes his historical material and the title of his play from Rictor Norton's historical study on the emergence of molly culture entitled *Mother Clap's Molly House* (1992). In this study, Norton examines the importance of molly houses as one of the first subcultural spaces of queer culture (9-11) and gives a historical account of their appearance "as a natural result of urbanisation," in 18th-century London (11). Norton writes about how the campaigns and attacks of The Societies for Reformation of Manners stimulated the creation of molly houses as underground meeting places for gay men (50-54), and gives detailed accounts of entertainment in the famous molly houses

of the period, especially, of "Mother (or Margaret) Clap's" which was "one of the most popular molly houses during the 1720s, for she catered well for the wishes of her customers" (54-55).

Many of the historical references in the play, such as the "claims that sodomy was becoming popular because many female prostitutes were infected by the clap" (50), the information on the "notorious cruising area in Moorfield Park," otherwise known as "The Sodomite's Walk," the details of the entertainment in molly houses such as "role-playing," "mock birth" (93), "marrying" (100), "fetishism and transvestism" (95) are based on Norton's accounts of the molly house culture. Moreover, the names of the most of the characters in the play, such as "Mother (or Margaret) Clap" (54), "Ned," "Thomas Orme," (58) "George Kedger," Gabriel Lawrence," "Thomas Newton" (59), and also the nicknames, such as "Kitty Fisher," "Princess Seraphina" (94) and "Suzan Guzzle" are taken from Norton's book. However, all these borrowings do not make the play a documentary. Although Ravenhill admits doing some research before writing *Mother Clap's Molly House*, he says that he does not "claim any great historical accuracy" ("Introduction" ix-x). As Harvie claims, Ravenhill's version of the 18th century "omits many of the harsher realities in the lives of mollies," (166) such as the accounts of violent arrests, hangings[2], suicides, that are examined in detail in Norton's book (51-54, 64-67, 99).

Different from Norton's focus on the creation and development of the molly house culture, Ravenhill is "interested in [the molly house culture] as a turning point" and wants "to leap forward and just see" its "ultimate extension" (Ravenhill, "Interview" 99-100). He adopts a queer approach to the relationship between the past and the present. Rather than focusing on a stable moment in history and constructing his narrative around a specific understanding of gayness, he focuses on a time of fluidity and complex cultural change. This way, Ravenhill's approach to history resembles

[2] Sodomy remained a crime punishable with death penalty till the Offences Against the Person Act in 1861, and the last execution in Britain took place in 1835 (Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 203).

queer theory's genealogical method because in a Foucauldian fashion, Ravenhill "never really explains how you get from one moment in history to the next" but presents the past as "epistemic moments" and "is concerned . . . with the way in which views of things change over time" (Fry 00:33:39).

Ravenhill's queer approach to history can also be regarded as a result of his use of the elements of epic theatre in *Mother Clap's Molly House*. In a parallel way to Hall, who regards history writing as "a singularly important political act" which "needs questioning – queering – aggressively so it is never naturalized or concretized" (*Queer Theories* 22), Brecht also regards historical setting as an important medium to develop political commentary in the epic theatre tradition. In the epic theatre tradition, the historical setting helps the creation of the "alienation"/"estrangement"/"defamiliarisation" effect necessary for receiving an intellectual response from the reader/audience to the events presented in the play (Barnett 74-79). Another epic theatre technique used by Ravenhill to strengthen the political discussion of the play is the use of songs. In the play through the songs such as *The Widow Carries On*" (18), "*The 'Prentice Led Astray*" (27), "*A Bargain With A Whore*" (35) and "*The Widow Finds New Trade*" (41), Ravenhill "interrupt[s] the flow of the action and provide[s]" an extra commentary on the events and the themes in the play (Bradley 36, Barnett 72). Moreover, long speeches delivered by the characters which contemplate on their own condition can also be interpreted as "clear dialectical arguments set up throughout the narrative" in a Brechtian fashion (Saunders 179). Furthermore, the double casting of the characters such as Amy and Tina, Stephen and Edward can also be accepted an element of epic tradition in the play. As it is stated above, through the double casting of these characters, Ravenhill both builds a connection between the past and the present settings of the play and also increases the gender ambiguity in the play. Thus, the elements of epic theatre employed in *Mother Clap's Molly House* such as the use of historicisation, songs, dialectical discussions, the double casting can be interpreted as elements that strengthen the effect of Ravenhill's queer arguments, and they can also be considered, a queer way of doing "away with the seamless realistic strategies of representation which concealed the problematic relationships between sex and gender" (Borowski 140).

In addition, the use of time and place in *Mother Clap's Molly* House can also be analysed from the perspective of queer theory. In her book *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (2005), Judith Halberstam develops the terms "queer-time" and "queer-place" to analyse the use of time and space in queer environments. According to Halberstam, "queer time" refers to the "specific models of temporality that emerge within postmodernism once one leaves the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance" (6). As Halberstam explains, "queer space" denotes to "the place-making practices within postmodernism in which queer people engage and it also describes the new understanding of space enabled by the reproduction of queer counterpublics" (6).

As for the use of time, *In Mother Clap's Molly House*, Ravenhill uses both heteronormative and queer models of time. At the beginning of the play, the patriarchal and heteronormative ideology of the play also finds its reflection on the understanding of time. The moment Martin appears in the play, which is also the first line of the play, he apologises to Tull for being late (5), and Tull voices her concern for Martin's "wandering," and says she feels the worry of "Mother and Father" (6). The way Tull measures the time Martin spent outside and the way she categorises it as late, show how Tull assesses time with a "middle class logic" (Halberstam 5). Besides, her worry also shows that she regards the time spent outside as risky and the time spent at home as safe, and, as she also admits, this concern results from her heteronormative familial positioning.

