

I. Presentation of Gabriel Noone as a Gay Hero in *The Night Listener*

The present novel, *The Night Listener* by Armistead Maupin, presents the celebration of homosexuality through the protagonist Gabriel Noone. It is like an autobiographical confession of the writer, as the writer himself is a gay showing how a gay should struggle in the heterosexual society. Moreover, the novel is not simply a confession but a proud declaration of his sexuality, accepting its drawbacks and still winning the consent of readers including straights. Gabriel bravely counters the discriminations in the heterosexual society and still, stands proudly accepting his gayhood without having any complains of not being straight.

The text projects the conflict between straight and non-straight characters and shows homophobia on one hand and some liberal straights being ready to accept the homosexual identity, which shows society in gradual change. One of the major characters of the novel Pete is just a thirteen years old boy who is suffering from HIV but does not hesitate to accept his gay identity as that of heterosexuals. As Karl Woelz comments, “The smart-ass dying youth with the heart of gold, wise beyond his years, might be both too ‘precious’ (to use Gabriel’s own word), and too familiar, for some readers” (1). Similarly, Anna, an assistance of protagonist is a straight lady raised by lesbian couples. She works for Gabriel unhesitantly, helping him by giving suggestions to his private problems. Likewise, Donna too is a liberal character. On the other hand, Gabriel’s Pa’ is a conservative aristocrat in the beginning but when Gabriel becomes a celebrity and starts living a prestigious life among other Californian fellas and among his other straight listeners as well, he gradually accepts his son’s sexuality. For the minor homosexuals, who think themselves as mistaken ones in creation or something abnormal, he is an icon of inspiration of loving one’s self as normal and natural.

There are details disproving the false myths created by heterosexual majority to disqualify and to dehumanize the homosexuals. There is a myth that child raised by homosexuals turn out gay or lesbian, which is disproved by Anna as she is a straight lady raised by two lesbian couples. Similarly, sodomy and child abuse cases are moreover blamed toward the non straight people but, here, Pete is abused by the so-called straight people and by his own biological parents. This evidence also satirizes the so-called heterosexual family institution. Donna's divorce with her ex-husband and her dissatisfaction toward her husband is also an irony. Comparatively, Gabriel's gay family is more showered with love, trust and devotion. A small misunderstanding in the beginning between Gabriel and Jess is finally resolved. Showing the flaws in the traditional heterosexual family institutions, this novel also contributes to normalize the homosexual bonding.

Homosexuals are still supposed as unhealthy, disgusting, and unacceptable part of the society. There is privilege of homophobic sentiments in most part of the human society where it is horrible to find oneself a gay and people are sympathetic toward these minorities only in the sense that they feel these non straights as sinners of past lives. But, in this novel a gay is seen from inside out. Gabriel and his other queer friends are nowhere below human. Moreover, Gabriel is an excellent human being at his heart and in his behaviors. He treats Pete nicely, he loves his partner Jess from the heart, he is able to win the heart of his listeners through his show, and the people who meet him feel good about him. Gabriel has seen the hostile perspective of society toward queers still, he is hopeful about the positive change. We can really see the positive energy surrounding in this novel where there is no extremist opinion to pull down hetero groups but, a soft human appeal to understand the reality of the so-called queers.

This novel is not an attack on the heterosexuals, nor is filled by a radical view about homosexual commitment because Gabriel nowhere attacks rudely to the heterosexuals for their sexuality by words or actions. He only reacts to the falsity, injustice, and against the child abuse. This is a self celebration, a celebration of the reality, and belongingness with the victimized minorities who are misunderstood by the society and the world. The natural representation of the gay sentiments to drop the false wall between homosexuals and heterosexuals in particular and between all queers and other type of sexualities is the focus of this novel. It is a revelation of what it is to live a gay life in heterosexist people. It also shows the changes in the attitude of people about the homosexuals. The naturalization of Gabriel's sexuality shows that it is not unnatural to find oneself a homosexual. Gabriel's humanity pleads his sexuality should not be made an issue to dominate his existence. His sexuality does not stop him from being a human; it does not corrupt the society. Each time he is seen human like, more positive, full of emotions, and full of love toward others. His only flaw for the conservative heterosexist society is that he proudly announces his queerness and believes in being oneself.

According to Devon Thomas, this novel is only about mystery, love, and trust. He writes that "the novel centers on the mysterious Peter, Maupin's (Maybe the Moon) latest is less a suspense story than a likable tale about major and minor betrayals by lovers, friends, and family members" (1). But it is not only about love, trust, and mystery. There is most crucial issue of celebration of homosexuality which is the reality of the protagonist, Gabriel Noone. After discovering his homosexuality Gabriel accepts the truth about himself. He stands in front of the heterosexual conservatives as a gay writer. When homosexuality is still a taboo even among the intellectuals, this act of the protagonist is a courageous one. Lois Tyson in her *Critical*

theory Today writes about the reality where a student was accused of being lesbian while she was trying to do research upon gay identity. This shows the horrible situation even among the university students of American metropolitan areas.

Commenting upon the novel Karl Woelz writes:

The thinly-veiled autobiographical and/or metafictional novel appears to be de rigueur these days among the most celebrated of contemporary gay writers. David Leavitt's done it (Martin Bauman), Edmund White and Felice Picano have done it (*The Married Man*, *The Book of Lies*), and now Armistead Maupin's done it, in his latest, much-anticipated novel, *The Night Listener*. (1)

Here, he compares Maupin to the other gay writers and their books. He takes this book as an achievement in the history of gay writings and focuses on the father-son relationship in this novel but, again he too fails to point out the crucial issue which is the celebration and acceptance of gayhood in Gabriel's life. He mocks at the closeted homos for not being able to accept their sexuality.

In "Ex-Gay Agenda", Mark Benjamin focuses on reparative or 'conversion' therapy which tries to get Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transsexual (GLBT) people to stop organizing their lives around the gay-lifestyle locus. The legal victory of Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX) in a Maryland school district is significant because the group claims that homosexuality is a chosen and unhealthy lifestyle and because the group is associated with the religious right. PFOX is a branch of a national network of 'ministries' that believes therapy can make homosexuals straight. These types of beliefs among people are parodied by the situations presented in the novel. This text also opposes the view that homosexuality is a disease. This takes homosexuality as a fact and mere a possibility of human sexuality. Here, Gabriel

stands proudly with the people and does not want to create a ghetto life for the minor homosexuals. He wants to live together with whole human race without being discriminated.

The present research tries to prove that this novel is not only a gay novel as many critics think but, it is like an open celebration of the gayhood which is still considered as a taboo. In this novel Gabriel proudly announces his sexuality without any guilt or nostalgia of not being straight. Donahue Dick writes that Maupin has hardly ghettoized himself personally. He quotes Maupin's words that, "I am very proud of the fact that I've been out of the closet for all these years, and that I've been popularizing subject matter that has heretofore been considered taboo. I would say that that's the single great joy of my writing life"(1). Especially about this novel Maupin says, "I've written this book, in such a way that I hope people will read it a second time, and see and catch a whole new level of meaning. It's a meditation about the power of voices" (1). While commenting about the novel Dick, only comments upon the story telling method of this novel and the play of imagination which is no doubt a strong aspect of the novel but, this overshadows what the novel is really about. The postmodern consciousness of celebrating the difference, acceptance of the queerness is one of the crucial issues of this novel.

In the audio review of Harper Collins while reading we can find his comments about the presentation very much. He writes:

Maupin presents his tale with such polished, effortless elegance that his talent can be underestimated because the sweat behind it is so invisible. Maupin's melodious, expressive reading reinforces his smooth prose, which is written to be read aloud. Audio is the perfect medium for this born storyteller. (1)

Harper Collins here, basically focuses upon the presentation of the story. For him the extraordinariness of Maupin is his storytelling method which is perfectly suitable for its audio presentation.

