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Ambivalence towards (Homo) Sexuality in Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*

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This thesis entitled "Ambivalence towards (Homo)Sexuality in Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Gopal Prasad Bhandari, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

This research has explored the sexual ambivalence in *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin. David, the protagonist's sexual ambivalence stems from his homosexual and heterosexual involvement at the same time. David can't help finding himself in relation with his male partner Giovanni. Again, his stance in the close relationship with his beloved, Hella, makes us find him in quite ambiguous position. The research work basically centers on the forthcoming of a new life- style that goes beyond the traditional marriage life causing a great confusion to the contemporary world.

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I. Introduction

Sexual Ambivalence in *Giovanni's Room*

This research work is an inquiry to Baldwin's protagonist, David's ambivalence towards (homo) sexuality in *Giovanni's Room* that stems from the contradictory portraits of his homoeroticism. David, an American expatriate in France, must choose between his mistress Hella and his male-lover Giovanni. On the one hand, David rejects Giovanni in favor of heterosexual love and on the other he fails to keep good relation with Hella because of his love towards Giovanni.

David's sexual ambivalence is a constant underlying theme of *Giovanni's Room*. David considers leaving Giovanni in the bar when they first meet; he longs to go home to America when he finds himself attracted to Giovanni. He seeks to escape by looking for a whore and then by having sexual encounter with Sue. David finally attempts to flee from himself from his homoerotic feelings by arranging to marry Hella only to find that he cannot maintain his charade. He then resorts to the use of alcohol and flees from Hella into the homosexual underworld.

The innocent homoerotic love is implicit in this interpretation. Throughout the work, Baldwin implies that homoerotic behaviour is David's natural sexual orientation. The positive depiction of homoerotic love (its association with innocence and with healing powers) and the subsequent tragedy of David, who denies his homosexuality and therefore can love and the subsequent implication that society, in producing sexual deviants, has failed to meet traditional standards. The depiction of David's homosexuality as his natural sexual orientation and the depiction of the innocence of homoerotic love are subverted by psychological and socio-economic factors. It is in this regard, the present research proposes to analyze Baldwin's ambivalent representation of (homo) sexuality in *Giovanni's Room*.

Baldwin's all works emphasize the race, sex, religion through the sewer of individualism and the continuous existence. His novels reflect great tension with the feeling of fear, insecurity and their struggles against it. Baldwin's second novel, *Giovanni's Room* explores the theme mainly as it relates to love and sexuality. By rejecting Giovanni, David denies his true homosexual self and his deepest feeling for another person in favor of society that promotes heterosexuality. As Baldwin develops it, he gives his protagonist the choice between America and Europe, conformity and freedom, safety and the risks necessary to realize love. In search of security, David instead precipitates chaos and tragedy for himself, Hella, and Giovanni.

Here, Baldwin has presented a man's struggle with his liminal homosexual and heterosexual space. David, the narrator, tells his story on a single night. He is a young bisexual American. Giovanni is his Italian lover, who is to be executed as a murderer, and Hella his would-be wife. Again, examining the agonizing mystery of love and passion in an intensely imagined yet beautifully restricted narrative, Baldwin creates a moving and complex story of death and desire that is revelatory in its insight.

It is portrayed with such characteristics as being Giovanni in prison, symbolic of Giovanni's life, holding the relationship between Giovanni and David, being a metaphor of homosexuality for David and being a tomb underwater. These different portrayals of *Giovanni's Room* which are dirty, suffocating and restricting are combined within the novel to create an overall negative metaphor of homosexuality as perpetuated by society. Baldwin is showing the reader that homosexuality can be understood as all of these things, detrimental as they are. The novel is a reflection

upon the common belief in society that homosexuality is unnatural and wrong causing homosexual men to turn from social hatred to self-hatred.

Baldwin has presented the search for self in sexual terms in *Giovanni's Room*. It concerns white characters, principally those in a triangular relationship involving two expatriate bisexuals—David, an American, and Giovanni, an Italian, both living in Paris, and David's girl friend Hella.

David of *Giovanni's Room* struggles with questions of identity posed by his relationship to his parents. His mother having died when he was five, David suffers from a recurrent sexual nightmare of a woman figure whom he describes as: "Hair as dry as metal and brittle as a twig, straining to press me against her body; that body so putrescent, so sickening soft, that it opened, as I clawed and erred, into a breach so enormous as to swallow me alive"(17).

This disgust carries over into shame at his father's drunken affairs with women, the subject of shrill scolding by David's aunt. His father, moreover, has a kind of invisible American boyishness that inhibits the maturation of his son, who first resents then pities his father and whose hapless love for him. A brief, bittersweet homosexual encounter with a boy named Joey compounds the confusion of the family situation. He explicitly calls an effort to find himself, recognizing in retrospect that it was really a flight from recognition of the true nature of the self. David goes to France, there he involves first with Hella an apprentice painter from Minneapolis who leaves him to travel through Spain in order to evaluate their relationship, and Giovanni, working as a bartender at a homosexual establishment presided over by Guillaume, a thoroughly corrupt and dangerously shrewd scion of an aristocratic French family.

Like David, Giovanni is a bisexual moving inexorably toward homosexuality. Unlike David, he is willing to accept the imperatives of love, whatever form they take. David moves into Giovanni's small, cluttered room but despite the genuine affection of their relationship, he fears the prospect of becoming like Guillaume or Jacques a businessman with a prediction for football players. This fear, the failure to commit himself fully to their love, constitutes a betrayal on David's part that drives Giovanni to desperation and finally to the murder of Guillaume.

Baldwin handles the homosexual theme in *Giovanni's Room* with dignity and restraint but as a protagonist David lacks tragic stature, eliciting pity, perhaps, but hardly terror. A pattern of imagery recurrent in this novel and elsewhere in Baldwin's work is that of drowning or being smothered or engulfed. David's dream of being swallowed alive in the embrace of his mother's decaying body reappears as his revulsion at Hella's female sexuality intensifies.

Baldwin has, thus, reflected the lonely sense of identity in his expatriate novel, *Giovanni's Room*. His central artistic concern with the discovery of personal identity that centers on the definition of what it means to be black, what it means to be American, and what it means to try to find love in sexual expressions that are not sanctioned by one's culture.

So, the present study has tried to show how David and Giovanni are treated as social pariah because of their indulgence to homosexuality. The society around them is not able to come to terms with them being homosexuals. They are treated as social outcasts by society due to the norms it formulates and then uses its power to define homosexuality through the discourse it controls.

The text has attracted the attention of many critics since its publication in 1956. They have judged it from different perspectives. Some have viewed the relationship between David and Giovanni as sterile and some claim that it is sentimental. Eldridge Cleaver launches his comment by saying the novel as the reflection on how the most biting attack on "the black homosexual who takes a white lover who enacts the racial death wish".

Similarly, *Encyclopedia Americana* also holds the position about the novel considering it as "the plight of homosexuals in mixed racial environment" (58). Ben Richardson and William Fahey have focused on the tragic aspect of the novel: "A poetically evocative love story that ends in betrayal and violence. *Giovanni's Room* takes place mainly in Paris, which Baldwin recalled and depicted with the careful eye of a painter" (110).

