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# **From Nowhere to Somewhere: Spatiality in Alan Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library* and Pai Hsien-yung's *Crystal Boys***

**Máster Universitario en Investigación en Literaturas Anglófonas e Hispánicas  
Contemporáneas**

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## **Abstract**

In heteropatriarchal society, homosexuality has always been considered as an unorthodox sexuality. Owing to social prohibition of that sexuality, queer groups have been marginalized and even excluded from society all the time. After Stonewall riots happened in 1969, more and more social activists are dedicated to enhance homosexual development globally. In London or Taipei, queer groups begin to walk out of the darkness and show themselves. From nowhere to somewhere, they can finally find themselves a place to fit in. In this way, a specific cultural phenomenon belonging to them is built among places. Eventually, places and gay people are connected together, and they are dependent on each other. In order to explore homosexual space, I will focus my analysis on two novels: a Chinese novel, Pai Hsien-yung's *Crystal Boys* and Alan Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library*. Both present the situation of gay men in 1980s. In my paper, I will make an analysis of the connection between places and gay people and the construction of mental space (emotional regime) from a comparative perspective. In two different cultures, society will direct the formation of their emotional regime and thereby influence how the connection between them is shown in both novels.

**Key words:** homosexuality; *Crystal Boys*; *The Swimming-Pool Library*; homosexual space; emotional regime

## **Resumen**

En la sociedad heteropatriarcal, la homosexualidad siempre ha sido considerada como una sexualidad heterodoxa. Debido a la prohibición social de esa sexualidad, los grupos homosexuales han sido marginados e incluso excluidos de la sociedad. Tras los disturbios de Stonewall en 1969, más activistas sociales se dedicaron a desarrollar la visibilidad homosexual en todo el mundo. En Londres o Taipei, los grupos homosexuales comienzan a salir de la oscuridad y se muestran ante la sociedad. Al final, pueden encontrar un lugar donde encajar y construir su fenómeno cultural propio. Como consecuencia, se ha establecido un vínculo imprescindible entre los homosexuales y ciertos lugares. Para explorar el espacio homosexual, centraré mi análisis en dos novelas: una novela china, *Crystal Boys* de Pai Hsien-yung y *The Swimming-Pool Library* de Alan Hollinghurst. Ambos presentan la situación de los hombres homosexuales en la década de 1980. En mi investigación, haré un análisis de tal vínculo entre los lugares y los homosexuales y la construcción del espacio mental (régimen emocional) desde una perspectiva comparada. En dos culturas diferentes, la sociedad siempre tiene el poder de determinar cómo establecer el régimen emocional. Por lo tanto, influirá en cómo se demuestra la conexión entre los homosexuales en ambas novelas.

**Palabras clave:** homosexualidad; *Crystal Boys*; *The Swimming-Pool Library*; espacio homosexual; régimen emocional

## 1. Introduction

“Love that dare not speak its name” is a classic sentence uttered by Oscar Wilde about the most disappointed shout of the inapproachable homosexual love. Love seems to be natural and spontaneous, but it is the privilege of heterosexuals. Along history, homosexuality has been considered as the unorthodox sexuality or even a mental disease, which has caused a lot of suffering to the homosexual community. The stigmatization of that sexuality leads queer people to being marginalized or even excluded from society. From the homosexual myth of pederasty in ancient Greek to the modern homosexual community, the oppression of heterosexuality is omnipresent. It seems that the discussion of the sexuality never needs an end in order to realize an ideal peace between different kinds of people. At least, it plays an essential role in provoking a thorough thought of how to foment the development of human society.