Commenting on Maupin's last three novels including the present novel, Steven A. Katz shows some of the important issues:

Maupin's long-term domestic partnership with an HIV survivor and AIDS activist is reflected in the novels' sensitive depiction of a community coming together to live with the disease in love and dignity. Finding a national audience through the publication of these six popular novels, Maupin has since gone on to other media, including Broadway and television, to promulgate understanding of gay concerns and human rights issues. (1)

The issue raised by Katz too is crucial in this novel where we can feel the hardships of characters while living with diseased and expecting to lose their close friends at anytime. While going through the novel we come across the death of characters due to HIV. The description of symptoms and illness during the story are also very pathetic. Whereas, the present thesis is more tilted towards the postmodern theme of celebration. Here, we can find double celebration: one is the celebration of one's self, the other is the celebration of the minor sexuality without being radical. Radicalism cannot be celebration because in radicalism there is always a deep dissatisfaction toward the other binary but, in this novel there is no radicalism as such. The present researcher has tried to focus these issues basically.

This work is divided into four chapters altogether. In the first section, there is an introduction chapter. This chapter introduces the topic, issues and purpose of the research which gives a clue to the readers about the main issue of this paper. The

second section is about the methodology for the topic. Here, will be a detailed description about the tool in order to prove my issue. In methodology there is the discussion about the theory of Michel Foucault presented in *The History of Sexuality* as the major tool. Besides, Judith Butler, Sedgwick, and other relevant critics related to sex and sexuality are also included. Third section is the textual analysis of the novel. In this section there is analysis of the text proving the issues through the textual evidences and through the opinions of critics. There are other supporting as well as critical opinions of the critics too included in this section. And the fourth and the last section is the conclusive part where there is summary and the conclusion of the research.

In this way, the analysis of the claim at hand is based upon the queer theory and the sexual minorities of the present society. This research paper tries to highlight the naturalization of the queer sexuality and wants the acceptance of the queerness. Queerness is here presented as a possibility of human sexuality. And it opposes all the dehumanizing issues and the fragmentations in humanity creating the false myths about the sexuality.

II. Homosexuality as a Queer Sexual Identity in 'Compulsory Heterosexuality'

Queer is a homophobic word because it means strange or unusual. It is used in order to reappropriate the word from what has been its homophobic usage. It further claims that only queer or non straight groups can define themselves not other heterosexuals. Queer is an inclusive term as which covers all non straight sexualities. It is a political theory through which all the non straight groups get united and ask for their rights as any other people. This is questioning back to traditional so-called universal, biological notion of sexuality which is based on binary opposites, i.e. male or female. This is a weapon of all non heterosexuals to fight against the discriminations they have been facing in the history and to come out of the closet with their dignified identity.

Queer theory tries to reunite the diversities among the non straight minorities as this theory primarily emerged from the white middle class roots of gay liberation and lesbian feminist movements of the early 1970s. It minimizes the gap among working class, non-white, non-European gay and lesbians who feel again twice marginalized from the middle class white gay and lesbian groups. Lois Tyson in "Lesbian Gay and Queer criticism" defines queer "as an inclusive category for referring to a common political or cultural ground shared by gay men, lesbian women, bisexuals and all people who consider themselves for whatever reason ,non straight" (336).

There are certain unspoken rules controlling which statements can be made and which cannot be made within the discourse. Since a virtually limitless number of statements can be made within the rules that characterize the discourse and that interests analysts such as Michel Foucault. According to Foucault, any truth is created within discourse but power plays important role to create any truth and knowledge. As

soon as the system of authority or the system of power changes, truth or knowledge accordingly changes in the course of shifting power from one point to another. So is the reality of the created truth about sexualities. This is a modern or moreover a postmodern theory of sexuality where traditional conservative notions about sexualities are under erasing with new truths and findings. This is the age of minorities where people who were considered as minors in the name of race, gender and ethnicity are fighting against the discriminations they faced. Thus queers who were regarded as deviant group are speaking their political voices in order to subvert the traditional heterocentric discourses.

According to queer theory, sexuality cannot be defined by binary opposition like homosexuals and heterosexuals. It leaves human sexuality as fluid, fragmented, dynamic collectivity of possible sexualities. It believes that our sexualities can be different in course of our life. Human sexuality is a vast subject to explore and it cannot be understood inside the limited binaries of homo/hetero. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that the intricacies of human sexuality could be understood just as well, or better, in terms of any number of paired opposites other than same- sex or different- sex object choice. The definition of one's sexuality might be based on one's preference for someone younger or older, for a human or animal, for a single partner or a group activity. Therefore, there are vast ranges of possibilities of human sexuality and, no one can categorize human sexuality inside a couple of terms. This open range of human sexualities, besides traditional hetero\homo binaries are also included inside the umbrella term queer theory.

Queer theory believes on the social construction of sexuality. It explores the history to find out the definition of human sexualities in different time period and in different geographical areas. For example, in ancient Athens sexual categories were

based on a caste system, in Mexico and South -America homosexuals are only those males who present themselves as submissive and who practise only anal or oral sex among men. Similarly, the definition of sexuality is different among early twentieth century working class Americans, white middle class Americans too. Judith Butler in *Bodies that Matter* writes that 'sex' not only functions as a norm, but in part of regular practice that produces the bodies it governs (1). According to her 'sex' is a regulatory ideal whose materialization is compelled, and this materialization takes place or fails to take place through certain highly regulated practice. She further writes:

It is not a simple fact or static condition of a body, but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize 'sex' and achieve this materialization is necessary is a sign that materialization is never quite complete, that bodies never quite comply with the norms by which their materialization is impelled. (2)

Here, Butler says that sex cannot be defined statically rather it is a dynamic phenomenon which is different in different phases of a single human. According to her bodies are beyond human norms.

Queer theory interprets the text from non straight perspective, it reveals the problematic quality of representations of sexual categories, shows the various ways where categories like homosexuals and heterosexuals overlaps, breakdown or do not represent the dynamic range of human sexualities. It further investigates the erased part of literatures where there are non straight issues sensibilities explores closeted sexualities of authors like Oscar Wilde, Tennessee Williams, Amy Lowell, Willa Cather etc .It also questions the representations of feminine male and masculine female characters, focuses upon the homosocial bounding (between same-sex human), gay or lesbian signs in the text, same sex doubles, transgressive sexuality, exposes the

homophobia of mainstream literature, foregrounds literary genres that had been neglected and the homosexual aspect of mainstream literature.

The theoretical grounding of queer theory lies in poststructuralism. Michel Foucault's work is usually seen as of special significance. Queer theory attempts to subvert the cultural stereotypes used to understand gay, lesbian, or bisexual people-to bring into focus the 'queer knowledge' that modernity has unleashed in its farming of sexual identities and differences. As Teresa de Laureates explains that "queer theory" arrived to erase all "distinctions" in our discursive protocols. It transgresses and transcends them or at "very least problematize[s] them" (qtd. in Tyson 148).

Therefore, Queer theory as a whole embraces sadists, fetishists, voyeurs, drag queer, transsexuals, transvestites, butches, gender benders, all other practices that attract 'deviant sexualities' and who write the asymmetrical power relations of patriarchy along with gay, lesbians and bisexuals.

Queer theory was developed during the 1980s as a significant political voice against the narrow conservative ideas about human sexuality. It comes under postmodern category as it questions the heterocentrism. It deconstructs the traditional binaries of hetero/ homo sexualities and erases the preferability of center over margin. It devalues any fixed categorization of human sexuality. It focuses upon open endedness of human sexuality and regards it as dynamic. It regards homosexuality as only one of the possibilities among many. It is a voice of long time suppressed group who were subject of parody or taboo in the so-called civilized society. Therefore, it should be welcoming issue among the intellectual group.