As the play progresses and becomes queerer, the division between heteronormative and queer time zones in the characters' lives becomes more apparent. All scenes in the molly house of the 18th century and at the sex party in the 21st century take place at night. Moreover, as "the normative scheduling of daily life" requires, farmers like Lawrence tend to their animals and shopkeepers and their apprentices open up their shops during the day, and they come to the molly house at night as the hidden nature of their relationships requires. Similarly, parental relationships, which are "ruled by the biological clock" according to the "logic of reproductive temporality" in the

heteronormative society, also go against the "familial time and place" in the molly house where being a mother and father does not start with infancy and does not end with death (Halberstam 5; Park 12).

Mother Clap's Molly House also provides examples of queer place. Both in the 18th-century and the 21st-century settings, neither of the houses function like a traditional domestic space. Although it is called a house, the molly house works like a tavern more than a house. Similarly, in the 21st-century setting Will and Josh's apartment is transformed into a party venue. Also, in both parts of the play the dichotomy between public and private space is destroyed as sexual activities are conducted openly in the social space. The only thing that disrupts the queer perception of place in the play is that, although it is not a traditional house, the molly house in the 18th-century setting is still given a privileged position as a sterile indoor space over the streets where prostitution takes place or over Moorfields where no one but "the poxed and the prickless" remain (69).

In its presentation of space, *Mother Clap's Molly House* also opens the rural/urban binary to discussion which is an important issue in the gay community's positioning of itself. In their article "Sex in Public," Berlant and Warner argue that "No group is more dependent on . . . urban space than queers" because "queer world making" relies on "parasitic and fugitive elaboration through gossip, dance clubs, softball leagues, and the phone-sex ads" which are all commercial practices, and at the same time, they are related to city life (561-3). As a result of this queer dependence on the urban space, cities became the centres for queer communities, and becoming a part of this community started to play an important role in queer lives. In her book *Between Men*, Sedgwick describes how the move from "provincial origins to metropolitan destinies" signifies a turning point in the life of a queer subject:

> As each individual story begins in the isolation of queer childhood, we compulsorily and excruciatingly misrecognize ourselves in the available mirror of the atomized, procreative, so-called heterosexual pre- or ex-urban nuclear family of origin, whose bruisingly inappropriate interpellations may wound us—those who resilient or lucky enough to survive them—into life, life of a different kind. The site of that second and belated life, those newly constituted and denaturalized "families," those tardy, wondering chances at transformed and transforming self- and other-recognition, is the

> metropolis. But a metropolis continually recruited and reconstituted by having folded into it the incredulous energies of the provincial. Or—I might better say—the provincial energies of incredulity itself. (ix)

This transforming effect of the move from the country to the city is illustrated in Mother *Clap's Molly House* through examples from both the 18th-century and the 21st-century settings. In the 18th century, Amy comes to the city from the country with big hopes of fulfilling her potential as a commodity (12-13). In the 21st-century part of the play, Tom also states that leaving his homophobic father behind, he has arrived in London two months ago to recreate himself in the city and to be a part of the gay community (64, 85-86). In both Amy's and Tom's cases, however, Ravenhill focuses on the "incredulity," as it is expressed by Sedgwick (*Between Men* ix), rather than presenting city life as a dream come true. In Amy's example, her disillusionment with her sexualised body after her pregnancy and in Tom's case, his humiliation at the party prevent their move from the country to the city from becoming stories of self-realisation.

Another thing that complicates the superior position of city life over country life for the queer community is the ending of the play. At the end of the 18th-century part, the group led by Tull "decide to escape the advent of early capitalist regulations and live different, less constricted existences by leaving London behind and moving to the countryside" (Monforte, "Witnessing, Sexualised Spectatorship" 158). As Ravenhill stresses, "Those characters who are polymorphous are the ones who are prepared to go and have a pastoral existence at the end," while those who remain are the ones who are "trapped in a rather fixed idea of themselves; they are not prepared to reinvent" ("Interview" 100). So, *Mother Clap's Molly Hou*se's presentation of the city is associated with entrapment while the countryside is associated with escape, and this presentation provides an alternative to the urban/rural binary division of traditional gay narratives.

*Mother Clap's Molly Hous*e's problematisation of the urban/city binary is also connected to its challenging the "coming out" process. In queer theory, like many other concepts that define gay subjectivity, the concept of coming out is also opened up to the discussion. In her discussion of the process of coming out, Sedgwick focuses on the

state of being in "the closet," and she argues that every new encounter in one's life creates a new closet because these new people encountered may not be informed about one's sexuality. Hence, for many gay people, coming out turns into a never-ending process (*Epistemology of the Closet* 68). In her questioning of "coming out," Butler also concerns herself with the creation of new closets, but in a different way:

> Is the "subject" who is "out" free of its subjection and finally in the clear? Or could it be that the subjection that subjectivates the gay or lesbian subject in some ways continues to oppress most insidiously, once "outness" is claimed? . . . If I claim to be a lesbian, I "come out" only to produce a new and different "closet." ("Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 308-309)

This way, even if it is possible to be out once, this outness means limiting oneself within the borders of an identity category. This new closet of the identity category can be as oppressing and at times more intimidating than the first one:

> Conventionally, one comes out of the closet (and yet, how often is it the case that we are "outted" when we are young and without resources?); so we are out of the closet, but into what? what new unbounded spatiality? the room, the den, the attic, the basement, the house, the bar, the university, some new enclousure whose door, like Kafka's door, produces the expectation of a fresh air and a light of illumination that never arrives? Curiously, it is the figure of the closet that produces this expectation, and which guarantees its dissatisfaction. For being "out" always depends to some extent on being "in"; it gains its meaning only within that polarity. (Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 309)