Robert F. Sayre talks about the content and form of the novel. For him *Giovanni's Room* has many faults. Beginning with the very first lines, "I stand at the window of this great house in the south of France as night falls, the night which is leading me to most terrible morning of my life" (7), the story labors with melodrama and self-pity. It is both unnecessary and unrealistic to jam all the narrator's self-examination into one short night, particularly such a fateful one.

But other critics unwrap the experience of David's homosexuality in a different way. They have concentrated on the positive depiction of homoerotic love an innocent expression of love. In this regard, George E. Kant asserts that "Falling first into a romantic homosexual experience with a fellow adolescent, Joey, (David) experiences the escape from isolation and the heightened spiritual awareness that love is supported to bring" (25). Holding the similar position, regarding David's

homoerotic love Horace porter remarks that "Baldwin emphasizes David's developing sexual self-consciousness-step by psychological step" (146). In the same way Stephen Adams comments:

With the exception of the bright haloes and starry-eyed fatality of (David and Giovanni) encounter ... Baldwin depicts the more complex reality of such a relationship and it is unfair to accuse him as does Irving Howe of whipped cream sentimentalism' wherever he deals with homosexual love. (137)

The novel is narrated introspectively and retrospectively in the first person by a young, white American named David, who is trying to find himself in post-war France. It follows David's exploits in Paris, where he keeps company with the saint - Germain crowd of homosexuals, While his official American fiancé Hella, is on David's struggle with his sexual identity and his tragic romance. With love David ultimately rejects in fit of self-hating and homophobic rage. According to Tomlinson this stubbornly innocent happiness of Americans is the mask of their guilt and the source of their lack of accountability. One of the French enactors of *Giovanni's Room* remarks that David was doing things in assurance that he would not have to do at home. And it is David's attempt to take pleasure without paying his dues which colors his affair with Giovanni with the moral irresponsibility and sexual guilt which Baldwin would evoke in the despairing vision of the homosexual. He further argues, "It is possible as it were to have one's pleasure without paying for it. But to have one's pleasure without paying for it is precisely the way to find oneself reduced to search for pleasure which grows to search for pleasure which grows steadily more desperate and grotesque" (104).

But no one seems to talk about the characters identity crisis not only because of society's ambivalent treatment to the bisexuals but, also their own ambivalent attitude to their own bisexuality. It is significant to find out ambivalent quality in sexuality. The problem arises when the protagonist David happens to choose between love for a man and love for a woman. The researcher sees the novel more psychosexual with racial influence.

In order to prove the hypothesis, the study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with an introductory aspect of the study. It incorporates the thesis title's clarification, and hypothesis in elaboration, introduction of the author, his works, themes, techniques, etc. The second chapter delves into the theoretical modality that is to effectively apply in the analysis of the novel relating to sexuality, homosexuality, heterosexuality and bisexuality. The third chapter of the dissertation presents an analysis of the novel at considerable length to justify the hypothesis of the research work. The fourth chapter concludes the research work.

II. Methodology

Sex and Sexuality

Sex is conceptualized as a natural instinct or drive which demands fulfillment through sexual equality. It is taken as a natural phenomenon, that is universal and unchanging, something that is part of the biological make up of each individual. The instinctive urge is directed at the opposite sex. It is essentially a heterosexual drive. So, in this view, sexuality is only a fulfillment of biological desire and it is said to be normal and natural.

However, sexuality is a topic that gives rise to varied responses and concepts. But for the sake of simplification there are mainly two schools of thought. One of them is referred to as the essentialist view of sexuality.

'Sexuality' is probably the most misunderstood concept in Freudian psychoanalysis. It is commonly conflated with the term 'genital'. For Freud, sexuality functions as a super ordinate term; the genital is merely one of the aspects of sexuality. Sexuality in psychoanalysis is described through a developmental model where the infant progresses through different stages. The oral, the anal, the genital and the phallic. It is biologically natural for some people to be gay, no matter what environment they are born into, and therefore homosexuals should be accepted as normal. Homosexuality is a normal response to particular environmental factors.

Sexuality is not concerned only with physical attraction between same sexes or opposite sex but goes beyond it. It is revealed in appearance, personality and even bodily movement and structure. Sexuality describes a whole range of a person's personality related to sexual behavior. Throughout history, generation and gender differences are regarded as natural, unproblematic and culturally accepted. However, sexual act involving the same sex partners is characterized as a deviant form of

sexuality. Sexual deviation however cannot be defined in terms of the participating gender only. It is a social definition rather than natural phenomena. What is normative in behavior in a particular period may be a deviation or crime in another. No sexual type or behavior is universal. The entire meaning and value of any statement of sexuality is determined or defined by the social temporal context in which it occurs.

For an example, homosexuality comprises choosing a same sex partner. The homosexual trait characterizes individuals who prefer romantic attachment and sexual interaction with the same sex. People with such traits are roused by the same erotic imagery. The term 'homosexual' is used for both sexes, although female homosexuality is often referred to as lesbianism. Of all variations of sexual behavior, homosexuality has provoked the greatest social pressure and evoked the liveliest historical account. It is regarded as problematic and culturally unacceptable. It has become subject to extreme prejudices in most western societies. It is largely considered 'perverted and sick' and a 'disgrace to human nature.' Michel Foucault argues that sexual act between two persons of the same sex has been punishable through legal and religious sanctions well before the late nineteenth century. Only in the late nineteenth century did a new understanding of sexuality emerge in which sexual acts and desires could be considered constitutive of identity. Medical and serological literatures were one of the few sites of explicit engagement with the question of sexuality during this period and they held substantial definitional power within a culture that sanctioned science to discover and tell the truth about the body. For sexologists interested in same sex sexual behavior, the key issue is the relationship between the sexual partners and their identity.

The word 'homosexuality' has acquired multiple meanings overtime. In the

original sense, it describes a sexual orientation characterized by lasting aesthetic attraction, romantic love, or sexual desire exclusively for others of the same sex or gender. Homosexuality is usually contrasted with heterosexuality or bisexuality. The term gay is used predominantly to refer to homosexual males. The adjective homosexual is also used for same sex sexual relations between persons of the same sex who are not gay or lesbian. Three major forms of homosexual relationships are proposed by anthropologists: egalitarian, gender-structured and age-structured. Of these, one is usually dominant in a given society at a given time. As there are different biological, historical and psychosocial components to sex and gender no single label or description will fit all individuals.

The word homosexuality came into general usage following the 1892 translation of Krafft Ebbing's *Psychological Sexualis*. Some earlier usage has been recorded: Swiss Doctor Karoly Maria Benkert used the term 'homosexual' in a response to German anti-homosexual legislation in 1869 to describe "inborn, therefore irrepressible drive"(Plummer 142). Foucault also records the use of the term in his 1890 paper *Archiv Fur Neurologie*, by Carl Westphal to describe "less a type of sexual relations than ... a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and feminine in oneself" (43). However, the 1890s marks the general adoption of the term by writers such as essayists J. A. Symonds and theorist Havelock Ellis. Like Benkert, all these theorists were involved in a debate about whether desires and behaviors described by the term 'homosexual' were innate or culturally acquired.

Although, some early writers used the adjective 'homosexual' to refer to any single gender context, today the term is virtually exclusively used for sexual attraction. The term homo-social is now used to describe single sex context that are

not specifically sexual. The more generic term 'homophilia' (same love) is also preferred by some.