Homosexuality is one of the possibilities of human sexuality which is regarded as abnormal sexuality in the so-called heterosexist concept therefore it comes under queer theory as other marginalized and so-called abnormal sexualities. It is a

challenge; on the traditional definition of human biological sexuality which was regarded as universal categorization. *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines it as “[a] person usually a man, who is sexually attracted to people of same sex” (747). This definition itself is old one because homosexuality is not limited within males but lesbians too are homosexuals. In a short definition we can define it as the sexuality of those people who are sexually attracted to the same sex without biological defect in their bodies.

Homosexuality has provoked the greatest social pressure and evoked the liveliest historical account. It is regarded as problematic and culturally unacceptable. It has become the subject of extreme prejudices even in the Western societies. Michel Foucault argues that sexual act between two persons of the same sex has been punishable through legal and religious sanctions. Only in the late nineteenth century a new understanding of sexuality emerged in which sexual acts and desires could be considered constitutive of identity. Charls Moskos also gives historical details about homosexual discriminations in American military law. He requests the government of the United States to leave the gay ban in military. He wants the United States to follow the example of nations which allowed gay men in military. He writes, “Unless such realities are faced, we can only hope that our postmodern military never has to face the uncivil reality of war” (83).

Heterosexuality is regarded as normal and straight, whereas homosexuality as queer or nonstraight even in the religious scriptures like the Bible (Levitations 20:13). Cristina Odone, in her “Oh, no not again! Can someone please keep my Church off the subject of sex?”, talks about the irrelevance of church authority to speak against the issues of homosexuality as it is one of the major issues of this sexcentered modern era. According to her, 'Jesus' campaigned against miscarriages of justice, greed, envy

and pettiness; but it is hard to imagine that the man who said the greatest commandment is "love thy neighbor as thyself" would deploy great energy to castigate an expression of love (1). In this essay, she questions back to the Christian scriptures for being against homosexuality which is quite irrelevant to the nature of Jesus.

In the nineteenth century, homosexuality was termed as a psychological disorder and people in this group were treated inhumanely in the hospitals. The famous psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud disagrees with this view and takes homosexuals as natural type of sexuality which is only different from heterosexuals. He too opposes the earlier sexologists who believed homosexuals should be demarcated as special category persons.

In construction of homosexuality, Jeffery Weeks writes:

It is vital to keep in mind when exploring homosexuality which has always been defined in our culture as deviant form that what matters is not is inherent nature of the act but the social construction of meaning around that activity and the individual response to it. (177)

Therefore, homosexuality is not only biologically imperative but the effect of historically condition, familial and social influences channeling sexual possibilities which exists in a young child. The changing families, notion of the childhood, the roles of parents and so on have profound effects in the construction of individual heterosexual or other sexual categorization.

Throughout history, homosexuality was practised in the name of sodomy, as ideal relationship among men in Greek period. Some ancient African cultures accepted same sex marriage like in Nzema of Ghana. Regarding homosexuality Sedgwick writes:

[Homosexuality is] the metonym for sexuality that the two stories of sexuality actually installs is homosexuality [. . .] and the history of sexuality is the history of homosexuality, under the hading incorporation of perversions and a new specification of individuals. (281)

She accepts the reality that previously there had been acts that also included all those minor perverted whom nineteenth century psychiatrists entomologized by giving them strange baptismal names. Similar is the concept of Foucault who argues that homosexuality and homosexuality date from the 1870s. In *The History of Sexuality* he writes about the past history of homosexuality as a childhood phase of homosexuality. He says that homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was “transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomites had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual now was a species” (43).

Foucault, however, does not mean to say that sexual acts that we refer to as homosexual acts were unknown before the 1870s. Rather such behaviors already had a long rich history. Foucault’s concerns about the culture of sexuality were prompted, in part, by his own homosexuality. He was troubled by what he saw as the intolerant and repressive heterosexual regime governing sex in French society. He became increasingly fascinated with the sexual liberation movements of the 1970s and 1980s and about its politicization of their identities. He regarded political demands for sexual liberation to be of crucial importance of redefining configurations of normal and pathological desires acts, and identities. However, he was suspicious of the claims of various sexual liberationists that desire was repressed in Western societies; he was even more troubled by the notion that if sexuality were released from existing

personal and social constraints, society might achieve greater levels of autonomy.

Rejecting what he described as 'the Californian cult of self' -the notion that the scrutinizing of sexuality would reveal the essence of the 'true self' - Foucault sought to develop a radically different approach to analyze the culture of sexuality, desire, and sexual identity.

Foucault talks about 'the repressive hypothesis' in *The History of Sexuality*. According to him, the healthy expression of sexuality has been ensured, negated, forbidden; at any rate this is held to be the case in the West sexuality as repressed: this theorem has been crucial not only to the Freudian and post-Freudian theory, but also to various sexual liberationists. Foucault rejects the thesis of sexual repression. Sex, he says, has not been driven underground in contemporary culture. On the contrary, there has been a widening discussion of sex and sexuality. For Foucault, sexuality is an end effect, a product, of our endless monitoring, discussion, classification, ordering, recording and regulation of sex.

Along with Foucault, Jacques Derrida also contributes to deconstruct the credibility of the spectrum of sexualities, demarcating "the insecure divisions between male and female, femininity and masculinity, heterosexual, friend and sodomite" (337), as Rachel Adams and David Savran ascribe in the introductory part of the *Masculinity Studies Reader*. Freud detached sexuality from its connection with genitals and reproductive function as well and makes it more ambiguous to understand hetero/homo dichotomy. In *Theory of Sexuality*, Freud writes:

Extension is of a twofold kind. In the first place sexuality is divorced from its too close connections with the genitals and is regarded as a more comprehensive bodily function, having pleasure as its goal and only secondarily coming to serve the ends of reproduction. In the second

place the sexual impulses are regarded as including all of those merely affectionate and friendly impulses to which applies the exceeding ambiguous word 'love'. (38)

Here Freud says that sexuality is no more limited to the genitals but, pleasure is its main target. In this way sexuality today is not primarily for the reproductive function. It has become more inclusive and ambiguous where the affections, friendly impulses too come.

William Patrick Jeffs defines homosexuality, in "The Turn of the Century: Freud, Psychoanalysis and Homosexuality", as a feeling in which same naturally sex attraction happens and there can be hatred toward the opposite sex as sexual object in extreme. According to him, only members of their own sex can rouse their sexual wishes. Those of the other sex especially their sexual parts, are not a sexual object for them at all. In extreme cases people of opposite sex are an object of disgust for them. This implies, of course, that "they have abandoned any share in reproduction. We call such people homosexuals or inverts" (18).

Attitude towards sexuality in general differ widely from one place to another and one historical period to another. The intense anti-gay sentiment that emerged in an especially concentrated and virulent form in America during the early 1950s and that which lingers today does not represent some kind of universally held attitude toward or even definition of homosexuality. And nowadays religious orthodoxies are being questioned by Jay Michaelson in his "Conservative Judaism" by quoting rabbi and by describing the biblical references about same sex relations. He says that there is indeed prohibition in such acts in Bible but we can change them for the human dignity. He writes:

Rabbi Dorff's opinion received the most attention, It argues that while Leviticus 18:22 does indeed prohibit anal sex between men, that the Biblical prohibition extends no further . . . rabbinic extensions of the law may be changed in the name of human dignity Thus, acceptance of gays, ordination of gays and lesbians, and even celebration of same-sex relationships are all permissible. (57)

Here, Jay Michaelson brings the reference of Rabbi and shows the possibility of acceptance of same sex relationships. According to him Biblical prohibition of anal sex must be changed in the name of human dignity so that all same sex relationships can be respected as well as permissible. He is in the part of reformation of religious dogmas and inclusion of human sexual potentialities..