Confronting the prohibition of homosexuality, queer people always need to seek for comfort. The necessity of gaining emotional security urges them to construct certain connection with places or people. Through this connection, they can feel emotionally attached to objects in order to obtain a feeling of being accepted. On the other hand, that connection, formed among different kinds of relations between people, represents characters of certain places: how they are and what they are. In this sense, the essential being of an entity is defined by places. In *Culture Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Concepts* (2005), the function of spatiality is put forward. According to David Atkinson *et al*, “identities are understood to be generated in relation to specific places, both territorial and social” (98). Therefore, the connection between places and people plays a significant role in the construction of identities of gay people. In my paper, I have chosen two novels: a Chinese novel, Pai Hsien-yung’s *Crystal Boys* and Alan Hollinghurst’s *The Swimming-Pool Library*. Both of them explore the situation of gay men in 1980s. The society at that time was extremely harsh for the queer group. The description in the novels can give me a better and overall understanding of the living condition of gay men at that period. It has been

quite interesting for me to investigate the meaning of places for queer people since the two novels create their own literary landscapes: the New Park and the Corry club, respectively. For gay men, these are two places where they can live and find other companions. They are expelled from the family and society and eventually fit themselves in such places. In this sense, those places have rendered homosexuals a sense of belonging, a kind of emotional comfort.

On the other hand, those places also connect with the inner space of the characters in the novels, because, to some extent, their existence is a protest against the dominant values or the patriarchal society. In the way, the struggling of the characters reveals not only the social situation, but also a wish to reconstruct their identities originally imposed on them by society. Therefore, my research will be developed in twofold layers: first, the construction of the inner relationship between the place and gay people; second, the transmission of the relationship between gay people and the society.

To be more specific, the first part will be focused on the construction of two places in the novels, the New Park and the Corry. Those physical spaces have become a comfortable place for gay men to settle down. From time to time, those places are converted into a symbol of the existence of the queer group. In order to investigate the symbolic meaning given to those places by the gay men who live there, I will go deep into their emotional attachment with the places from a perspective of functionalism. The main focus lays on the discussion of the idea of the intentionality which is revealed in two novels.

Eventually, I will go deep into the social level, because the queer group cannot be completely independent from the world or society. From the physical places to the construction of an emotional refuge, the development is relevant to gay man's connection with society. However, the unfriendly social situation of gay men, somehow, has made them have a certain attachment with some specific places. The reason is mainly the norms set up by the heterosexual society. Gradually, the standards are forming the identities of this group. When the queer group cannot be

able to accomplish the identities imposed by their family or the society, there will be a disruption between them, and then they have to reconstruct their own identities. In this part, I will mainly focus on the transmission of the identities of characters by means of examining the emotional regimes presented in two novels.

Two different cultures bring about distinct conflicts in the context of the emotional regime. For the Chinese culture, the importance of the family or the authoritative role of the father have constituted the emotional regime of filial piety. The conflicts between the gay sons and the fathers are indeed a twisted protest against the patriarchal society. On the other hand, in *The Swimming-Pool Library*, there is no such a strong emphasis on the family. More likely, the conflict is directly revealed between the individual and the society. The benefits of the queer group seem to be the topic of this novel. In this way, I will focus on the presentation of the situation of gay men. At the same time, the mode of pederastic relations is so reviving in the novel that I will carry out my research from that perspective. The homoerotic relations can hardly survive in the heterosexual-dominant society, even if they exist all the time. Therefore, the depreciation of those relations at that period is quite worth being scrutinized. Nevertheless, the relations of characters have been twisted invisibly into another one in a protector- servants mode, which is reflecting the colonialism in British society. Seemingly, Hollinghurst intends to utilize the homosexuality as a mirror to expose social problems. At the same time, the concept of colonialism of white people is infecting the relationship between Will and his black boy Arthur. To some extent, the obsession revealed by the main characters will be a proof to the colonial dominance in British society.

## 2. Literature Review

Homosexuality seems to be a constant subject related to the oppression all the time. Being marginalized, the group of queer people never surrender to the oppression coming continuously from heterosexuality, and stay dedicated to procuring for a full-circle solution to such a harsh situation. Living in such circumstances, the construction of their identities is a significant social aspect to be discussed. In order to explore homosexuality in my analysis, I will apply a comparative perspective to two homosexual novels: *Crystal Boys* (1989) by Pai Hsien-yung and *The Swimming-Pool Library* (1989) by Alan Hollinghurst. In the following paragraph, I will focus on the historical development of queer theories and on discussions of several sexologists about sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular.