Regarding the orientation of homosexuality, writers can create such impression in the environment of his writing, or they can bestow their characters with distinctive markers in their performative behavior. Certain features such as effeminacy, excessive preoccupation with male beauty, misogyny, inability to express their deep feelings to their soul mates, etc. are described in pathology as the description of homosexuality. Only a single among aforementioned characteristics may be inadequate to identify that someone with such predilection is unmistakably a homosexual. But as pathologists agree when excessive preoccupation with male beauty comes jointly with any of those features, they are traces of homosexuality at the most, or homoeroticism at the least. The character having same sex passion detests nature at the cost of artificiality.

Throughout history homosexuality has existed in most societies. Various cultures have different attitudes toward it. The ancient Greeks not only accepted homosexuality but considered it to be an ideal relationship, perhaps because they were taught to consider women as inferior. Such men felt that only man could fulfill the role of true lover and friend. Similarly, some ancient African cultures accepted same sex marriage. Among the Nzema of Ghana friendship marriage between man and the male teenager and sometimes two women of different generations was taken as means of transmitting, social and spiritual guidance. There is a long tradition in the Christian west of hostility toward homosexuality although this usually took the form of formal regulation of male homosexual activity rather than female lesbian activity. Christian taboos against homosexuality have varied in strength through time and have had different effects on male and female homosexual behavior. Attitude towards

homosexuality are, thus, culturally specific and vary enormously across different cultures and through various historical periods. Not only attitudes vary, the social and subjective meanings given to homosexuality are also culturally specific.

Social and cultural judgments on homosexuality have however relied on theories developed in the field of sexology after the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Pioneer sexologists of the period developed the notion that homosexuality was characteristic of a particular type of person. Karl Wistphal, for instance, in the 1860s, described contrary sexual feelings and argued that homosexuality was a product of moral insanity resulting from congenital reversal of sexual feelings. Karl Ulrichs, a German Lawyer and writer who was himself homosexually inclined, pioneered congenital theories and argued that the 'Urning' (as he terms homosexuals) was the product of the anomalous development of the originally undifferentiated human embryo, resulting in a female mind in a male body or vice versa. Such bodily structure is known as intermediate sex. On a more scientific level, the great German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld developed the notion of 'third sex' and integrated into this notion the discoveries of the significance of hormones in the development of sexual differentiation. His ideas were taken up by homosexual apologists to form the basis for an explanation of homosexuality, which was free of the pejorative implications of sin or moral weakness theories.

The role of emotions in sexual life was a matter of concern for later sexologists like Edward Carpenter, who was especially anxious to know about emotional sexual feelings. Carpenter, the gay socialist and free thinker who wrote a number of books in defense of homosexuality introduces differences between love and sexual feeling. Talking of the intermediate sex (1908) he writes:

The word love is commonly used in so general and almost indiscriminate a fashion as to denote sometimes physical instincts and acts, and profound feelings; and in this way a good deal of misunderstanding is caused. In this book the word is used to denote the inner devotion of one person to another; and when anything else is meant as, for instance, sexual relations and actions- this is clearly stated and expressed. (188)

The linguistic demarcations that Carpenter sets up between love feelings and sexual acts are partly, of course, strategic rather than scientific. He is concerned with defending homosexual men. By stressing the significance of the emotional, rather than the physical aspect of sexual relations, he argues for greater moral rectitude in gay love, which was, in experience, often unconsummated. Eroticism between men, in his opinion, easily reaches a state of transcendence not because of its sexual possibilities but because of its tendency to run along emotional channels.

Differentiating between emotional states of being and sexual acts, Carpenter describes his version as something emotional rather than sexual. Borrowing the notion of intermediate sex from Karl Ulrich, Carpenter says that urnings have a specific part to play as reconcilers of the sexes to one another, Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character* (1903) appeared two years before Freud's first edition of *Three Essays on Sexuality*. Though the book is quite unbalanced in its view of gender, it popularized the notion of universal bisexuality. Weininger urges that it is impossible to love actual women. Men who love women can do so only by projecting on to them their own narcissistic ideal. Conversely, women who have no essence and no existence cannot love. Thus, Weininger regards homosexuality not as degenerative or pathological, but as an internal human quality.

Along with invigorating congenial theories, Havelock Ellis also accepted environmental factors in the formation of homosexual desire. Ellis redefined homosexuality as an inborn condition rather than a form of sin. He furthermore, differed from many of his European counterparts in explicitly rejecting the vocabulary of 'degeneration', insisting that homosexuality should be seen as a harmless physiological variation rather than a neuropath taint. His sexual inversion is a distinct and definitive investigation of homosexuality. This book seeks to normalize male homosexuality by rendering it acceptable to a wider audience and downplaying its association with effeminacy. The book largely intends to defend homosexuality. Ellis assumed that the invert might be visually distinguishable from the normal body through anatomical markers, just as the differences between the sexes had traditionally been mapped upon the body. He argues, homosexuality is an innate condition. He admits that external environmental factors might excite the latent condition although he insists such factors require favorable pre-disposition.

Recent advantages in social psychology and neo-Freudian theory suggest that development of heterosexual or homosexual propensities during youth is not a product of inherent biological imperative but the effect of historically conditioned familial and social influences channeling sexual possibilities which exists in a young child. The changing family, the changing notion of childhood and the role of parents and so on actually have profound effects in the construction of individual heterosexual, or other sexual categorizations. Emotions are differentially structured according to different social forms and pressures. But, even if primary differences were biologically formed, this would not fundamentally alter the argument. Society plays a very crucial role in respect to homosexuality. The important point to be

observed while studying homosexuality is that there is no automatic relationship between social categorization and individual sense of self-identity. The meaning given to homosexual activities can vary enormously. It depends upon a variety of factors, social class, geographical location, gender differentiation and so on. In the *Construction of Homosexuality* Jeffrey Weeks writes, “it is vital to keep in mind when exploring homosexuality which has always been defined in our culture as a deviant form, that what matters is not the inherent nature of the act but the social construction of meaning around that activity, and the individual response to it” (177).

Homosexuality remained for long the term of abuse. The same sex practice encountered not only legal hurdles, but more severely, many people were massacred in the name of being homosexuals. But later, homosexuality earned the stature of special species. Homosexuals were considered a "social freak" which has to do something with the effect of power circulating within the society. Power in its productive phase functions to install limits through "marking off" the discursive domain specific to individual subject positions.

Late in the 19th century, as large cities allowed for greater anonymity, as wage labor apart from family becoming common, and as more women were drawn out of homes, evidence of a new pattern of homosexual expression surfaced.

Heterosexuality and Homosexuality

Power creates a series of binary identifications. The creation of new political and social identities is one of the most distinctive effects of power/knowledge nexus. As such, power effectively produces individual subjects, both in the sense of being “subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to (one’s) own identity by a conscience or self knowledge” (12). Foucault’s treatment of homosexuality provides a characteristic example. In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*

Foucault speaks of the invention of homosexuality, among other exotic perversions, via the “specification of individuals” (42). Such a process effected the creation of new sexual identities around particular acts and perversions hitherto regarded as temporary aberration(s). Around the figure of the homosexual in particular was constructed a whole “personage, a past, a case history and a childhood, in addition to a . . . life form and a morphology” (43). The specification of the homosexual was made possible by the confluence of a network of disparate discourses and practices targeted at the body of the pervert. The new sciences of sexology, psychiatry and medicine were particularly instrumental in the construction of this new identity, whilst the articulation of power in the practices of confinement and treatment enabled such discourses to have practical effects.