In this way, now a days religious dogmas are being questioned to make a respected place for the sexual minorities. This has helped the heterosexuals as well as other sexual minorities to stand with their head straight in the heterosexual majority. There are two distinct group under this term 'homosexuality' named as Gay and Lesbian group. Although they share same nonstraight sexuality they are distinctly different as well. These terms and their differences are discussed below in different paragraphs.

Gay liberation movement began in 1969, after the gay and lesbian patrons of Greenwich Village. Stonewall Inn bar finally responded to police brutality by fighting back to the oppressor. This momentous event known as Stonewall is a turning point when gay and lesbian group both stood together to renounce their victim status and stood up , collectively for their rights as American citizens. In 1990 they still faced the discriminations in every sector of their social life. They became the victims of police harassment and violent hate crimes, in AIDS related discriminations, in white

heterosexist culture etc. Many discriminating myths regarding these people, are prone to othering them from the heterosexual majority. Gay and Lesbian minorities belonging to non white non westerners were heavily stigmatized in their own communities. And now we can find diversities of voices even in the communities of gays and lesbians.

As gay and lesbian fall under the sexual minorities who are still being parodied, taken as deviated form of sexuality they now are demanding for their equal human rights. Gay and lesbian critics help them to go for their rights by critiquing the traditional notion of sexuality. They use the different historical transitory definitions of sexualities, bring forward the scientific notion of sexualities and reestablish the gayness and lesbian ness as one of the possibility among human sexuality. They challenge the existing system of family by demanding right of marriage among homosexual couples. As a result, most of the constitutions of democratic nations including Nepal are being changed allowing gays and lesbians to legitimate their identity, family and other social rights.

Words like homophobia, heterosexism, and heretocentrism are created in order to spotlight the ways in which gay people constitute a political minority. As a minority they deserve the same protection under the law offered to the racial, ethnic and religious minorities. Now the biological essentialism proves that the fixed segment of population is naturally homosexual. Some gay and lesbian theorists often claim that the potential of same sex desire is found in every human being. They say that homosexuality and heterosexuality are not biological forces but social constructions. Gay and lesbian studies have emphasized stable and knowable identities. The problem, of course is that sexuality is neither stable or tidy, nor developmental. With the advent of queer theory, there are now other perspectives

available that frequently find themselves at odds with traditional gay and lesbian studies.

Besides being faced with same oppression gay men and lesbians are polar opposites. They have their own significant social, political and personal experiences. Lesbians identify themselves exclusively with women and they are discriminated from heterosexual females and also from males by gender discriminations as well. However, gay men identify themselves exclusively with males but, closeted gay men have the opportunity to enjoy the patriarchal privileges of straight men unlike closeted lesbians because they will be discriminated as females in patriarchal society. Likewise, all men writers either gay or straight share privilege in literary canon, whereas females are always suppressed or neglected. Therefore, both lesbian and feminist critics defend themselves from the high patriarchy together. They are concerned with personal identity, suppressions and oppression of females in patriarchal society. Yet, lesbians are different from feminists because, they defend themselves with both sexism and heterosexism. Among both gay and lesbian groups there are diversities too because there are working- class gays and lesbians, color-gays and lesbians, non- white and non- European gays and lesbians who again feel marginalized by the white- European- middle class gay and lesbians. So, there are so many possibilities of representations among both gay and lesbian groups which we cannot deny.

Similar idea is given by Adrienne Rich in her lesbian continuum (631-60). She includes emotional bonding and reciprocal relationship of psychological support, shared experience of joy and sadness as lesbian continuum without limiting it to the sexual relationship between women. In this regard women's friendship of the nineteenth century too comes under this topic:

A lesbian continuum include[s] a range –through each woman’s life and throughout history –of woman- identified experience, not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with an another woman. (239)

Adrienne Rich unties lesbian continuum from the genital sexual experience. She includes all women identified experiences which are purely female inside this. For Rich lesbian relation is more about shared experiences, feelings and problems of women.

Kwasi Kwartng says about platonic homosexuality where the relationship among males was regarded as ideal and more prosaic kind of relationship. But, it was different from modern homosexuality “Platonic homosexuality” had with little to do with sexual relations. Plato believed ideally that love and reason should be fused together and concern over the body and the material world of particulars should be annihilated. Even today, "Platonic love" refers to non-sexual love between two adults (12).

Gay critics attempt to determine what might constitute a gay poetic or way of writing that is uniquely gay; to establish a gay literary tradition; and to decide what writers and works belong to that tradition. Gay critics also examine how gay sensibility affects literary expressions and study the way in which heterosexual texts can have homoerotic dimensions. Whereas, lesbian critics try to discover their own poetic and unique lesbian tradition, they fight with the heterosexists’ prejudices co operating with gay critics. Both of them try to discover gay or lesbian writer from past whose work was underappreciated, distorted or suppressed, including homosexual writers who have been presumed heterosexual. They try to determine sexual politics of specific texts analyzing how gay characters or feminine males or lesbian masculine

females are portrayed in homosexual or heterosexual text. They identify the correct heterosexist interpretation of literature that fail to recognize or appreciate the gay sensibility informing specific literary works.

In this way, gay and lesbian critics explore the definitions regarding sexuality and defend for the rights of their groups making their sexuality normal and its existence throughout the history. Joseph A. DeVito in "Theory and Research in Gay and Lesbian Relationship" addresses the need for gay and lesbian relationship research and theory and some of the directions such research and theory might take. It suggests academic research into gay and lesbian relationships is needed because these relationships are a fact of modern life and are different from heterosexual relationships, and because such research and theory is prerequisite to advice, remediation, and/or intervention and will contribute to relationship understanding as a whole. Socio-political needs for research and theory are based on legitimization and the ability to use knowledge to lessen fear and discrimination and to secure equitable rights (4-7).

Thus, we can conclude that homosexuality is regarded as a controversial issue in the contemporary literary theory. There are many voices for and against homosexuality. Church and other religious scriptures, traditional thoughts, conservative groups of people are not free and frank to this issue. They regard homosexuality as an illness of this age. But, as the change in time, the misconceptions about it are narrowing down. Now it is proved that homosexuality is no more a medical illness but, a possibility of human sexuality. Homosexuals are now coming out of closet demanding their rights to live freely with full respect in society. The term was taboo before some decades but, now educated groups are introduced with it. Now people are becoming more open to this reality. There are ten percent of gay people

only in the United States. By 1973, there were almost eight hundred gay and lesbian organizations in the United States; by 1990 the number was several thousand; in the first anniversary of stonewall riots 1970, five thousands gays and lesbians marched in New York City. In October over six million marched in Washington to demand equality. Thus, it will keep increasing with the time going on and the prejudices against homosexuality will be stopped within nearly coming decades.

III. Celebration of Homosexuality in *The Night Listener*

Homosexuality, as a debating issue, is a hot topic among the intellectuals. It is still a topic of controversy among people. Homosexual identity has not been happily accepted in the human history till now. Homosexuals are still forced to stay inside the closet. They fear the society and have internalized the heterocentrism and are suffering from inferiority complex. Even in the developed country like USA, we see the history of marginalization of homosexuals and mistreatment to them. We can find the discriminating tendency whether they be gays or lesbians in the streets of America.