In relation to homosexuality, it has been considered as a mental disease and thereby homosexual people had to suffer from a series of medical treatments in order to “fix it right”. In such a situation, the psychoanalysis of homosexuals has been started in order to figure out a scientific explanation. To understand the production of homosexuality within the heterosexual frame, Freud’s works are quite essential. In *The Ego and the Id* (1923), he discussed the relation between melancholia and the formation of gender. He perceives that melancholia plays a significant role in the sessions of “ego formation” and “character”. Furthermore, he elaborates on the structure of mourning and compares it as an initial structure of ego construction. In relation to the structure of mourning, the experience of losing another human being who one loves unquestionably breaks his heart. In order to avoid such an unstoppable melancholia, the ego will incorporate that other into the very structure of ego formation. In other words, the truth of losing that other has been internalized in the brain by the ego long before one could realize. The other becomes a part of the ego and determines the other’s attributes permanently to some extent. However, the incorporation of that other has not been set aside and forgiven forever but to be projected into another by the ego. In this sense, that other who one has lost is



mechanically substituted by the new another. Including, the desires and the love for the lost one have been shifted into another. In other words, the boy will realize the prohibition of incest and internalize his prohibited affection towards the mother. Then when he grows up, he will project that internalized affection into other women instead of his mother. Somehow, such a magical process of projecting results is in a kind of identification between the one and the other. In *The Ego and the Id* (1923), Freud remarks on the process of the permanent internalization of the ego also described in his other thesis “Mourning and Melancholia” (1917):

we succeeded in explaining the painful disorder of melancholia by supposing that [in those suffering from it] an object which was lost has been set up again inside the ego—that is, that an object-cathexis has been replaced by an identification. At that time, however, we did not appreciate the full significance of this process and did not know how common and how typical it is. Since then, we have come to understand that this kind of substitution has a great share in determining the form taken by the ego and that it makes an essential contribution towards building up what is called its “character.” (18)

The process of finding the others as a substituted object for the lost one proceeds from the choice of the ego. According to the traits of the lost love, the ego will direct itself to an appropriate one in order to sustain such an imaginary love relationship not with the present one but with the lost one. Therefore, the process of internalizing and sustaining the romantic relationship with the lost love is quite crucial to the construction of the ego and to its “choice-object”.

However, owing to the prohibition of homosexuality, gay men cannot realize the process of internalizing. In other words, they are not allowed to project their homosexual affection into another male. In heteropatriarchal society, the incapability

of sustaining a love relationship with another is perceived as so-considered abnormality of homosexuals. It explains the reason why homosexuals are constantly marginalized out of society.

The proposal of the close-knit relation between mourning and melancholia originates from another important idea of Freud, which refers to the “Oedipus Complex” in *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). According to his concept of the Oedipus Complex, after the birth of a boy, an intimate relationship with the mother will result in the boy’s sexual desires and love towards her. Aware of the existence of the father, the boy at first will consider him as an opponent. Thereby, a competitive relationship between the boy and the father will be developed. Conversely, such incest relationship is prohibited by the law of the patriarchal society. As for the boy, the sexual desires and the love towards his mother has been oppressed. To some extent, the oppression results in the rupture of the boy’s relationship with his mother. In other words, the one is losing his loved subject. Related back to the structure of mourning, the oppression urges the boy to internalize permanently his lost love into the ego formation and later the boy invests his affection into other objects.

In the case of heterosexual union, what is denied between genders is the object into which the one projects his all affection, but not the modality of desire, so that the desire is deflected from that object onto other objects of the opposite sex. Conversely, in the case of prohibited homosexual union, in Freud’s opinion, not only the object is being rejected by the ego, but also the desire, because the law of society prohibits incest and homosexuality in any case, so that they become subjects to the internalizing strategies of melancholia. In this sense, the primary bisexuality, put forward by Freud, is quite limited. The primary bisexuality is an ideal condition to explicate the formation of genders and characters and even a process to foster that formation. However, in Freud’s psychoanalysis, the primary bisexuality is a complicating factor because of the interference of the law. For instance, the boy must require renunciation of the object cathexis and the desire towards objects of his same sex. In that situation,

the boy has no choice but to deal with his affection towards the father by another way of identifying with him.