The example of the homosexual also illustrates the extent to which the government of socially marginal identities simultaneously regulates the experience of subjectivity in the wider population. This is, in fact, one of the most important functions of those dividing practices examined above. In the example cited, the specification of homosexuality inevitably calls forth the establishment of heterosexuality and its attendant social and political identities: “just as the homosexual is enmeshed in a series of relations of power and knowledge, so to is the heterosexual couple” (105). Beyond this particular case, Foucault explores a number of other marginalized identities, including the delinquent, the madman, the pervert and the criminal, each of which only further illustrates the construction of limits distinguishing normal from deviant and self from abject. Foucault argues that the constitution of subjectivity through such practices effects the reification of the ‘normal subject’ thereby facilitating a pervasive normalization of subjectivity so characteristic of modern societies. Foucault’s studies provide a series of histories of

the “different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subject” (208). Identity and subjectivity are not, for Foucault, the realization of some deep, interiorized essence, ostensibly the very distillation of human nature.

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault examines the organization of homosexuality in the west. He begins his analysis with a powerful critique of what he terms “the repressive hypothesis”. Conventional understandings of western sexuality appeal to the repressive nature of Victorian society. Sexuality is a taboo, something about which nothing can be said. Silence and censorship are the law. In the contrast of this view Foucault suggests that sexuality is talked about all the time in Victorian society. From the rise of sexology to judicial institutions, sexuality is a profusely discussed and regulated entity. It is something which is produced through discourse, not repressed through censorship.

The most significant aspect of Foucault’s research centers on the production of the homosexual. The proliferation of discourse of sexuality gave rise to the category 'homosexual' originally, a taxonomic device employed within sexology, the terms subsequently gained currency in judicial and psychiatric fields of knowledge. By demonstrating that “homosexuals” did not exist before this classification, Foucault shows that social identities are effects of the ways in which knowledge is organized. He observes the politically ambiguous characters and the formation of characters like the homosexual:

There is no question that the appearance of nineteenth century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourse on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversions, pedantry, and “psychic hermaphroditism” made possible a strong advance of social controls into the area of “perversity”; but it also made possible

the formation of a “reverse” discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or “naturally” be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified. (101)

Foucault offers an account of the social production of identities which are assumed to be natural in current dominant knowledge. Foucault views the invention of the homosexual and the addict as predicated upon the modern epistemic regime in which particular acts and behaviors like sodomy and drug taking were transformed into criminalized and pathologized identities through the positive effects of power. The modern regime which organized through a division between normal and abnormal, are mutually dependent categories: the self’s border is produced through a social power of producing and policing the other. As Michel Foucault explained, the shift from acts to identities is an effect of a modern epistemic regime that produces, locates, and contains what and who are threatened and threatening in order to produce and stabilize the norm. The strategies and operations of modern power are concealed but work to produce and render visible the deviant, the pathological, the delinquent:

There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourse of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth ... In the end, we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living and dying as a function of the true discourse which are the bearers of the specific effects of power. (35)

Foucault wished to prove beneath such abstract system in which discursive practices are interwoven with social practices by the circulation of power. Truth then is itself a product of relations of power and of the systems in which it flows and it changes as system change. Hence, he avers that homosexuality is socially created, historically variable and therefore deeply politicized.

At the juncture we should be aware of the fact that sexuality is a metonym for homosexuality and in *The History of Sexuality* Foucault traces unmistakably the history of homosexuality of “sodomites”. Thus, whenever I’m stating Foucault’s concept of sexuality, I am stating homosexuality, like Sedgwick says, "homosexuality is] the metonym for sexuality that the two story of sexuality actually installs is homosexuality ... and the history of sexuality is the history of homosexuality, under the heading incorporation of perversions and a new specification of individuals” hence, the term themselves are interchangeable" (281).

In constructing a genealogy of the homosexual/heterosexual divide, Sedgwick’s work draws on Foucault. To be homosexual is not to be heterosexual, and in the more direct terms to be male is not to be female. It is precisely this fixing of identity, or we can say the government of individualization, that Foucault is so opposed to. Foucault thus exhorts us to consider the costs of our subjectification in terms of the active restrictions of freedom and agency. Foucault’s intention is to wake us from our great ‘anthropological sleep’ such that we might become aware of the extent to which our subjectification erects limit our experience. Whilst limits have very immediate and very concrete practical effects, Foucault stresses that limits remain ‘events of thought’ and as such might be discursively and practically reconstituted. In this sense, the subject may actively challenge the pervasive

observation of limits through his or own aesthetic practices, through the realization of a limit 'attitude'.

For Foucault, the construction of homosexuality since the mid-nineteenth century has engendered innumerable transformations in the manner in which men relate to one another in their ordinary social interactions. In particular, Foucault argues that intimacy between men and the access to other men's bodies has been problematized through the reification of homosexuality and its attendant homophobia. The construction of what Foucault calls a homosexual 'mode of existence' has thus ensured that friendship and intimacy between men have become aligned with a sexual identity, hopelessly problematizing the manner in which men might come to share "their time ... their leisure, their grief, their knowledge, their confidences" (136). Foucault here notes the extent to which the desire to develop intimate relationships with other men has been conflated with sexual desire and the practice of homosexuality.

Recent critical studies on "sexuality," undoubtedly, have to deal with it as a category consisting of wide range of sexualities rather than only a monolithic heterosexual one. The traditional formula of 'normative' heterosexuality, it seems, has erased the historiographies of many people or groups whose sexual behavior define such norm. Contemporary studies on sexuality seek to describe the repressed historiographies, and these "other" sexualities that were ignored or denied by traditional scholars. Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, among many others, have illustrated and emphasized the shift-worthwhile to be noted- from sexual behavior to sexual identity with the commencement of modern practice of putting mortals into either/or camp of sexuality from nineteenth century onwards. In

his influential *The History of Sexuality*, volume one, Foucault argues that homosexuality and homosexuals date from the 1870s. Foucault argues:

The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality [...] Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practices of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. (43)

Along with Foucault, Jacques Derrida's poststructuralist contribution of deconstructive strategies, has similarly disclosed the credibility of the spectrum of sexualities, demarcating "the insecure divisions between male and female, femininity and masculinity, heterosexual and homosexual, friend and sodomite" (337), as Rachel Adams and David Savran ascribe in the introductory part of *The Masculinity Studies Reader*. Since all such terms as historically contingent, talking only of homosexuals and heterosexuals, for example, is not only insufficient to refer to conscious or unconscious performances such as "queen, dyke, butch, transsexual, nelly, femme," (Chinn 295) but absurd also, as the system of constructing such binaries is less a condition of human nature than being a feature of certain kind of society.