In *Mother Clap's Molly House*, this new closet Butler describes materialises in the form of the sex party in the 21st-century setting. All of the characters who are trapped in the concept of gayness experience this "dissatisfaction" one way or other but it becomes most visible in the example of Tom. Having recently come out, and broken his ties with his family home, Tom is the most animated character; he has the highest expectations from his new life but he is also the one who expresses his disillusionment in the most explicit manner:

> I was really looking forward to this evening. This is all I ever wanted. All them years stuck at home listening to me dad: Fucking poofs this, fucking queers that. And I thought: You're history, you. Cos I'm a poof, but I in't telling you. Oh no. One day I'm just gonna up and go. Stick a note on the fridge. 'Fuck the family'. Little husband with his little wife and their little kids. That's history. And I'm the future. This is the future. People doing what they want to do. People being who they want to be. So why . . . ? Why do you have to make it wrong? (85–6)

Although coming out is regarded as the end of oppression and the start of a new liberated self, as it can be seen from Tom's example, within a similarly oppressive system where homonormativity replaces heteronormativity, coming out does not mean a real liberation and self-realisation. The conventional perception of coming out as a transformative experience in gay life is problematised in *Mother Clap's Molly House* through Tom's confused position.

While concepts such as being in and out of the "closet" or "coming out" are questioned in terms of their transformative effects on the individual's life, *Mother Clap's Molly House* can also be interpreted as an act of outing of queer sexuality, in which queer intimacy is brought out of the closet in its most explicit and provocative form. In both 18th-century and 21st-century settings, sex is practised in the most public manner as a part of the communal life. This explicit presentation of same-sex intimacy in the play can be analysed in relation to Ravenhill's use of in-yer-face theatre tactics.

As it is stated above, at the beginning of his career Mark Ravenhill was associated with a group of young writers, such as Philip Ridley, Anthony Neilson, Sarah Kane, who were characterised by the distinct confrontational tone of their plays, and named by critic Alex Sierz as the representatives of in-yer-face sensibility (Sierz, *In-Yer-Face Theatre* 1-2; Rebellato "Commentary" xii). In-yer-face theatre is depicted by Sierz in his canonical book *In-Yer-Face-Theatre: British Drama Today* as an "experiental theatre," "a theatre of sensation: it jolts both the actor and spectators out of conventional responses touching nerves provoking alarm" through theatrical techniques such as "stage language that emphasise. . . rawness, intensity, swearing, stage images that show . . . acute pain or comfortless vulnerability," explicit scenes of sexuality, characters who execute and suffer from extreme acts of violence (*In-Yer-Face Theatre* 4; Sierz, *Modern British Playwriting* 57-58).

Sierz also admits that the concept of in-yer-face is also a highly controversial one, and states that the leading names associated with this style shared a similar "contemporary sensibility in their work" but "they all wrote in distinctly different contemporary styles," and also, at the end of the 1990s, this new sensationalism gave way to new styles in

their works (*Modern British Playwriting* 58). In a paper he gave to the German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English (CDE) in 2003, Sierz also states that by the time he finished writing his book on in-yer-face theatre in 2001, "the phenomenon that it was describing had already begun to slide back into the past;" so, the book suddenly became "an extended obituary" ("To Recommend a Cure" 45). *Mother Clap's Molly House* coincides with the time Sierz marks as the end of the in-yer-face era, and it is regarded as the first serious departure in Ravenhill's career from the in-yer-face tradition. With its big cast, musical overtones, historical setting, it "allows Ravenhill to expand his theatrical vocabulary outside the more claustrophobic, pressurised atmosphere" of the in-yer-face tradition (Svich, "Commerce and Morality" 93).

However, there are still many scenes in *Mother Clap's Molly House* that can be regarded as a reflection of in-yer-face sensibility. Amy's bloody miscarriage in the 18th-century part (50), Tina's excessive bleeding throughout the 21st-century plot, the scene where Tom is forced to perform oral sex on Will, the use of blatant language and swear words such as the lyrics of choral song: "This is a marriage/ Of purse and arse and heart/ Shit on those who call it sodomy/ Shit on those who call it sodomy/ Shit on those who call it sodomy/We call it fabulous" (56) are some examples of explicit violence and sexuality, and profane language in the play.

All these features used in in-yer-face plays are described by Sierz as "shock tactics" that are employed by the playwrights to "push the boundaries of what is acceptable—often because they want to question current ideas of what is normal, what it means to be human, what is natural, what is real" (*In-Yer-Face Theatre* 5). This way, the provocation created by the confrontational in-yer-face features in *Mother Clap's Molly House* works towards a similar effect with the queer questioning of normativities. As Sierz argues, "demolishing the simple binary oppositions" such as "human/animal; clean/dirty; healthy/unhealthy; normal/abnormal; good/evil; true/untrue; right/wrong . . ." is often what creates the biggest shock in in-yer-face theatre (*In-Yer-Face Theatre* 6, 9). Hence, many of the elements that attack the binary hegemonic discourses in *Mother Clap's Molly House* also create an in-yer-face effect.

Using provocation as a way of conveying a message has always been a part of the queer tradition. Especially, at the beginning of the queer movement, Queer Nation and Act Out's public demonstrations, such as "kiss-ins" and other explicit acts of same-sex affection, were regarded as controversial "in your face' displays" that declared "We're here, we're queer, get used to it!" (Hall, *Queer Theories* 53). Even the introduction of the word "queer" to the academic field of gender studies was intended as an intentional act of provocation by Teresa de Lauretis as she wanted to "unsettle the complacency of 'lesbian and gay studies'" in the most disruptive way by pairing "that scurrilous term with the academic holy word, 'theory'" (Halperin, "The Normalisation of Queer Theory" 339-340). Hence, the explicit presentation of queer sex in *Mother Clap's Molly House* can be interpreted both as a remnant of in-yer-face sensibility in Ravenhill's theatre and as a queer act of challenging sexual taboos because both queer and in-yer-face strategies depend on provocation in a similar way.