The formation of genders and characters seems to be over-controlled by the law of heterosexuality. The social power forces people to reject homosexuality from the very beginning and then comes up with strategies to deal with that by a series of identification. In this sense, the boy is obliged to choose to identify with his father, because homosexuality is related by the politics to feminine traits. To align with homosexuality refers to the castration of the phallus. Therefore, the castration anxiety does not originate from the fear of the father, but from the prohibition of homosexuality imposed by the patriarchal heterosexual power. To some extent, it seems to be a strategy to deny the homosexuality through identification with parents.

From the internalized melancholia of Freud, we can perceive that patriarchal heterosexual power and politics are constantly interfering in the formation of genders and the identification of people. Such an idea coincides with Michel Foucault's. In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1976), Foucault argues that the conduct of "sex" is univocal, because one is one's sex and not the other (the trait is quite revealing in the binary structure of sexology). Therefore, that univocal behaviour of sex is produced in order to facilitate the social regulation and control of sexuality. Such a situation has determined the supreme role of the power in sexuality. Long before, we might think that the biological traits which are revealed by the body determine one's sex. The sex seems to be a consequence of the revelation of the body. However, Foucault perceives that there is no relation between the sex and the body and both of them are effects of juridical power, so that the concept of sex is invented by that power in order to require repression and domination over sexuality. Therefore, sex is shaped by the culture and the society. In relation to homosexuality, the artificial construction of sexology denies it in order to realize the unique dominance of heterosexuality.

The sex and the body can be considered as two independent units but all influenced by the power. In some regards, the body also has provoked a profound thinking in Foucault. In his book *Discipline and Punish* (1975), he begins to explicate his theory with a description of a public execution in Paris through a series of observations of the changes from a public way of punishing to a more insidious one. In his opinion, in the present, different kinds of institutions such as schools and the military keep applying a similar method in order to realize one goal. They continue to exist in the service of shaping the way of thinking. In order to illustrate his opinion, he applies a metaphor of panopticon (put forward by Jeremy Bentham in 1785), a specialized prison in which a tower is set in the middle so that the guard is capable of supervising the prisoners in an overall view while they cannot see into the central tower to know if they are being watched or not. In order to avoid more punishment, the prisoners are obliged to behave themselves. Such a situation, in Foucault's view, is also applied by the power in the present. The power no more publishes a set of norms to force people to obey, but to reconstruct their way of thinking, so that it is us who limit and discipline ourselves. The power can manipulate people's minds in such a way. Therefore, he posits that the soul is the prison of the body.

Back to the discussion of homosexuality, the power no more exerts a series of punishments to eliminate it (although homosexuality can never be exterminated). Through the act of changing people's way of thinking, people impose themselves the discipline of heterosexuality. Related to homosexuality, the situation of being marginalized continues to be prevalent. And the power associates homosexuality with feminine traits which will consequently bring about a castration anxiety among men.

The development of the queer theory is being fostered thanks to numerous discussions of feminism about sexuality. Owing to a plenty of theories related with sexuality by Luce Irigaray, Monique Wittig among many others, they have offered more possibilities to apply a fundamental analysis to the homosexuality. A famous saying of Simone de Beauvoir in her *The Second Sex* (1949) about women is: "One is

not born but becomes one” (301). The formation of gender is not a choice of that one but originates from an expectation of society. “Woman” as a gender is shaped by culture and politics. In some regards, gender is a specific identity given by society. The masculine power possesses a supreme authority in the process of that formation. In her book, she argues that men have made women the “other”. Men apply a series of manipulation of stereotyping women as the opposite sex of men in order to organize society into a patriarchy. The distinction between sex and gender made by de Beauvoir is the fundamental source to overcome women’s oppression as the others.