In this critical background, *The Night Listener*, a novel by Armistead Maupin, unfolds the story of a gay protagonist with his personal problems, discriminations and his witness to the bitter treatment toward the homosexuals. So his novel is a kind of confession of Gabriel to the world. He confesses his identity, his humanity, his sentiments, and his view, toward the world, toward the discriminations to him and to the whole homosexual community. Here, the protagonist does not negotiate the reality of his sexual life, he confesses openly in media as he is the RJ of cult radio serial *No one At Night*. This is an open radio broadcast of a story of homo couple named Jamie and Will. This show represents partially the story of the California living protagonist Gabriel and Jess. Thus, many people claim those characters as Gabriel and Jess in real and this proves that he has no hesitation and guilt of being a homosexual person and, neither he is radical nor he questions to the hetero sexual living style. He wants to live a happy and peaceful life accepting the existence of heterosexual reality as well. He has the awareness that, just as others sexual identity, his sexuality too is normal.

The opening sentence of the novel, "I know how it sounds when I call him my son" (1), shows that the protagonist is quite positive to have a child even if the child

Pete Lomax is not his biological son and also a heterosexual teen (1). Their intimacy grows gradually in the phone calls as they share about the problems of their life. Pete is an abused child by his own parents; he has a traumatic history but now he is safe in Donna's hands. Being a heterosexual teen, Pete easily accepts the reality of Gabriel and still wants him to call 'dad'. He does not respect his biological father and calls him only a "sperm donor" (117). This bitter irony of the plot also questions the hypocrisy of the concept of family based on heterosexism and it suggests that family is not a matter of biological or social institution but a feeling of at home, a complete acceptance and emotional attachment toward each other. In this novel, Gabriel Noone and Pete Lomax create a family not even seeing each other. They share frankly the truths of their life and trust each other. This detail also questions the concept of conservative heterosexual myth according to which gay people are sick, evil, or both therefore, in their nature they are instable sexual predators. These myths about the homosexuality even question the character of such people; blaming them for molesting children, and corrupting the youths by recruiting them to become homosexuals. This conservative attitude is questioned back by the critical irony showing Pete's parents more brute and sexually corrupt in front of the protagonist.

The way Gabriel treats Pete, suggests him and gives his emotional support proves him to be the best father which was almost a dream to Pete who was abused by his own father in the past. He makes Pete understand the homosexual attraction by giving the simple clear example of Pete's own attraction with the female body rather than male. This simple truth of difference in sexuality which is so hard to understand for the grown ups is easily understood by a thirteen years old teen. Here is an extract of conversation between them when Gabriel told Pete that Wayne thought Hugo, a New York fashion designer, was a sexy man:

Pete: Man, is that all you guys think about?

Gabriel: Don't you think about girls all the day?

Pete: Well . . . yeah.

Gabriel: Well, there you go. (77)

Well, this simple conversation makes Pete understand the difference between his sexuality and Gabriel's. The way Gabriel reveals the simple difference of homosexuals from heterosexuals is quite noteworthy. Like most of the people, Pete is not homophobic but a true liberal who easily accepts and understands the reality of Gabriel in particular and all homosexuals in general. The imposition of hetero\homo division in seemingly natural ways which has made hetero-desire a compulsion is mere a loaded issue. This is clearly seen in the conversation of Gabriel and Pete. People surrounding them are quite conservative for them, homosexuality is a disease. As Pete was admitted in hospital for his treatment, because the ward was full with gay patients they too generalize Pete as gay. While talking with Gabriel he confessed that ironical reality, "half of those other jackoffs thought I was gay" (47). This too is a satire to the whole academics which generalizes the idea that one cannot remain straight in the group of non-strights.

Gabriel Noone, remaining a gay throughout his life, behaves as a complete human, may be even better than the ordinary person. He lives through the deadly reality of HIV AIDS among his partners. Jess is his life partner; they have some misunderstanding later which is resolved, and in this make up Pete has also played a vital role. The homosexual family has continued a chance to reunite. They have enough feelings for each other however; momentary obstacles are always there in every kind of relationship. In contrast to this family we can see Donna's family which is almost fragmented with no hope. Donna says, "[H]usbands, in my experience, are

more trouble than they are worth" (55). She is divorced after three years of married life and she is hopelessly negative about her married life and feeling better remaining single. Both of them were well educated and professionally both were psychologists and used to counsel the couples to strengthen their relationship but ironically their own relation broke without having a chance to make up again. Gabriel satirizes for this situation by saying: "How agonizing would that be, I wondered, to have two professional minds analyzing the same breakup? I didn't ask, though, for fear that Donna would ask about my husband" (55).

The contrast between Gabriel and his father is beautifully shown in the novel. Gabriel is named after his father. Both of them are Gabriel Noone, but, one is homosexual out of pure aristocratic conservative heterosexual couple. He comments upon his father and his relation by saying,

I know it wasn't easy for pap, having co-opted by such a conspicuous homo. I had being programmed to be him, after all: a partner in his bank, a conservative, a practicing aristocrat. But now, by his own account, he had become a rode-show version of me. Dewy-eyed shopgirls and waiters, clocking the name on his credit card, would ask him for his autograph only to discover he wasn't the Gabriel Noone.

(62)

This statement shows that the myths like children raised by gay men or lesbians grow up to be gay, and unchecked homosexuality results in the extinction of the human race are totally based on unscientific beliefs to marginalize the homosexuals. Here, the protagonist, despite of being raised on complete heterosexual environment, turns out to be a gay. His father was such an conservative aristocrat that no one in his family could ever be less than aristocratic, just as no one could really be gay. When the truth

about Gabriel was revealed in that family it was always the truth that suffered. Still Gabriel didn't hide his reality or behaved as closeted and at last, the father too understands the reality and accepts the sexuality of his child. His father in contrast to the character Pete is homophobic at first but, later he says, "I'm damn proud of you" (67). He too accepts the presence of Jess in Gabriel's life as a responsible husband which "was largely the truth, and it gave pap an excuse to respect, however marginally, the funny fella who was sleeping with his son" (68). Gabriel, on the other side, is happy, for having a company on the journey like his father did.

There is another equally important character in Gabriel's life whom he thinks as his son named Pete. Pete is as a refugee, a psychotherapist of Gabriel. Gabriel is frustrated with his relationship with Jess as Jess is living far from him and in this situation; Pete came miraculously in Gabe's life with his highly sympathetic background. Both remain emotional refuge to each other. They become close in a short span of time, as they share their dissatisfactions, expectations, and betrayal they faced during life. As Pete himself is a sexually abused child he too has the experience of rough sex and sodomy thus, Gabriel feels easier to share his sex life with Pete. The entire novel is a revelation and reflection of Gabriel's life while conversing with Pete. Therefore, this episode is the most awaited part of this novel to the readers. Gabriel confesses the feeling after he talks with Pete: "I felt so much better the next morning that I called Pete to thank him for listening" (111). Gabriel becomes addicted to Pete and he feels like missing something when Pete calls him late. He guesses the possibilities of not calling by Pete. He has not seen the boy still he has become a part of his life, as his own child. He does not want Pete to know about his suspect about his existence, thinking that it could hurt him. He feels relief when he knows that Pete is not angry, "Pete didn't hate me, after all; he had just been very sick" (112). He

thinks Pete as his sweet, volatile man who had come out of nowhere to slay his dragons, to take care of him. As Gabriel is threatened by the death of Jess who is HIV contaminated and feels hard to love him with the fear to lose him anytime. He fears to feel closer to him and also knows that he cannot count on Jess being with him in old days. And in this situation, Pete gives him courage to accept his reality and not to fear for the future but to enjoy the company which he do now. These suggestions make Gabriel more close to Jess and Pete as well. This is an example of ideal relationship of son and father even between heterosexual teen and a fella.