In conclusion, Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* brings a truly queer vision into the British drama. With its richness and multidimensional nature, the play manages to cover different understandings of the word "queer" despite "its definitional indeterminacy and its elasticity" (Jagose 1). With its characters who defy identity categories and openly question their sexualities, the play carries the discussions of queer theory to the stage and reveals the theoretical impossibility of the creation of a unified gay identity, and it shows that there is more to sexuality than being heterosexual, gay or lesbian. Moreover, through its colourful molly house setting, *Mother Clap's Molly House* "celebrates Sodom like there's no Gomorrah" ("Dirty Work from Mark Ravenhill") and shows that it is possible to create an alternative for the commercialised, loveless and normative gay culture; and that is a more fluid, less hierarchical queer culture in which desire is experienced and celebrated in its most explicit and vibrant form. Therefore, it is possible to argue that, on the one hand, *Mother Clap's Molly House* reflects the limitations of the idea of a unified gay identity and community prevalent in British society in the early 2000s, and on the other hand, it introduces and celebrates the new social and theoretical discussions on a queer identity and culture.

CONCLUSION

With its "tendency to represent a hermetic world, closed off by the 'fourth wall' that imaginatively separates actors/characters from spectators," the theatre is interpreted as one of the most effective social and cultural mediums that reflect and shape the values and perceptions of the world beyond it (Dolan 15). As it can be observed from the detailed discussion of the development of gay drama in the Introduction of this dissertation, this function of the theatre is also valid for the representation of homosexuality in both the pre-and post-liberation British drama. In the period before the Gay Liberation Movement, the dramatic representations of homosexuality mainly reflected and promoted heterosexual, conservative perspectives on homosexuality and presented homosexuals as villains or victims in a stereotypical manner. In the post-liberation period, however, this power of drama was appropriated by gay playwrights who used their dramatic works as a channel through which they can both reflect and comment on the mainstream society's outlook to homosexuality and present their own perception of homosexuality.

Bearing this discursive power of drama in mind, this dissertation is an attempt to analyse Julian Mitchell's *Another Country* (1981), Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* (1993) and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* (2001) as representative texts that reflect and constitute the changing perceptions of gayness in British drama and society in the post-liberation period. Julian Mitchell's *Another Country* combines the two different but related discourses on homosexuality which prevailed in Britain in the 1980s. With its emphasis on suicide, hypocrisy and persecution, the play reflects the predominant association of homosexuality with repression. However, with its criticism directed at the heterosexual system represented by the institutions such as the public school, religion and family and with its resolute characters that celebrate sexual and political freedom, *Another Country* also represents liberationist ideals. On the other hand, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing*, written a decade after *Another Country*, presents gayness as an uncomplicated identity that develops over time with the acceptance of the gay subject by family and friends and with his connection with the

gay community. With its positive and confident presentation of gayness, *Beautiful Thing* both exhibits and contributes to the establishment of the gay community and identity within British society. The last play of the dissertation, Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* presents a criticism of the limited and normative perception of gayness in the contemporary consumerist gay community and with its queer outlook, challenges this perception and provides a plural, colourful queer alternative to traditional, hegemonic gayness. A detailed analysis of these plays, in the light of the social, political, theatrical and theoretical background provided in the introduction of the dissertation, reveals that each one of these plays represent the social, political and theoretical views on gay and queer identity that dominated the periods they were written in, and building a bridge between these different plays and decades through this dissertation leads us to the changes in the perception of homosexuality in British society and drama in this period.

First of all, comparing the different portrayals of same-sex love in these plays enables us to observe how the presentation of gay identity in drama develops in a parallel way to the theoretical discussions on the formation of gay identity. Each play can be associated with a different stage in the history of gay and lesbian identity theories discussed in the introduction in detail. In *Another Country*, despite the differentiation of Bennett's perception of homosexuality from other students' participation in same-sex activities, the boundaries of homosexual identity are still left undefined. The nature of homosexual desire is disputed by different by parties in different ways, Menzies regards it as a temporary adolescent desire (71), Judd as an expression of upper-class decadence (7), Fowler as a sign of moral corruption (87) and Bennett as a source of love (88). Therefore, there is still some vagueness in terms of what constitutes being a homosexual. In *Beautiful Thing*, on the other hand, gayness is presented as a stable identity. Ste and Jamie do not question the nature of their feelings. They discover their feelings in an environment where gayness is already perceived as a well-defined identity category. Soon after this discovery, they transform their mutual attraction into a relationship, and by coming out to Sandra and Leah (68, 95), they complete their identity construction and define themselves —and they are defined by their immediate circle— as gay. While this confident and unified state of gay identity is celebrated in

Beautiful Thing, in *Mother Clap's Molly House*, it is presented as a limitation and conceptual impossibility in a queer vision. *Mother Clap's Molly House* problematises the perception of gay identity as a stable gender category. In the 18th-century setting, through Tull, Amy and Princess Seraphina's changing gender roles the play lays bare the performative nature of identity construction, and in the 21st-century setting, it shows the limitations of the gay identity and community. Therefore, these plays function as signposts in the evolution of gay identity: the early stages of gayness as a sexual category are presented through Bennett in *Another Country*; gayness is presented as a more stable identity category through the Ste and Jamie's unproblematic identity construction in *Beautiful Thing*, and gayness is deconstructed through the fluid and changing sexualities in *Mother Clap's Molly House* where queer identity is presented as a more viable alternative.