Binaries, such as Adams and Savran mention, especially their traditional formulaic referential significance, are inefficacious to include the dynamic range of sexual desire and multiple identities. At present, the terms 'sex', 'gender' and 'sexuality' often blur into each other in a complicated way. 'Sex' not only refers to

what Sedgwick calls ‘chromosomal sex’ but to the cultural expectations of male and female, namely masculinity and femininity. ‘Gender’ again fares the same schema, as due to the hardcore imposition of masculine/feminine qualities, individuals are forced to act accordingly. If gender was not limited to the logic of the binary, sexuality would also be able to cater to wider range of other repressed or unacknowledged desires and practices. Moreover ‘sex’ and ‘sexuality’ also overlap, as Sedgwick clarifies:

[...] the whole realm of what modern culture refers to as ‘sexuality’ and also calls ‘sex’ -the array of acts, expectations, narratives, pleasures, identity-formations, and knowledge, in both women and men, that tends to cluster most densely around certain genital sensations but is not adequately defined by them-that realm is virtually impossible to situate on a map delimited by the feminist defined sex/gender distinction. (29)

Sexuality, thus, can be seen as a fluid category, which incorporates not only concrete and real activities but ruminations, fantasies, and what-not. Moreover, due to the individual differences it is very hard to define a precise boundary of sexuality. Even identical sexual acts may mean very different things to different people. Many people may even have rich mental or emotional involvement with sexual acts they do not do, or which they even do not want to do. Thus, the homo-/hetero-opposition turn out to be overtly constricting in this regard.

In a nutshell, rather than being embroiled in the accuracy of biological essentialism versus historical constructivism regarding sex, gender, and sexuality, it would be more reasonable, as Sedgwick argues, to keep such understanding, and “cultural and material reproduction, plural, multi-capillary, argues-eyed, respectful

and endlessly cherished” (44). And as Garber’s concept “clothes make the man”(75) in her *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety* also suggests, the concept of male and female or masculinity and femininity and, by extension, sexuality, must be viewed as an unstable historical and political construct in our societies and such an awkward issue has continually to be revisited, disavowed, rediscovered, and affirmed.

Sexual Ambivalence

Homosexuality is still considered an uncomfortable, if not inappropriate, topic of discussion. Many literary professors simply avoid addressing lesbian and gay issues in undergraduate courses not specifically devoted to lesbian and gay writers. And at many colleges, although courses on gay and lesbian writers can be offered occasionally as “special topics” courses, they do not always occur as regular course offerings in undergraduate English Faculties, despite the progress made by gay study programs since the 1970s and the emergence of lesbian, gay and queer theory as an important force in academia in the early 1990s.

Gay people are no longer placed in mental institutions for “treatment” - which sometimes included aversion therapy, electric shock treatment, and even lobotomies-it wasn’t until 1974 that such practices officially ended, when the category of homosexuality was removed from the American Psychiatric Association’s list of psychological disorders. Moreover, it wasn’t until 1990 that the 1952 immigration policy restricting homosexual immigration into the United States was lifted. Talking about homosexuality Dawkins suggests:

Homosexuals must be regarded compassionately. Many of them are suffering from a psychological disturbance and none of them can even find the happiness of raising their own family. There is evidence that

homosexuals have not, from a very early age, been able to accept their own sexuality: consequently they cannot love a member of the opposite sex my tallies. (76)

Homophobia is evident in many forms of discrimination against gay men and lesbians still practiced today, despite the enormous social and political gains achieved by gay and lesbian activist groups since the Gay Liberation Movement began in 1969. Then the gay and lesbian patrons of Greenwich Village's Stonewall Inn Bar had finally responded to police brutality by fighting back, two thousand strong, during two nights of rioting. This momentous event, referred to as *Stonewall*, has great symbolic significance because it marks the turning point when gay men and women renounced their victim status and stood up, collectively, for their rights as American citizens.

In the 1990s, gay men and lesbians in America still face discrimination in the military; in obtaining jobs and housing; in using public facilities, such as hotels and taverns; in areas of family law such as the right to marry, retain custody of their children, adopt children, or provide foster care; as victims of police harassment and violent hate crimes; and in AIDS related discrimination. Gay men and lesbians who are members of racial minorities in America face a complex system of discrimination. For in addition to the oppression they suffer in white heterosexist culture, gay and lesbian African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos, and Latinos are sometimes heavily stigmatized in their own communities.

The myth that gay people are sick, evil, or both and that it is therefore in their "nature" to be insatiable sexual predators, to molest children, and to corrupt youths by "recruiting" them to become homosexual. Another myth portrays gay men and lesbians as a very small population of deviants, when, in fact, it is estimated that gay people comprise at least 10% of the population of the United States. Other common

misconceptions include the belief that children raised by gay men or lesbians will grow up to be gay, that unchecked homosexuality will result in the extinction of the human race, and that gay people are responsible for declines in U.S. foreign power.

III: Textual Analysis

Exploration of Sexual Ambivalence in *Giovanni's Room*

This research work on Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* is to examine the sexual ambivalence projected in David which dictates the whole plot of the text. David, the main character of the novel, has homosexual relation with his male lover Giovanni. But at the same time he has relation with his beloved Hella. This bisexual relation leads David to his sexual ambivalence.

In the novel, David seems unable to achieve his own true dream which presents the clear picture of ambivalence towards (homo) sexuality. He says, "Me, I want to escape this dirty world, this dirty body, I never wish to make love again with anything more than the body" (Baldwin 24). It is not that Giovanni simply despises his flesh on the contrary, he loves his flesh. He wishes to make him again, but only with his body, bodies on which others will no longer project notions of filth and bestiality. Indeed, Giovanni begins his process of pushing against the strictures of western thought not in Paris but in Italy where he heaves behind his wife after their failed attempt to produce a child, the marker of both husband and wife's potency within the patriarchal society. Giovanni expresses his feelings:

I wanted children. I wanted to be inside again, with the light and safety with my manhood unquestioned, watching my woman put my children to bed. I wanted the save bed at night and the same arms and wanted to rise in the morning, knowing where I was. I wanted a woman to be for

me a study ground like the earth itself, where I could always be rendered. (79)

It is the search for the homosexual satisfaction that drives the narrative of *Giovanni's Room*. David, finds himself homosexual when he has relation with Giovanni, a male lover. His homosexuality surfaces when he says, "I'm not trying to make you a little girl. If I wanted a little girl, I would be with a little girl" (107). So, the novel basically is the exploration of sexual ambivalence that is arising in David. He can't leave Giovanni and lives with Hella. This is revealed when he says:

I'm very fond of Giovanni. You didn't see him at his best tonight, but he's a very nice man. I laughed; covered by the night, emboldened by Hella's body and my own, and protected by the tone of my voice, I found great relief in adding : I love him, in a way. I really do. (100-101)

Homosexuality arises in David because his relation with his father isn't so pleasant. His mother doesn't like him to behave as his father does. Because David couldn't get proper responsibility from his father, he turns to fulfill his masculine desire from male partners.