There are so many opinions about Gabriel's role in Pete's life. As Pete's existence was questioned by the producer Ashe Findlay for publishing the book by Pete there is a great war of trust and the visible proofs during the novel as nobody has ever seen this boy Pete. Jess too is suspicious about the boy. Pete's publisher Ashe Findlay also has not seen the boy and hasn't met anyone who had really met Pete except Donna. As the voices of Pete and Donna seems alike to Jess he feels as if Donna is really exploiting Gabriel by creating the high melodramatic life of Pete in order to have publicity. Anna too gives the logical possibility of Donna's multiple characters and she too suspects the existence of Pete. Gabriel is caught between the war of trust and visible proofs and unable to decide what is really going on in his life. On the other hand it seems that as Pete has gone through unimaginable abuse, he too is in critical situation because he is infected with AIDS and a small flea can cause him infection which could lead him to death. Therefore, Donna is over protective as a mother. She is like a tigress and even the Pet's counselor Warren Bloch has to council Pete in telephone. This conflict remains throughout the novel unresolved till the end. Gabriel cannot meet Pete; he is informed by Donna that Pete is dead and he returns with heavy heart only seeing Pete's room exactly as Pete had described in phone and

the Playboy magazine he had sent. And the exciting thing is that this boy calls once more to Gabriel and confesses that Donna misinforms Gabriel about his death intentionally only to be out of connection. Pete confesses that he still loves Gabriel and he does not want to lose him so he would continue in touch with him secretly.

Gabriel's father also disregards the intimacy of Gabriel and Pete. Pete was abused by men, 'straight men' and his father was suspicious about the people who would misunderstand the relationship of Pete with Gabriel. But, the relation continues with only the 'trust' about Pete's existence. The statement spoken by Donna is very important and the main theme of this novel. She says, "All you have to do is believe and let go, and you'll have all the proof you need. May be not in the way you planned, but it'll be there" (296). The intimacy of Gabriel with Pete proves that he was capable to love and even to be loved by a child more than any straight person. When his father said it's ridiculous to love an abused boy being gay, he defends saying,

What is so ridiculous? The boy needs love. You dint have to be straight to do tat. Children will take it anywhere they can get it. And you don't deny them jus because you didn't gat it yourself. Just because somebody betrayed you. Sooner or later, you have to break the cycle, or the damage is just passed on from one generation to (71)

Here, Gabriel compares Pete with Jess because both of them have same histories. Jess used to be beaten by his father routinely as a child, he was thrown out of the house at the age of sixteen, was been ignored of his medical death sentence due to HIV and his mother was already dead in his early age. The contrast is beautiful between a straight heterosexual parents and queer father figure. A straight father is unable to fulfill his parental duty toward his child on the other side; Gabriel is quite successful to remain a good father to Pete and a loving company to Jess.

There are lots of sexual details of the gay life of Gabriel. These sexual details of the life of characters prove that if gender was not limited to the logic of binary, sexuality would also be able to cater to wider range of other repressed or unacknowledged desires and practices as Sedgwick says. Sexuality is here seen as a fluid category which incorporates not only concrete and real activities but ruminations, fantasy and what not. For example, the practice of sodomy with Pete by the so called straights is also a possibility of sexuality. Similarly, there are the reasons of breakups in the gay couples. Wayne, who was once Gabriel's lover, leaves him when he wanted "The Great Dark Man" (80). They live together even when the sex was dead between them indulging in sentimental gestures. They broke up their relation only to find what they wanted still remaining best friends. When he found Jess he became worried about hurting Wayne's feeling as he was his companion for seven years. Gabriel describes him by saying, "a sunny guy. He could find the humor in catastrophe, thereby romanticizing it and robbing its power" (81). When he met Jess their sex life "was extraordinary" (50). He was conscious about his figure even if Jess finds him sexy in any size. Later he joins gym after the break up in order to look attractive to Jess. The conversation is quite open and frank forward about gay sexuality in this novel. Jess was infected so they were conscious of safe sex. Gabriel comments about their sex life by saying that "[w]henver we discussed our sex life in interviews, we invariably sounded like poster boys for Responsible Behavior. The human mind, we would say, was the greatest sex organ of them all" (50). Both of them were satisfied from their sex life. Jess had been Gabriel's satellite for ten years without complaint. Jess needed a crowd in which he could be judged on his own, beyond the distracting glare of Gabriel's celebrity. He needed the company of others who had defied a death sentence which Gabriel could never give him. Jess proposed

to have sex with other people too and that hurt Gabe. The feeling after Jess's proposal is seen in Gabriel's soliloquy. He says:

How difficult this moment must have been for him, I thought, and how terribly important Our fortress had been stormed, right there on that gray stretch of freeway, and the damage was irreversible. Worst of all, I didn't know myself anymore. Who was this fool weeping over sex? I had been a regular tart until I met Jess. (52)

In this way, we see the extra marital relation of Jess and also of Gabe when he sleeps with a closeted homo while he was traveling in street in search of Pete's apartment in Milwaukee, Henzke Street. But what matters is, they share their need, ask for suggestion with each other, make plan together, and stand by each other's side no matter what. That's why Gabe and Jess are the perfect couple and the break up between them was situational one. It was only the need that changed between them but the relationship always remained inside each other's heart. That's why, they were able to join their once broken relation.

This homosexual couple had really broken the traditional notion about family. They are different from each other but still are alike. More over they love each other, they care for each other even if they stay apart for some reason. Their dog Hugo is loved by both of them equally, Gabriel even shares Pete with Jess and this boy really plays an important role to connect their broken heart. Pete makes Gabriel understand that Jess is his family, his buddy man and there is love between them however they stay apart. Here, the concept of male and female sexuality is viewed as an unstable historical and political construct of our society and such awkward issues should continually to be revisited, disavowed, rediscovered and affirmed. Jess here, plays the

role of husband in Gabriel's life in this novel even if both of them are males which is against the traditional concept of sexuality.

Gabriel's grand father had committed suicide. There were homophobic myths about this death too. Many people in the community regard this death due to the queerness. And the heredity was blamed for the queerness of Gabriel too. This myth too is clarified in this novel toward the ending part. His grandfather was neither gay nor crazy but a decent family man and the cause of suicide was something else. This confusion is resolved during the conversation of Gabriel with his dad upon the forbidden topic of grandpa's death before sixty five years ago. Gabriel feels relief after he cleared long suppressed assumption about the pathetic death. After knowing the fact he says, "Fine. Thanks for sharing. I am glad we've cleared him of that shameful possibility" (321) . His father shouts at him when he comments queerness as the shameful possibility and says: "[T]hat's not what I meant, goddammit. Don't twist my words. We weren't talking about you" (321) . This statement by his father shows that he no more regards homosexuality as shameful.

Anna, assistant of Gabriel, is heterosexual woman raised by lesbian couple. This detail also disproves the myth about homosexuality. According to the myth homosexuals create environment to rear the child to become homo like them. This also suggests that a fixed segment of the population of world is naturally gay or lesbian like the rest of the population is naturally heterosexual. So, it is naturally fair to become homo to some people and hetero to others. Gabriel sends Pete a *Playboy* magazine as a gift behaving as his big brother this act shows his equal respect to the heterosexual sentiments in teen age. This show how inclusive is Gabe without being extremist and rude toward the heterosexuals. That's why, Pete, a hopeless child, wants to make him a father figure even he is severely deceived by his biological parents.

The way Pete asks permission is really an innocent inquiry and his trust upon the person he talks in phone. He says,

Could I call u Dad sometimes? . . . I've never called anybody that . . . the sperm donorHe never used my name, and neither did... you know his wife. Sometime their customers called me Little Boy Blue, but those two never called me anything. Just Hey, you, and shit like that. I didn't know my name until I went to school and the teacher read it out during roll call. I couldn't believe it when mom started using it.
(117)

In above extract we come to know about the harsh treatment Pete gets from his biological parents. This exceptionally brute treatment makes both readers and the character Jess hard to believe the reality of Pete's life. We get amazed how could the parents treat their own child in this way? Anyway this shocking detail is an irony about the all heterosexual family institutions where such inhuman practice exist under so called civilized social cover. Gabriel is the father for Pete and also a figure of love and trust in his life.