Situating these plays into a chronologic frame also makes it possible to observe how the perception of gayness in British society and British drama has evolved progressively over a period of twenty years. First of all, with the emphasis it gives to the repression of homosexuality, *Another Country* shows that a homosexual identity as a struggle; the homosexual subject is someone who needs to be liberated from the repressive conditions created by the heterosexual system. Because the play's focus is on the darker experiences, the pain and the conflict arising from repression, the joy Bennett drives from his love for Harcourt is presented as a secondary issue in the play. In *Beautiful Thing*, on the other hand, the emphasis is not on the burden the discovery of gayness may bring, and the love between Jamie and Ste is celebrated in a much more positive environment. Gay love is associated with happy feelings. Although bullying at Jamie's school (7) and Ste's house (29, 33) are mentioned in the play, they do not interfere with Ste and Jamie's happiness. In this presentation of gayness, the gay subject is already liberated and freed from the constraints of the society. Finally, in *Mother Clap's Molly House*, the societal barriers are lifted totally. In both the first and the second parts of the play, there is no external threat to molly, gay or queer subject's experience of sexuality. Princess Seraphina's judgemental comments on mollies in the 18th century (78), Tina's homophobic remarks on the participants of the party in the 21st century (65) are only

presented as ineffective comments with no real power. Therefore, it is possible to argue that each play reflects a more liberated vision than the one before.

The increasingly liberal approach to homosexuality also affects the way gay and queer intimacies are presented in these plays. In *Another Country*, although Bennett appears on the stage as an openly homosexual character and homosexuality is a topic widely discussed in the play, there are no scenes that present homosexual intimacy. We are informed that Martineau and Robert are caught during a same-sex act, but this act is not presented in the play. Similarly, Bennett only talks about his feelings for Harcourt and characters such as Delahay and Menzies's participation in same-sex acts in the past is inferred from the implications (71). Therefore, homosexuality only appears as a concept in the play, without the presentation of homosexual intimacy or sex on the stage. In *Beautiful Thing*, same-sex intimacy is presented in a more physical way than *Another Country*. On the second night Ste stays at Jamie's room, Jamie massages Ste's back to ease the pain of his bruises, and later in the same scene, he kisses Jamie on the lips (48-50). Moreover, the play ends with the image of the boys embracing one another and dancing in a dreamy state (88-90). However, in line with the play's idealised presentation of gayness, these acts are displays of romantic love rather than sex. Therefore, it can be argued that through these scenes of sexless gay intimacy, *Beautiful Thing* presents a romanticised and sterilised form of gay intimacy which would appeal to mainstream sensibilities rather than the sexual one. Among the plays discussed in this dissertation, gay or queer sex is presented openly only in *Mother Clap's Molly House*. As it is discussed in the last chapter of the dissertation in detail, in *Mother Clap's Molly House*, both among the mollies in the 18th-century setting and among the gay men in the 21st-century setting anal sex is presented in the most explicit form as a part of the queer and in-yer-face sensibilities of the play. Noting that all the plays discussed in this dissertation are staged in mainstream theatres, the changing depictions of same-sex intimacy presented in these plays, and also, in many other plays discussed in the introduction part of the dissertation, show us not only how much the readers' but also how much the mainstream audiences' reception of homosexuality have changed in the short period of twenty years.

The twenty years covered in this dissertation starts with a transition in gay drama from propagandist plays, intended for gay audiences, towards more established plays that are staged in big mainstream theatres for wider audiences. This development in the dramatic quality of gay and queer plays can also be observed among the plays chosen for this study. Although both *Another Country* and *Beautiful Thing* are critically acclaimed plays that received the Olivier Award for best play and the John Whiting Award respectively, they are less complex plays than *Mother Claps Molly House.* While *Another Country* and *Beautiful Thing* develop around one plotline in one setting, *Mother Claps Molly House*, with its complicated structure, shifts between two different plot lines in two different centuries. Additionally, the ambiguity of *Mother Claps Molly House* in transmitting its message and its postmodern approach also increase the complexity of the play. Moreover, while the first two plays intend to raise a more emotional reaction from the reader/audience, *Mother Claps Molly House* with its borrowings from epic theatre, in-yer-face theatre demands an intellectual reaction from the reader/audience and enables a more technical analysis. All these things provide more material for a more theoretical queer analysis in Chapter 3, therefore, slightly distinguishes the discussion in the last chapter from the previous two chapters.

A development can also be observed in the way gay or queer subject's relationship to the heterosexual system is presented in these plays. This change can be best examined through the settings of the plays. In *Another Country*, the public school with its hypocritical claim to heterosexuality is presented as a heterosexual space. In this heterosexual space, the homosexual characters, such as Martineau who commits suicide (19) and Bennett who decides to become a spy, are pushed out of the system. Therefore, the homosexual characters are not even given a minority position in this heterosexual environment. As it is stated in the introduction, *Beautiful Thing* was written at a time when the gay community started to be perceived as a minority in the mainstream society. In a way that mirrors this social change, the gay characters, Jamie and Ste, are also presented in a minority position in the heterosexual working-class setting of the play. In this heterosexual environment, they are given just enough space to discover their sexuality and claim gay identity. Additionally, with their visit to the gay pub Gloucester, Jamie and Ste are also provided with access to a gay subcultural space,

although this place is not presented on stage. In *Mother Clap's Molly House*, on the other hand, the setting becomes queerer in comparison to the other two plays in a way that reflects the development in British drama's and British society's perception of homosexuality. As it is argued above, both the 18th-century setting of the molly house and the 21st-century setting of the gay party can be interpreted as queer spaces measured by a queer perception of time. In these settings, it is the heterosexual characters that are given a minority position among the gay and queer majority. Hence, it is possible to observe a reversal of power relations between heterosexual and homosexual characters of these plays as we move from *Another Country* written in 1981 towards *Mother Clap's Molly House* written in 2001.