Gender is constructed as a strategy to fulfill a goal of stabilizing the dominant position of patriarchy. However, the existence of the biological sex is enduring the questioning from another feminist: Judith Butler. In her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), she categorizes different theories of sexuality and comes up with the gender performativity theory. In the book, she theorizes on the performative nature of gender and sex. In other words, the formation of gender is a consequent result from the norms imposed by society and the masculine power while the biological sex is also an artificial concept invented by society. According to her description about sex, there is never a set of natural or original models to direct the formation of the sex neither the gender. The sex and the gender never have been two static elements in history. In order to realize a unified control over people, the power invents a set of notions of the gender and the sex. Consequently, it seems that the dominance of heterosexuality is not utterly unchallengeable.

Bearing all these ideas in mind, when it comes to the development of the queer theory in China, it is quite disappointing that it has not developed its own structure yet. However, thanks to the queer theories from the United States and the Europe, the analysis of homosexuality can proceed to a great degree. The book *Queer Politics and Sexual Modernity in Taiwan* (2011), written by Hans Tao-Ming Huang, has discussed the development of homosexuality and its present situation especially in Taiwan in an

occidental perspective. In addition, the problems related to homosexuality are exposed to people, such as the AIDs and the prostitution especially among queer groups from lower class. After all, that book is a significant source of my research on homosexuality in this specific context.

From the very beginning, numerous scholars and sexologists have intended to take a scientific look at homosexuality. They start with plenty of research on the original production of homosexuality in a biological view. It turns out that the production and the formation of sex and gender are being influenced by society. The production of homosexuality is utterly oppressed by the power. After being processed by the ego, the mourning as a notable biological trait has become an act of internalizing that prohibited part of the human being in order to obey the social regulation. In such a situation, Foucault deepens the discussion of the homosexuality in the heterosexual society. He thinks that the social control has become more insidious by the means of shaping people's way of thinking. Consequently, people will regulate and discipline their own behaviours. To a great degree, I think that Foucault's opinion explicates the intrigue of homosexual oppression in society.

On the other hand, the development of the feminism is fostering the fundamental analysis of the sexuality. Based on the discussion of the sexuality, the queer theory can continue to perfect its system. For instance, the binary relation between homosexuality and heterosexuality is built on the discussion of the binary structure between men and women. Women as others are always considered as absence in order to reflect the supreme dominance of men. And homosexuality always exists as a dirty mirror to reflect the authoritative power of heterosexuality in society. To some extent, it is a kind of narcissistic behaviour of the "masculine heterosexuality". Even the notions of sex and gender are invented by heteropatriarchal power in order to unify the society. Butler perceives that the gender is performative. In other words, the gender is always in a state of changing. It is never an absolute definition. Such a theory does foment the liberation of homosexuality in society and reshapes people's

way of viewing it. However, if everything is in the process of changing and becomes indefinable, how can we find a way to develop it much further? On the other hand, the trait of being indefinable can bring about chaos. In the way, from my perspective, it is more necessary to find a balance rather than to drag people into the void. Hence, it is paramount to find a way to get all different kinds along with each other, even though it is a long-way road.

From Freud's theories of mourning and melancholia to Foucault's pavilion theories of self-discipline, the discussion about sexuality has fostered the development of homosexual theories which are a crucial source to offer me a broader vision in that topic and help me a lot to develop the idea of this paper, and my analysis is all based on those theories above. Therefore, through two novels, *Crystal Boys* (1989) by Pai Hsien-yung and *The Swimming-Pool Library* (1989) by Alan Hollinghurst, I will examine homosexuality in a comparative perspective in order to present the problems in the construction of identities of queer people.