In the novel, Baldwin details the childhood and adolescent environment of David. We learn that David moved seven times during his childhood, and that his father moves once more before David leaves for France. David's motion seems to echo that of his father and of his childhood. His mother died when David was five; her image has terrified him in the form of night moves and her picture dominates the living room. David's father argues with Ellen. David's Aunt, who appears unapproachable to David, describes his father hiding a newspaper. David also describes desperate attempts to conquer his father's attention, his attempts to end his

father's show of anger. His father overindulges in alcohol and women. Once, when David overhears his father and Ellen arguing, he learns about his father's promiscuity and consequently, that leads to wonder whether each woman that he faces has been interfered with his father. During this argument, his father says "that all I want for David is that he grows up to be a man and when I say man, Ellen, I don't mean a Sunday school teacher" (16). This frightens David, who from this point on despises his father and hates Ellen. Such influences unsurprisingly begin from the earliest moment of sensitivity for many actors. The condemnation and degradation of the homosexual experience by society renders the individual worries and guilt. The actor comes to perceive his initial experience with increasing anxiety and possible guilt confronting with the stereotypes of sin, sickness and sadness. Baldwin recounts the first childhood experiences of David as his homosexual hero like this:

I awoke whilst Joey was still sleeping, curled like a baby on his side, toward me. He looked like a baby, his mouth half open, his cheek flushed, his curly hair darkening the pillow and half hiding his damp round forehead and his long eyelashes gliding slightly in the summer sun. We were both naked and the sheet we had used as a cover was tangled around our feet. Joey's body was brown, was sweaty, the most beautiful creation I had ever seen till then. (11)

David explicitly notes that this argument occurs after his experiences with Joey and that it is this overheard disputer which makes him "secretive and cruel" (porter). It is clear from David's description that his psychological needs were met by his father, who hid from responsibility behind newspapers behind alcohol, and being a buddy to buddy relationship with his son. This shows that boys with a negative relationship with their fathers were more likely to emerge as homosexual men. It also proves that

like David pre- homosexual boys have worse relationship with their fathers than pre-heterosexual boys do. Baldwin quotes David to describe his father son relationship like this:

We were not like father and son, my father sometimes proudly said we were like buddies. I think my father sometimes actually believed this. I never did. I did not want to be his buddy I wanted to be his son. What passed between us as masculine candor exhausted and appalled me. Father ought to avoid utter nakedness before their sons. I did not want to know –not, anyway, from his mouth that his flesh was as unregenerate as my own. The knowledge didn't make me feel more like his son – or buddy – it only made me feel like an interloper, and a frightened one at that. (17)

It is clear that, more homosexual men recall their fathers as relatively weak and cold as David does. Moreover mothers of pre- homosexual boys do not want them to grow up to be like their fathers" just as Ellen, a surrogate mother for David, does not want him to be like his father. The researcher becomes cheer that homosexual men describe their fathers as detached, absent, or hostile as David does in order to distort their memories of early erotic attachment to the male parent.

Baldwin makes a study that explains homoerotic love as behavior that is produced by diagnosable circumstances within a society. Closer examination reveals that David's flight has several levels of psychological implications. Baldwin emphasizes the heterosexuality of David's father, who flirts with women and wants his son to become a heterosexually active man, and David responds to his knowledge with hatred. Indeed, he hates Ellen and his father, both of whom express the traditional roles that they would like David to play. David's anger and his flight into

the may be seen as his rejection of these roles and rebellion against his parental authority figures. But Ironically, his rebellion takes the form of flight into his father's alcoholic and heterosexually promiscuous behavior.

In fact, David's fear of his homoerotic feelings leads him to imitate the authority against whom he rebels. His inner conflict may be seen as the struggle between the rebellion against the heterosexual stereotypes of his father and his fear of not meeting the heterosexual values of his society. In seeking to resolve this conflict, he overlooks self acceptance. It shows that he is left to a life of degradation and self – reproach, punctuated by furtive affairs with sailors.

The symbol of thumb is important that explains how David develops his nature of homosexuality. Here, homosexual tendency has been aroused in David when Giovanni touches his thumb. As David says, "he played with my thumb and grinned" (88).

The struggle for cleanliness, the denial of the body that might protect one from the dangers of intimate odor, is precisely the struggle that David faces when he looks into his darker past. He attempts throughout to maintain a chuan masculinity, to maintain his sense of respectability. David's immersion into the Parisian demimonde has as much to do with his desire to understand himself as not dirty, as not vulnerable and indeed as not homosexual as with any real affinity for the people by when he finds himself surrounded:

Most of the people I know in Paris were, as Parisians sometimes put it, of le milieu and while this milieu was certainly anxious enough to claim me, I was intent on proving, to them and to myself that I was not of their company. I did this by being in their company a great deal and

manifesting towards all of them a tolerance which placed me, I
believed, above suspicion. (Yesmin, 32-33)

Real identity, means heterosexual identity, is formed through concurrent acts of repression and projection. The homosexual non- subjects of le milieu not only reflect David's own subjectivity, creating him as a real man. They also stand in for the reassurance of boundaries that render the entire real not real loci unworkable.

David's abandonment of Giovanni for his female lover, Hella, a woman whom we only hear about in the second person until rather late in the novel, is both a demonstration of his heterosexuality and his authenticity. With Giovanni, David can only exist in the shadowy and confined spaces of back alley cafes, late night bars, and most especially Giovanni's cramped, suffocating and disheveled room.

Having emphasized equally both the sexes- male and female, Baldwin never forgets to put the female role to the periphery of male reader finds a vivid description about sexual promiscuity among the male characters with an abrupt shifting of the attention towards the female characters. The scene in the bar symbolizes co-existing relation of male and female in human life. We can see through David that he cannot stay longer with his male lover and becomes very much concerned about female partner. The excessive drinking in a bar tender Giovanni develops a deep and open relation between David and Giovanni and other male partners. In the drinking mood David is asked about his beloved by Jacques. They talk like this:

Are you going to write to Hella?

I very often do, I suppose I will do again.

That does not answer my question.

Oh. I was under the impression that you had asked me if I was going to write to Hella. (45)

The more intimacy develops between the male partners the more aware he becomes about the case of love with Hella. Moreover, David's uncertainty about writing to Hella culminates with his ambivalence in sexuality. Alcohol drinking works the shadow to the sexual agency.

Contemporary American society was characterized by personal freedom. Even the family relation is undervalued by the quest of personal happiness. One likes to be detached from another to live their own personal life. There is not much personal care and parental love to David who has already lost his mother and father only wants him to be a man. He is detached from any personal care and relation. Making his life more private, David likes to keep no longer with either sex. David can be one example in the society where people want the world understand them he does so because he likes his life must be of his own.

Baldwin presents a new experimentation in the system of marriage in the post modern world. Marriage itself has become a vague tendency in the post modern society. Unlike in the traditional society when there would be only male and female sitting together and working together, today marriage has included the issues like intimacy, homosexual union, faithfulness and monogamy. This is the new form of life that Baldwin gives in *Giovanni's Room*. Marriage is not for the offsprings, but it is concerned how joyfully we can live a life. Exploration of new way of living a life is a special in *Giovanni's Room* which gives rise to a great confusion to the traditional marriage.

David's concomitant thoughts regarding sexuality make us see his ambivalence in sexuality. In his world we can see female's role important being a circumference to the male characters while Ellen shouts David's father as, "Do you

really think it's a good idea for David to see you staggering home drunk all the time?" (16). She is trying to draw a circumference to keep them in a required limit.

Thus, it is not carry to say circle and the centre are equally important.