It can be argued that while homosexual, gay and queer characters in these plays steadily gain more power, their presentation becomes less heroic. In *Another Country*, for instance, in the hypocritically heterosexual and repressive public school setting, Bennett is presented as a homosexual hero who fights for his desires, at times, with his sarcastic tone that mocks the heterosexual system and undermines the repression, and at times, through his transgressive actions and statements that challenge the rules. In *Another Country*, Bennett is presented as a source of inspiration for the homosexual readers/audiences who still struggled with homophobia prevalent in Britain in the 1980s as it is discussed in the Introduction. In *Beautiful Thing,* although the love story of Jamie and Ste is also intended to be inspirational for the gay community discouraged by the AIDS outbreak and the Clause 28, their presentation is less heroic. They are presented as ordinary teenagers who only happen to be gay. They arouse sympathy with their good nature, but they do not have any heroic qualities. In *Mother Clap's Molly House*, there is an unromantic presentation of both queer and gay communities of the play. In the 18th-century part, the queer community in the molly house is presented in a more positive light than the gay community in the 21st-century setting, but the molly house's appeal depends on its colourful and lively atmosphere rather than the idealistic representation of its queer characters. In the 21st-century setting, the play's harsh criticism of commercialist ideology prevents a heroic representation of the gay characters; the gay community is condemned for its unfeeling and consumerist attitude. Therefore, it can be argued that the improvements in the social conditions have allowed

gay playwrights to develop a more objective and critical attitude towards their gay and queer characters.

The predominantly gay or queer perception of these playwrights also gives us a chance to observe the heterosexual society from a gay or queer point of view. *Another Country* presents the most direct criticism of the heterosexual system among the plays studied in this dissertation. Through its repressive public school setting which victimises the homosexual, it provides social criticism to the heterosexual institutions such as the public school, religion and family which contribute to the repression of homosexuality in their own way. Additionally, it also criticises hypocritical heterosexual individuals in society who engage in homosexual acts but deny homosexuality as an identity and take the most judgemental stance against homosexuals through characters such as Delahay, Menzies and the fathers. *Beautiful Thing*, in its more positive and optimistic tone, suggests that a reconciliation between the heterosexual society and the gay individual is possible. Sandra, Leah and Tony assume a central role in the coming out process of Ste and Jamie with their supportive attitudes. However, the play still directs criticism not at heterosexuality but its abusive heterosexual characters such as Ste's father and brother although they do not appear in the play. Furthermore, *Beautiful Thing* presents gay love as a purer and more loving alternative to heterosexual relationships represented in the play by Sandra's unstable relationships and Leah and Ste's broken families. As it is stated above, in *Mother Clap's Molly House*, heterosexual characters such as Stephen, Tina, Charlie, Amelia do not have power over gay and queer characters of the play, and they are in an underprivileged position in the queer settings of the play where gay and queer characters are in control. In a similar way to *Another Country* and *Beautiful Thing*, in *Mother Clap's Molly House*, with their dysfunctional relationships and confused emotional states, the heterosexual characters are too unstable to be presented as referents for gay and queer characters as the heteronormative system assumes them to be. However, in its queer pluralism, *Mother Clap's Molly House* refutes the dependence of the sexual categories on the difference between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Therefore, heterosexuality is not presented as the other but another form of sexuality in the queer spectrum. Despite these differences, these gay playwrights challenge the

heterosexual system's control over gay and queer lives and present gay and queer lifestyles as equally, if not more, rightful ways of being and loving.

Therefore, these plays provide political statements on the statuses of the gay and queer communities. As stated, all three plays are written by gay playwrights who approach their works with a political consciousness expressed in their interviews as well. Although not all three plays are political to the same degree, — *Another Country* and *Mother Clap's Molly House* are more overtly political with their criticism of the heteronormative and homonormative systems — they all carry the political intention of shaping the perception of gayness in the society. *Another Country* reflects this liberationist consciousness with its presentation of homosexuality as a heroic struggle in the face of repression; *Beautiful Thing*, with its a happy, hopeful, confident gay characters, aims to challenge the stereotypical representation of the repressed homosexual and to show, both heterosexual and homosexual communities, that it is possible for gay people to adjust to the mainstream society easily; *Mother Clap's Molly House* sheds light on the degeneration of the consumerist gay community and the limitations of gay identity politics and aims to change this condition by enforcing a diverse queer vision.

Moreover, the social and political concerns of these plays can also be interpreted as a reflection of the changes in the goals of the gay and queer communities in Britain in the period following the decriminalisation of homosexuality. As it is discussed in the introduction of this dissertation in detail, the political agenda of the homosexual community altered rapidly in the second half of the 20th century. From the late 1960s onwards till the end of the 1970s, the gay community was radically politicised with the ideas of liberation; towards the end of the 1970s, the revolutionist ideas of liberation were replaced by the assimilationist identity politics, and from the beginning of the 1990s onwards, with realisation of the limitations of the identity politics, the attention moved towards creation of a more diverse community. As it can be seen from the discussion above, these political concerns coincide with concerns presented in the plays respectively.

In conclusion, Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House* have been analysed in terms of their different portrayals of gay and queer identities in the British mainstream drama/theatre with reference to the social, political and theoretical discussions on homosexuality in the second half of the 20th century in Britain. This study has indicated that these predominantly gay/queer plays are more than mere expressions of the artistic and creative capacities of their playwrights. On the contrary, in a way that combines the political nature of both drama and sexuality, these plays are grounded in social, political and theoretical discourses on homosexuality that prevailed in Britain at the time of their creation. Moreover, as representative written between the 1970-80s, the 1980-90s and the 1990-2000s, they illustrated how crucial and dynamic these periods were in terms of the changes in the perception of gay and queer community in British society and how responsive the British mainstream drama was to these changes.

ENDNOTES

[i] Although this shifting and sometimes simultaneously existing desire for male and female sexuality was permissible for men in the Greek society, a similarly liberal attitude could not be seen in their attitudes towards female sexuality. For instance, "[t]he honour of a man [was] measured through the sexual purity of his wife, mother, sisters and daughters" and "through the virility to which his public behaviour gives testimony" (Cohen 11). While women were confined to the interiors of their houses, bereft of any social and intellectual improvement, and with their sexuality strictly controlled, men were allowed to exercise their sexual desires in the most liberated way (Boswell, "Revolution" 30; Stearns 30-31; Crompton 27-33; Garton 34-35; Hubbard 3).