Another feature of the protagonist in this novel is that he does not internalize homophobia during the course of his life. He accepts the reality of his sexuality easily without having any guilt. In a part of novel he comments his living with fellow fella as twentieth-century queers. He says, "We were already aspiring to the proud nobility of twentieth-century queers" (82). Sexual pleasure as theorized in psychoanalysis is not liked to a specific activity like heterosexual genital relations, but to the satisfactions associated with particular functions and bodily zones but this is not accepted in our society as it is quite conservative to talk frankly even about the human sexual life. People regard heterosexuality as the only right kind of sexuality, therefore

most of the homosexuals in general have self hatred because in their growth through adolescence to adulthood, they internalize the homophobia pressed upon them by the heterosexual world. They even are afraid to confess the reality about their sexuality and live the double life of closeted homo. There is an intuitional discrimination in the society and privilege of heterosexuality. Society enforces "Compulsory heterosexuality," as Adrienne Rich calls, on young people through the medium of family, educational institutions, religions, medical professions, and all forms of media(239). In contrast to this situation, Gabriel represents a strong confessor without a spot of internalized homophobia in his personality. Thus, he joins a gym which is not a gay one but a "gym down at the UC medical Centre" (75). This act shows that he doesn't even feels uneasy in the hetero community but wants to cooperate with them. So are the other characters like Pete, Jess, Wayne, Anna, Donna, and etc. They don't confuse the difference of sexuality to the discriminations. We can see the straights who are homophobic and also the straights who really don't have this instinct. Likewise we see characters like Gabriel, Jess, Wayne etc. who are not afraid to confess the reality about their sexuality and also other minor characters who live a life of closeted homo. Such closeted homos live a double life: they live a life of heterosexual family style outwardly but, inside they also enjoy the homosexual activity. Such people even are afraid to confess the reality of their sexuality like Gabriel's father's friend Dick Burbage. He is a gay but closeted and he never confess his identity to his fellow friends. These people don't understand that like heterosexuality, homosexuality is just a natural possibility of human sexuality and the social construction of this binary is to discriminate the homosexual minorities. There are evidences of other closeted homos living a double life like the one whom Gabriel meets in the Henzke Street. These characters are minor but they show the

contemporary social reality where people are not ready to show their reality because society is not liberal to them. In this situation Gabriel is presented as a hero never afraid of the society and courageous enough to accept his sexuality happily.

There is a resistance capability in the protagonist as he publicly criticized a famous actress who narrates a film as homophobic but refused to confess her sexual identity. We can also find resistance of racist attitude in the characteristics of Gabriel. He defends the racist perspective of his aristocratic father who is engulfed with the "racist shit" (71). Gabriel defends when his father used words like "nigger and Jap shit":

Do you think your children want their children to hear that kind of talk? They don't, Pap. That got old a long time ago. Billy dreads it every time he brings his kids over, for fear you will be pulling that racist shit again. Talk about a lousy influence on children . . . (71)

This extraordinary understanding power; and the quality to speak against the falsity; makes Gabriel very loving character to the readers of this novel. He doesn't even like fishing because he thinks that it hurts fish and he too dislikes hunting, this shows his humanity full of compassions toward the fellow living being of the planet. He can stay by the side of good and truth no matter what but, doesn't support the falsity even if it is done by his own parents. When his father suspects the abusers of Pete as gays because they practiced sodomy with a teen aged boy; Gabriel tells him that those were straight men. His father doubts, "How could they be straight, if they were messing with a boy" (70). This suspect of Gabe's pap represents the attitude of all heterosexists who think that only gays are to be blamed of these acts. This is an irony toward the whole heterosexist conservatives who are quite unaware toward the reality and are in great misunderstanding. This fact disproves the myth of human sexuality based on

binary. Here, not the homosexual person but the so called straight people are involved sexually to mistreat a child who doesn't even know why he is been mistreated. This nature of human sexuality is directed toward the criminal sexuality in human history. We can see such realities also in our societies which are neglected and are often ended with slightest punishment to the convict. Foucault also talks about the history when there were no binaries like homosexuality and heterosexuality but still the practice of sodomy was present secretly before eighteen century. According to him sexual behaviors had a long rich history but in the name of maintaining morality, the society exerted a set of limitations by constructing parameters of normalcy. This view is equally supported by Sedgwick in her *Epistemology of the Closet*.

We also see the details of being affected by AIDS among homosexuals and also to Pete by sexual abuse by his own biological parents. Jess is using "cocktail" that is a combination of drugs which can be effective against the HIV virus. He is even the poster boy for the cocktail. The death of Wayne, the possible death of Jess and its helplessness all add the emotional stuffs in the novel. These details of being infected is also note worthy because, these details show HIV as the major problem among homosexuals and the story becomes more occupied with gay environment. The pain of separation with their partners at any time makes the non infected ones miserable. So is the condition of the protagonist. Gabriel is demolished by a lyric which describes the similar condition: "Oh, my friends forgive me that I live and you are gone. There's a grief that can't be spoken, there's a pain goes on and on" (82). The death of Wayne, his usual illness, the fatigue and neuropathy, the night sweats and diarrhoea all are pathetic details due to HIV patients and its consequence. There is not only sexual intimacy between Jess and Gabriel but a close emotional connection. Even in the separation Gabriel could understand the pain of Jess and all

the time he wants to sooth it. He can understand the loneliness and confusion of Jess. This depth of feeling and understanding among partners mock the heterosexist tradition that can not even imagine that there could be such an ideal relation between men. Their one month separation was the measurement to the depth of their relationship in which they get victory. Gabriel was reluctant to come closer to Jess which is reflected in his dialogues with Pete. He once says, "Do you? I thought. Then why the fuck are we doing this? If you're hurting as I am, you could fix us both in the blink of an eye" (93). All these details of the plot provide the homosexual environment, its ups and down, and its challenging problems of HIV to make the novel more realistic and interesting as well.

The jealousy felt by Gabriel seeing snapshots on refrigerator door of Jess makes us understand the same jealousy when a wife or husband feels when their partners are more inclined toward someone else. Gabriel calls Jess new partner his so called "motorcycle buddy" (95). He feels there was nothing of him in Jess' life. His monologue expresses his jealousy when he visits Jess' new apartment. He says, "Why would he leave the photo there if he knew I was coming? Wouldn't it be common decency to take it down? Or did he want me to see it? Was this his way of making something official?" (95)

He feels nice to hear 'we' from Jess' mouth. He feels himself lucky to find him in his life. He feels that Jess cares about him more than anyone in the world, along his vision of things, his planning of combine future etc. He feels all items of Jess' room disposable except those which carries the remembrance of their together life. For Gabriel, his married life with Jess is the only deity he requires. Jess is the man who has shared a bed with Gabe for a decade, who had cried in his arms over his mother's coffin. So their combine life is an example of acceptance, a celebration and depth of

homosexual reality. That is why, he has no regret and objection about his reality rather he feels proud about himself about Jess to find him in his life.