Keeping balance his relation with Giovanni and Hella, David Says:

I told myself that we both had always known, Giovanni and myself, that our idyll could not last forever. And it was not as through I had not been honest with him – he knowable about Hella he know not she would be returning to Paris one day. Now she would be coming back and my life with Giovanni would be finished. (72)

We find David equally concerned with both the sexes. The scene in the bar is very significant in which David can't help talking about the beautiful and rich ladies who are seemed to "have come into the world hungry for bank notes, and requiring helplessly, unable to focus their eyes until they came to get on a cash- register." (42). His male friends Giovanni, Jaques, Guillaume are getting introduced with one of the ladies in the bar, called madam Clothilde. They all have been impressed by her "a big deep bosom and her outlook" (42). She becomes all the sources of their happiness and joy as for Giovanni, "something is burning in his eyes and it lights up all his face it is joy and pride" (43). Why David is desirous for both the sexes? He seems to be equally attracted to Giovanni and the old rich lady Clothilde why? Life without either of the sexes is incomplete. Male and female culminate together to form a sphere of the life. Baldwin is very much serious in exploring the wholeness of life through David who finds himself experiencing both the components of the wholeness of life.

Traditional tendency of bisexual relation has been kept a side in the novel and a good deal is about heterosexuality. Baldwin goes beyond the idea of opposite- relation. That has been decayed his ideology permits one to trespass the areas of bi-

sexuality and at the same time homosexuality. They consider the people denying this ideology as traditional and unsociable. David could be the ideal for Baldwin. Lives far away from Paris in a dreadful street, near Nation among all the dreadful bourgeoisie and their pig like children, so called civilized and rational people are, very much disgusting for Baldwin's characters.

The attraction for both David and Giovanni is that they are obliged to recreate themselves and the room daily each has refused readily to settle down both has left their homelands both throw off the strictures of male heterosexuality. Moreover, both leave behind mores and values of le milieu. Perhaps then, the greatest tragedy and the promise of this work is that while David and Giovanni are cast out of the mainstream they are not the other, but the vehicles of the object.

Baldwin depicts homoerotic love as the natural and wholesome interaction of innocent characters whose love transcends the degeneracy of the gay Parisian underground and is capable of healing and reformation. But, he also depicts homoerotic love as deviant behavior that proceeds from both psychological and socioeconomics depravity within the microcosmic home environment and within the larger society. It will be mistake to see the text only through the eye of homosexuality David timely makes with Hella. And that time he seems not to see another partner.

Baldwin quotes David:

I kept kissing her and holding her trying to find my way in her again as she were a familiar, darkened room in which I fumbled to find the light. And with my kisses, I was trying also to delay the moment which would commit me to her, or fail to commit me to her. (91)

David finds himself believing on the kind of love that goes as it is. His duality stems from the acknowledged influence of both groups upon his perception of

homoerotic love. One finds, in *Giovanni's Room*, that the positive depiction of homoerotic love conveys the tragic theme of self-denial and that this positive depiction is deconstructed by the psychological and environmental circumstance of the homosexual characters to reveal the tragic failure of a society which produces deviant behavior. So the reader oscillates between two irreconcilable interpretations of the nature of homosexuality. The innocence of homoerotic love and the tragic theme of self denial are conveyed by the major themes and motifs of the work.

George E. Kent has pointed out the innocence of the first description of homoerotic love in the novel. Falling first into a romantic homosexual experience with a fellow adolescent, David experiences the escape from isolation and the heightened spiritual awareness that love is supposed to bring.

Baldwin deliberately emphasizes the innocence of this experience. He has David, describe the positive feelings that he had for Joey, the innocence of their accidental kiss, and the joy they experience produced in both of the boys. Joey is described as a "nearly doomed bird" (Baldwin 14). Implying that David's love can have healing powers however he has assimilated the homophobic attitudes of mainstream society, and this forces him to flee from Joey, then became cruel to him. The superficial tragedy of this episode is the pain inflicted on Joey and the dissolution of a boyhood friendship. The profound tragedy of this episode, however, is David's denial of his homoerotic orientation. David describes this behavior as his first flight (16), and this episode serves as a microcosm for the larger story of David and Giovanni. The motifs of light and flight continue throughout the novel and reinforce the themes of innocence self denial, and fatalism. Stephen Adams, views on the present issue that:

With the exception of the bright haloes and starry-eyed fatality of (David's and Giovanni's) encounter [...] Baldwin depicts the more complex reality of such a relationship and it is unfair of accuse him, of whipped creams sentimentalism whenever he deals with homosexual love. (137)

David flirts with soldiers when he is drunk; he is happy when he realizes that Giovanni is attracted to him and proud of him and proud of he terms his experience with Giovanni his awakening with Giovanni, David becomes insufferably childish and high spirited" (Yesmin 110).

As in the case of Joey, David's love is depicted as a healing device. Giovanni, we're told, finds out that he wants to live only when he meets David, and David asserts that "the burden of Giovanni's salvation" (152) served to be on him. This shows the tragedy of the character on the death of the youthful Giovanni after the dissolution of his relationship with David a great source of the pathos in the text, but the dissolution of his relationship with David a great source of the pathos in text. But the greater tragedy is David's continued self denial. He recognizes his betrayal of Giovanni, and he projects this guilt upon the caretaker of the villa in southern France, who represents, for David the peasant mother of Giovanni. He also is able to admit to Hella that he was lying to himself when he denied his love for Giovanni. However, neither of these admissions though they represent a movement toward self acceptance allows David to break the chains of his psychological prison. David, at the end of the work, " attempts the heroic role of bringing himself both to remember and to forget his garden of Eden- and so walks off into the morning with a dreadful weight of hope" (Adams 139).

At the end of the work, however, the researcher finds David ripping up the notice that reveals the time of Giovanni's execution and having some of the scarps blown back upon him. If David has begun to move toward self acceptance, this acceptance is never able to let himself full love Giovanni and he has played it safe for so long that, as Jacques foreshadowed, he has ended up "trapped in [his] own dirty body" (77).

Baldwin makes us clear how David turns to sexual ambivalence by drawing the images of gloomy relations between father and son when David is involved in a car accident, a modified version of his earlier attempts to gain attention, he screams for his mother. His father is unable to see the possibility that he has misguided his son. "I haven't done any thing wrong, have I?" (19). His father asks symbolically smothering David with a handkerchief and this sickness in his father forces David into a permanent silence, accepting that he will never truly communicate with the man. This is how he chooses female image as a healing power to make himself satisfied in the sphere of wholeness of life.

Baldwin's depiction of David's childhood concurs with the psychological explanations of homosexuality that have developed during the latter half of the twentieth century. The absence of a mother, for example, was listed by Green (1970) as one of the "fifteen factors in the mother-son relationship that lead to homosexuality" (52). This shows on the behalf of David's in the text that "unresolved oedipal conflicts are hinted, and just when (David) needs spiritual sustenance from a father, his father, who knows nothing of his son's experience" (25).

Baldwin provides David's acceptance to Hella as his beloved though relation with Giovanni is already there. We can see David's dual relation from their conversation which Baldwin quotes this way:

What is she doing, wandering around through Spain alone? Asked Giovanni she likes to travel, "I said. 'Oh', said Giovanni, nobody likes to travel especially not women. There must be some other reason" raised his eye brows suggestively. Perhaps she is with torero: perhaps she is, I thought. But she wouldn't be afraid to tell me. Giovanni laughed. 'I do not understand Americans at all, he said 'I don't' see that there's anything very hard to understand. We aren't marrieds you know.

But she is your Mistress, No? Asked Giovanni' Yes.

'And she is still your mistress?'