[ii] Homosexual slang remained a secret way of communication among homosexuals till it became public in the 1960s with BBC's Radio Comedy *Round the Horne*, and in time, words like 'drag', 'naff', 'slap' and 'rough trade' became a part of the everyday language (Jivani 15). In the 1960s, with the development of camp aesthetics, which drew the attention to the act of performance, homosexual slang became more than a way of communication and turned into "a way of presenting the self to the straight world" in a parodic manner (Weeks, *Against Nature* 42; Mallan and Rodericks 1).

[iii] The first scandal of these scandals, The Dublin Castle scandal, took place in 1883, at the heart of the political disputes in Ireland. Irish nationalist William O'Brien leaked the news to the press that the important British officials were involved in same-sex activities in a private house in Dublin. Proving this claim and uncovering similar other scandals became a part of the Irish nationalist campaign. The news of the scandals was used as way of strengthening the association between the British aristocracy and its moral corruption (Upchurch 155-156; Cocks, "Secrets Crimes" 129-131).

The Cleveland Street scandal took place in London in 1984. The scandal took its name from the Cleveland Street in Soho where a house was discovered in which male prostitution was conducted. The inquiries revealed that the clients of the house included army officers, the members of aristocracy such as Lord Arthur Somerset, an equerry to the Prince of Wales and son of the Duke of Beaufort. The trials created great public sensation, and the sensation escalated with the rumours that the Prince of Wales was also involved in the scandal and the government covered it up to protect the royal family and the members of the aristocracy (Cocks, "Secrets Crimes" 131-134).

[iv] The poet, John Addington Symonds, who came to terms with his homosexuality at the end of his life, was one of the first writers to write on the nature of same-sex love in Britain. In his book *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1883), he studied Greek literature and the classical ideal of same-sex love. Hall considers this work as, "the first serious British work on homosexuality" (*Sex, Gender and Social Change* 35). In 1890, Symonds printed fifty copies of *A Problem in Modern* Ethics and secretly distributed them. In this work, he discussed the work of German pioneers Krafft-Ebbig and Ulrichs and introduced words such as "inverts" and "urning" to English (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 49).

Symonds' later work, *Sexual Inversion*, was the result of a collaboration he conducted with Havelock Ellis. The book could only be published in 1896 after Symonds' death, and Symonds' name was not used in the publication process to protect the reputation of his family. For that reason, the work is still cited under Ellis' name. The co-writer of *Sexual Inversion*, Havelock Ellis, was not a homosexual himself, but he was a sympathiser of the homosexual cause, and he had extensively conducted research in the field of sexuality (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 50). The outcome of this joint effort, *Sexual Inversion*, is regarded as the first scientific book on homosexuality in Britain, discussing biological, anthropological and psychological knowledge of its time on the subject (Cocks, "Secrets Crimes" 136). It was also quite ground-breaking as it did not regard homosexuality as a disease but as a physical anomaly. According to

Sexual Inversion, homosexuality was a physical variation, like colour-blindness, harmless and most importantly not worthy of blame (qtd. in Sullivan 8).

Alongside Symonds' and Ellis, Edward Carpenter is also acknowledged as a forerunner in the field. With the extensive body of work he published in the early 20th century and with the campaigns he conducted as the first president of the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology (1914), Edward Carpenter became a well-known specialist on homosexuality, from whom many homosexual men sought advice and assistance. He became a more public and political, but less scientific figure than Ellis; and the avant-garde lifestyle he created for himself and for his lover Merrill was an example for many young men struggling for finding their sexualities (Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 64-65; David 48-51). In his works, he regarded homosexuality as "intermediate sex," carrying characteristics of both men and women; and, for Carpenter, this mixture was even a better sex, "more likely to be involved in socially useful work…open-minded and progressive" (qtd. in Cocks, "Secrets Crimes" 137). With this perception, by giving homosexual people superiority over heterosexual people, Carpenter reversed "the normative hierarchy between heterosexuality and homosexuality" (Sullivan 13). Like Symonds and Ellis, his approach to homosexuality was very much affected by his socialist views. He regarded male-male love as a form of comradeship, and homosexual love, in his work, had a more spiritual origin than merely being a physical attraction (Adam, *The Rise* 38-39; David 50-51).

The works of these pioneers had a lasting effect on British sexology as they initiated a discourse in which sexuality could be discussed on both scientific and personal levels. For many homosexual men, the ideas developed by Symonds, Ellis and Carpenter became the guides for understanding their sexuality (Cook, "Queer Conflicts" 160). However, the inspirational function of their works was obstructed to a great extent by censorship and the limited availability of their publications during their lifetime. J. Addington Symonds had to print and distribute his *A Problem in Greek Ethics* and *Problem in Modern Ethics* himself. After the publication of his collaborative work with Symonds, *Sexual Inversion* (1897), Havelock Ellis was prosecuted for obscenity; and there were discussions in the medical press that the book might be dangerous if it fell

"into the wrong hands" (qtd. in Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 37-38). A similar comment was also made by a *The British Medical Journal* reviewer on Edward Carpenter's *The Intermediate Sex* out of concern for the book's "cheapness and accessibility to a lay public" (qtd. in Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change* 37-38).