The story of the Pete is the most delicate and sentimental part of the novel. He feels proud of his role in Pete's life and having a nuclear family. His proud feeling of Gabriel is reflected in his recollection when he says to Darlie, his step-mother,

I told her about a little straight boy who had felt like such an outcast that he had finally found fellowship in a ward full of AIDS fags. It gave me perverse pleasure to mess with the mythology of the nuclear family in my father's presence. (69)

When Pete asks him about his dad, Gabriel feels that he is asking about his own ancestry. Similarly, when a passenger on plane inquires why he is going to Wysong; he replies that he is going to meet his son who is living with his mother over there with dignity. He does not say to Pete his son in order to closet his sexuality but to feel pride to claim Pete as his son. The suspect of Jess about the existence of this boy adds tension in Gabriel's mind. But, he justifies the doubt of Jess toward this boy when he comments, "Jess had a rough childhood thus is skeptic, distrusted many things until they were proven certainties, until they are incapable of betraying him" (136). Jess feels that both Pete and Donna are the same person playing with Gabriel thus he tries to protect his "sweetie" from this mess. He too disbelieves that anyone can fall in love by having some conversation in phone calls. That's why he says; "C'mon sweetie, love . . . After four phone calls? . . . Somebody's been jerking your chain, sweetie" (128). However, they remain different in attitude they are always protecting each other. As this novel is written in first person point of view, the story says that it is Jess Carmody who inspires him to write this novel in order to immortalize Pete through his work. When Ashe Findlay, Pete's editor and Publisher can not risk publishing his book as

his existence is under suspect thus, to write Pete's story from his point of view is the only resolution Gabriel can bring. Therefore it is Jess who removed the writer's block by inspiring him to write the Pete's story and the whole novel. In this way the writer has done full justice to the story to make it realistic as much as possible that's why the Protagonist seems as an alter ego of the writer himself.

There are also the historical cruel details about the discriminations toward the homosexual people in this novel. For example, Matthew Shepard, an open gay who was shot dead by the "cowboys" (153). This incident makes sad to both homosexuals and heterosexuals alike. The act of Strom Thurmond who regards gay agenda as evil and complains about in his organization and the senator's avoiding of the subject altogether is also a crucial detail of the discrimination queers face during the American history. These details are the examples of the struggle of queers who were on the way to demand their rights. It shows that history was always cruel to the changes but, still the change is obvious and today we are the witness of this change. About the cruel death of a gay Matthew Shepard when Donna asked Gabriel, "[w]hat is itAre people getting meaner?" (133). There is indication what Gabriel told her which shows, how are the history's reactions with these minorities? He says:

I told her this kind of cruelty had always existed, that only the circumstances around it had changed. Matthew Shepard had been openly gay, after all and his parents had never been ashamed of him. For once there was no reason to hide the cause of his death, so the truth could be examined in full. And that was progress, I suggested, as grim as it might be. (133)

Here, Gabriel is quite positive toward the change. He is quite optimistic about the future. This proves that he is celebrating what he is and also is hopeful about the time,

the changing attitude of people. This makes the novel realistic and of course more convincing to the readers. It too makes us aware about the reality which we must accept as homos are also a part of human history.

We can find lots of philosophical views about the meaning of love, trust and friendship in this novel. Pete tells Gabriel to hang on the relationship with Jess even he thinks that it's not working both ways. When Pete speaks about the measurement of heart he it is touches and overwhelms he readers. He says, "The heart is measured by how much you love not by how much you are loved by others. Fukin' Hitler was loved by othersIt's just something you do yourself, not something you get. Nobody's love ever saved anybody else" (109). Donna says that people need proof until they grow up but when they are grown they learn to carry everyone who has loved like the portable bliss. She tells Gabriel that he must learn to trust the love of both Jess and Pete. She says, "All you have to do is believe and let go, and you'll have all the proof you need" (295). There are indications that love needs not be proved, one must just love and see the miracles. No doubt there are also voices of rationality like Jess and of Ann equally convincing but toward the end love wins, trust wins leaving a sweet moments in Gabriel's part which we can feel in the novel. Therefore this novel is about heart and feeling mixing with gay sentiments which are all humanitarian.

There are lots of slang words in this novel. These words make the conversation between characters more natural and day to day language of contemporary American society. These words also include the words from homosexual vocabulary. Words like "goddammit" (175), "Fuck" (175), "dick smoker" (45), "fella" (75), "lucky motherfucker" (109), "penishead" (135) and "motherfucker" (109) which make the language quite informal. But, it seems as if we are over hearing the usual conversation between two intimates. Likewise homoerotic words like,

"AZT" (that is, a name of cocktail medicine) (51), "ACT-UP" (51), "HIV" support group, "closeted" (75), "S and M" (175) etc. which make us curious about what they mean as they are new words from the homosexual communities. Therefore, this kind of language makes the plot more rebellious and interesting to the readers.

In this way, the novel, besides being a gay novel by a gay writer, is equally famous and loving for all types of readers. The celebration of own sexuality even being a gay creates an aura which ties all the readers in one tone. This makes us realize that gay sentiment is not a different category but historically created as hetero. The feelings and sentiments presented in this novel make us aware that these are our own feelings spoken by the characters but that of the sexuality. It makes us aware of our own images, complains, expectations, distrusts and frustrations. Homosexuality has found the full justification and celebration by the life of protagonist. Gabriel is the celebrity, famous writer as well as a famous RJ among his listeners. He accepts his sexuality and is accepted by his loved ones. The subject matter of the novel is 'queer' sexuality and suitable in the contemporary reality. It is able to show the sentiments of the sexual minorities living especially in America and in different areas of the world in general. Moreover, it disproves the falsely created myths about the queers and their sexuality. Thus, it is a remarkable work in queer history.

IV. Conclusion

Gabriel Noone, the protagonist of the novel, *The Night Listener* confesses his sexuality proudly to the public. He mocks at the closeted homos over the world by ironizing their double life. Throughout the story he never regrets for what he is and does not even negotiate his sexuality even if the society was against him. From the day he discovered his homosexuality, he accepts his reality and lives with it. He even thinks his life as perfect, his relations more true compared to the other straight characters like Donna and Pete if only his buddy man Jess is back in his life. He celebrates his being in love with Jess where there is no boundary of age and sex.

Gabriel's aristocrat father, the senior Gabriel being a straight, at first ridicules the protagonist for his sexuality. In this situation too Gabriel no more hides his sexuality; he stands with his reality in spite of the rejection of his family members and the expectation of the heterosexual majority. He even ridicules a famous actress who in spite of being a lesbian rejects to accept her sexuality in front of the public. He does not support the ghetto life; he wants to stand with all other straight people. Therefore he rejects joining gym especially for the homosexuals and goes to the public gym. Likewise, he works with Anna who is a straight lady and nowhere has he showed any rude behavior to her regarding her sexuality. He is capable of accepting the heterosexual reality as well just as his gayness that's why he accepts Pete Lomax, a straight guy as his son. He understands the feelings of straights as well as nonstraights and nowhere has he discriminated between them. He only expects the homophobic group to be little liberal without being radical.

The humanity in the protagonist is noteworthy. He is always by the side of truth. He gives hope to the nearly dried up child Pete, becomes his father, and shows him that there are still people who can be trusted. He becomes able to win the heart of

Pete; he loves his partner Jess and is proud of his homosexual family which he thinks far well than the so called perfect heterosexual bounding of Donna and her husband. His parentship in contrast to the biological parents of Pete is quite positive and more human like. He is a who rescues the lost belief of the child and makes him feel that there are good people too. He loves, trusts, helps the people around him.

In this way, it can be concluded that the novel as a whole is about the celebration of the so-called inferior sexuality. It speaks an equal importance from the side of the minority. It not only speaks about the uplifting of the so-called ridiculed part toward the mainstream, but also about celebrating the differences. And Gabriel Noone, the protagonist, is quite able to fulfill that remarkable part successfully. This type of consciousness is not found in the conservatives who just attempt to maintain the status quo. Gabriel Noone of this novel, thus, represents a hero celebrating the homosexuality and making it a part of humanity without creating discriminations among people.

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