I started at him. 'of course', I said. (60)

Giovanni, with a girl in the bar, suggests us the presence of female role in homosexuality. Giovanni's relation is still there with David, as Jacques says David, "He is very fond of you" (46). Baldwin's Characters are using a new way of life. This is very confusing and strange. Observing Giovanni's behavior, David says, "I don't understand him ... I don't know what his friendship means, I don't know what he means by friendship" (46).

Baldwin wrote in the time of post war era. Many of the young generation of the time were parentless, suffering from loneliness. Their broken family structure became a firm basis to give rise to a new lifestyle. Many of them were identity less and were suffering from anxiety of loss. Baldwin's characters can't help themselves

depicting the contemporary scenario. Especially, some are barmen while the others are the customers away from their home come to have a rest and have some drink. And, they are representing the countries which fought in the World War II. After having destroyed the earlier established norms and values of the society, they are now recreating their identities. Amongst the anxiety and confusion they are coming out forming new basis of their life style.

Baldwin manipulates the reader's response to Giovanni by forcing us to identify with David, who communicates the innocence of Giovanni and the misrepresentation of Giovanni's character in the newspaper accounts of Guillaume's murder. But that does not necessarily mean that the story is about Giovanni but it is about David and David's self denial. When we see David to say about Giovanni, "I would have made him kiss my feet ... but I did not want to do that, I really did not want to be dirty with him" (81). It makes us clear to see his ambiguity towards his true love (homosexual).

What one finds, on the close examination of the text, is a duality that informs the novel as much as it informs the criticism and the collective American consciousness. Many Americans were expatriates as David, that time in different countries searching for their identity. Everyone was seeking his/her a basis in his/her life. In the course of living their life they were forming an identity of confused mentality. Baldwin's characters can't be an exception to that. It is the study of the sex. David's projection of life detached from either of the sexes is what Baldwin is much more concerned with. David is keeping himself detached from his own sexual identity. This is why Baldwin is making his study on the sexes more genuine. When the readers are shifted to observe Giovanni's psychology regarding David and Hella, as David says, "he looked briefly at me, then back at Hella" (97), we are made clear

that David is detached from his own sex (male) and experiencing both the sexes quite explicitly.

Baldwin seems deliberately to have put aside the problem of race and turned to his other principal issues homosexuality, heterosexuality and bisexuality. In the text David has deserted Giovanni in favor of his American fiancé and respectability; and Giovanni, in desperation, has murdered his former patron. Being worried of Giovanni's execution, David spends the night in ruthless self-examination. There is the symbol of breaking of the tradition. First, there's the victory over the master and secondly the war is between the similar sexes. David describes the moment of killing of Guillaume this way:

Guillaume struggled to get out of the room, but Giovanni followed him-everywhere: now it was Guillaume's turn to be surrounded ... when he had reached the door perhaps, Giovanni lunged after him and caught him by the sash of the dressing gown sobbing, becoming lighter every moment as Guillaume grew heavier, tightening the sash and cursing. Then, Guillaume fell, and Guillaume fell-back into the room the streets, the world, in the presence and the shadow of death. (117)

The novel is important for its philosophical ideas that ideas that a person is personal in this world. Taking support equally from the two races of human being (male and female) he has to pass his life. That is with out support form one is like a lame with only working leg. Baldwin ends his novel leaving the reader in a great mystery with a surprising message. Hella, his beloved, leaves David leaving him in a quite painful suffering. She has her duty to fulfill to go away from him. "Hella. Hella. One day, when you're happy, try to forgive me" (124), David says to Hella at the time of partition that will last forever. Though she says to him, "Oh, God, I wanted you ...

Every man I come across will make me think of you"(124), she is doomed to leave him. That is the tragic for us human being. For each of us is the same case. She curses herself and the whole human race, "Poor man! Poor men! Poor me!" (124).

The same is the case for his male lover also. David is departed for ever from his true love which we know from the event of the execution of Giovanni. It is revealed when he informs us "of the date of Giovanni's execution"(125) found in an envelope sent by Jacques. David leaves the place and makes his journey to the station leading him towards the unknown zone. Being born in the world everyone should perform their duty. They have to complete their course of their life. None is left to escape from that. Though, earlier, David had his dearer and nearer, he has no one, now, to go together to make a journey of his life. David is in a great mystery as we, the readers, are. He teaches us something about life out of his anxiety towards sexuality.

Though written in a humorous way Baldwin has been able to give a message of universal importance through his universally acclaimed novel *Giovanni's Room* exploring the idea of sexual ambivalence. Once considered to be banned because of its excessive vulgarity, a serious reading of the text gives its readers a serious meaning. The characters appear not just for amusement and to make us refreshed but can feed us with his far reaching and valuable philosophical idea that is a person is passing through the encounters of the universal sexes in the course of his life. But he is alone and should set out his journey by himself resulting himself in a mysterious and confused character. We can not omit that universal truth. That valuable idea makes the novel universally well received.

IV: Conclusion

In *Giovanni's Room* Baldwin presents the idea of ambivalence towards (homo)sexuality through its central character David. David an American expatriate in France must choose between his Mistress Hella and his lover Giovanni. David denies his true homosexual self and his deepest feeling for another person in favor of socially sanctioned heterosexuality. As Baldwin develops it, the choice is also between America and Europe, conformity and freedom, safety and the risks necessary to realize the agonizing mystery of love and passion in an intensely imagined yet beautifully restricted nature. Baldwin creates a moving and complex story of death desire that revelatory in its insight.

The text presents such characteristics as being Giovanni in prison symbol of Giovanni's life. The dual depiction of homoerotic love has led to an ambivalence ranging from sterile homosexual love to the sentimental bisexual love. The coexistence of the positive depiction of homoerotic love as an innocent expression of love as a healing device; and the negative depiction of homoerotic love as deviant behavior produced by depraved psychological and socioeconomic culture.

The researcher finds reasons why Baldwin's David enters homosexuality. Having no proper care from father figure, lacks masculinity. The absence of mother-son relationship is another factor in David to turn to homosexuality. So, he wants to get something (male power) from his (buddy) male partner and go with his beloved to make a true love. Thus, ambivalence is seen in David's behavior in keeping an equal relationship with Giovanni and Hella.

Rejection of traditional roles and becoming rebellion against parental authority figures make one to behave a violent sexual behavior. The confused anxiety regarding

sexuality develops the dual nature in the performance of sexual behavior.

David's life passes through compression and happiness. He cannot go out of them.

Baldwin has written at the time when there was loss of American innocence.

Giovannis Room is important for its meaning of loss of innocence and celebrating the experiences that transcended both the national origin and sexual orientation.

Baldwin's David is standing on the midway losing his innocence and seeking pleasures with the sexes (male and female). That is where we can see his ambivalent nature regarding sexuality.

It has been proved by the instances in the novel that the writer is trying to give a new way of life in the post modern era. The world now is quite anxious to lead a life led by David. Baldwin has explored a new territory in human life that denies the traditional way of marriage life which believes on the sexual relation of two opposite sexes. But, Baldwin adds more to the traditional way of conjugal life where there is at least freedom of sexuality. That is why Baldwin demands David to accept (homo)sexual life. Thus, fixity in the sexuality has been shattered. The indecisive quality has resulted the novel to be a manifesto in the direction of new conjugal life. Confusion is the innocence that goes with the experiments giving new results. Baldwin has well observed the sexual ambivalence through David.

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