[v] Wilde's style as a dandy, his embellished camp mannerism, his effeminate manners, the way he exhibited himself as a work of art was not regarded as a sign of homosexuality by his contemporaries before the trials. Also, his comedies were widely staged without "encouraging any queer inferences" (Sinfield 28-29). It was upon Wilde's arrest that the "successful run of *An Ideal Husband* at the Haymarket Theatre was terminated;" the "[p]erformances of *The Importance of Being Earnest* at St. James Theatre continued…but with Wilde's name obliterated from all the playbills and posters outside the theatre" (David 14). With the impact Wilde's trials and arrest, the characteristics Wilde was believed to exemplify both in his life and his works, such as "effeminacy, leisure, idleness, immorality, luxury, insouciance, decadence and aestheticism" were perceived as the signifiers of homosexuality. (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 3, 16-17). "[C]amp speech, camp design, camp costume" used freely in the plays of the period came increasingly to be associated with homosexuality in the following decades; also, Dorian from Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1980) became an inspiration for the coded stage representation of homosexuality with his "dangerous, evil and life-destroying" sexual desire, his attributes of being "sensitive, delicate, artistic, passionate for perfumes, jewellery and embroidery" (De Jong, *Not in front of the Audience* 3, 16-17).

[vi] Some of the plays that were censored as a result of their (hetero)sexual content at the turn of the century were Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1881), Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (1888), Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession* (1893), Wilde's *Salome* (1893), Schintzler's *La Ronde (*1897), Brieux's *Damaged Goods* (1901), Pirandello's *Six Characters' in Search of an Author* (1921) and O'Neil's Desire *Under the Elms* (1924).

[vii] These stereotypical representations of homosexuality also found their reflections in the novels and films of the time. Starting from the 1930s and increasingly in the 1950s and 1960s homosexuality was represented in many literary works and in films as a source of plight, bringing lots of misery, and torment to one's life. These fictional representation of homosexuality usually ended tragically with suicide or unbearable losses. Sullivan exemplifies the case with many novels and films from the period; some of the examples from fiction are Lilyan Brock's *Queer Patterns* (1935-1951), Fritz Peters' *Finistere* (1952), and Dean Douglas's *Man Divided* (1954); while the examples from the cinema are from the US; John Brahm's *The Locket* (1946), Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* (1947), Michael Curtiz's *Young Man with Horn* (1950), Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Suddenly Last Summer* (1959), William Wyler's *The Children's Hour* (1961), Otto Preminger's *Advise and Consent* (1962), Gordon Douglas's *The Detective* (1968); from Germany: Leontine Sagan and Carl Froelich's *Maedchen in Uniform* (1931,1958); and from Britain: Basil Dearden's *Victim* (1961) and Robert Aldrich's *The Killing of Sister George* (1969) (19).

[viii] In its early years, The Gay Sweatshop produced coming-out plays such as *Mr X* (1975) and *Any Woman Can* (1976) which dealt with the problem of identifying oneself as gay or lesbian within a homophobic society. In these early plays, the agendas of socialism, comradeship were intermingled with gay problems in a didactic or agit-prop manner (Deeney 403; Greener 34). The structure of the company was also influenced by the collective "working structures of feminist theatre," and the production of the plays depended on the collective authorship of a writer's committee (Dolan 3). Wilcox argues that the company's highly political mission and structure "smother[ed] the more durable, dramatic instincts of most of [its] playwrights," and the Gay Sweatshop mostly produced "poorly-crafted play[s]" most of which were not "worth publishing" (7). Furthermore, as a result of their provocative and confrontational nature, these plays were mainly staged in "gay friendly venues," principally for lesbian and gay audiences (Deeney 403).

[ix] In 1971, Stanley Kubrick used Thamesmead for his adaption of Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) and the area played an important role in creating the "devastating and brutal effect" of the film (Parnell 372). *Beautiful Thing* followed *A Clockwork Orange* in 1993; in 2009, Thamesmead was used once again in the TV series *Misfits* (2009-2013) as a background for the stories about underclass British youngsters who suffered from "adolescent alienation" just like Jamie, Ste and Leah. However, this time, the unspectacular ordinary working-class environment of Thamesmead created a contrast with the supernatural powers of the working-class adolescents of the series (Woods 78-81) rather than complementing the ordinariness of the lives of the characters as it did in *Beautiful Thing*.

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APPENDIX I: ORIGINALITY REPORTS

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
YÜKSEK LİSANS/DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 17/01/2018

Tez Başlığı / Konusu: **The Changing Portrayals of Gay and Queer Identities in Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House*"**

Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 228 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 16/01/2018 tarihinde tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 6 'dır.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler:
1- Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç,
2- Kaynakça hariç
3- Alıntılar hariç
4- 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orjinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

17.01.2018
Tarih ve İmza

Adı Soyadı:	Hande DİRİM KILIÇ
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Prof. Dr. A. Deniz Bozer

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
THESIS/DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 17/01/2018

Thesis Title / Topic: **The Changing Portrayals of Gay and Queer Identities in Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House*"**

According to the originality report obtained by my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options stated below on 15/01/2018 for the total of 228 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled as above, the similarity index of my thesis is 6 %.

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Name Surname:	Hande DİRİM KILIÇ
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ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.

Prof. Dr. A. Deniz Bozer

APPENDIX II: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORMS

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KURUL İZİN MUAFİYETİ FORMU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 17/01/2018

Tez Başlığı / Konusu: **The Changing Portrayals of Gay and Queer Identities in Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House*"**

Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmam:

1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır,
2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir.
4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullar ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

17.01.2018
Tarih ve İmza

Adı Soyadı:	Hande DİRİM KILIÇ
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HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM FOR THESIS WORK

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENCY

Date: 17/01/2018

Thesis Title / Topic: **The Changing Portrayals of Gay and Queer Identities in Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*, Jonathan Harvey's *Beautiful Thing* and Mark Ravenhill's *Mother Clap's Molly House*"**

My thesis work related to the title/topic above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).

I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

17.01.2018
Date and Signature

Name Surname:	Hande DİRİM KILIÇ
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ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL

Prof. Dr. A. Deniz Bozer