### 3. The Physical Space

#### 3.1 The New Park in *Crystal Boys*

Pai Hsien-yung's only full-length novel, *Crystal Boys* (*CB* hereafter), published in 1989, is regarded as a pioneering novel in Taiwan which touched upon the problems of the queer people. The topic about gay men has been something common and constant to deal with, but the intention of Pai Hsien-yung to directly show the life of gay men in the 1970s of Taiwan can be considered as something brave. He applied a humanist approach to discuss the social situation of gay men in the 1970s after the imposition of martial law by 1949 in Taiwan. From his novels, I can find out that his main aim is to focus on the description of people from low classes or people who are marginalized by society. In this sense, the queer group does become a crucial source for his writing. At the same time, Pai Hsien-yung is a homosexual himself and he can feel closer to this topic and the harsh life which his companions have. Under the shadow of the martial law, people became very discreet about their behaviors so that the censorship could not catch a chance to punish them. This was so especially among gay men, who were subject to be supervised, because society seems to consider the homosexual phenomenon unorthodox, which gives people an excuse to exert violence to this fragile group. In such an intense social background, the queer characters described in the novel have to struggle to live and find a place to fit in. Since then, their notorious fame forces them to become "monsters" living forever in the shadow and hiding: "Our anarchic kingdom cannot give us any shelter. We all have to rely on our animal instincts to find a way to survive in the dark" (*CB* 12).<sup>1</sup>

The need to find a place to survive urges many gay men to gather in this place, the New Park. It was a palace from the Qing dynasty, but rebuilt into a public park in

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<sup>1</sup> I do not have access to the English version, so I have translated the direct quotations in the text myself. Here is the original phrase in Chinese version: 我们那个无政府的王国, 并不能给予我们任何的庇护, 我们都得仰靠自己的动物本能, 在黑暗中摸索出一条求存之道。



the colonial period. Since then, that park has become an essential space for gay men to conduct various activities. More and more gay men begin to settle down in that public park. To some extent, the New Park has given people a shelter at least to make them feel they belong somewhere. In this sense, the place is a seemingly safe space to that group of people. It can be considered more than as a physical space for gay men but as an emotional shelter, even if the park does not have a roof to shelter them from wind and rain. However, from the description which I have mentioned above, everyone who belongs to that place knows clearly that the park is something temporary and so fragile that they have to endure the invasion or the harassment from the outside world. It seems to be a gay paradise, but it is constructed completely under the supervision of society. Therefore, the park has transformed itself into a battlefield between gay men and heterosexual authority. Yet, for all that, the place is so meaningful for gay men.

In the following lines, I will take a close look at the construction of the New Park and its location. The landscape invented by the writer sometimes is quite relevant to the activities of the characters, as it has witnessed all changes and the whole construction of the identity of the protagonists. Apart from the analysis of the outside appearance of the New Park, I will seek an inner relationship between the characters and the place. What stops the characters to leave that place even if they still have to suffer there? In the novel, the protagonist Qing returns to the park in a windstorm. He seems to feel more comfortable there than in a cozy bed. Why does that place mean so much to him? Not only just for him, people who lived there sooner or later will come back to that nest. Therefore, it is quite necessary to find out the reason while it may help me to figure out how the identity of gay men was constructed in the 1970s of Taiwan.

### ***3.1.1 The Imaginary Country of the New Park***

In the original Chinese version, the title of the novel is “Nie Zi” (孽子), which means sinful and evil son. Pai Hsien-yung invented such a negative name to call the characters who are involved in his novel. These people are considered as sinful persons, especially for their families. They are certain tumors in the family and sooner or later will be excluded or even eliminated by society. However, since when being a homosexual becomes a sin which someone should pay for? Pai creates his queer characters and narrates their stories which mainly take place in a real place, the New Park. It is a public park situated in the centre of Taipei. According to the narration, the park was a palace that remained from the Qing dynasty, then during the colonial period, the Japanese rebuilt it into a park in order to demonstrate the destruction of the dynasty. When the Chinese government regained his sovereign power, they constructed a pavilion in a typical Chinese style in the middle of the Japanese-stylish park. Nevertheless, such a queer place has become a significant home to all queer people, including Qing. The narrator Qing starts the story with his experience of being exiled from home by his ruthless father, when Qing is denounced for having a sexual relation with a male guardian of his school. From then on, Qing escapes to the New Park from home. On behalf of the mainstream values, the father expels Qing as a sinful son. Qing is a homosexual, a species which is prohibited in society, so he runs away from the patriarchal society into an anonymous place.

The park becomes another home to Qing. It provides him with friendship and a sense of security. About the park, the description of it takes place at the beginning of the story: “Speaking of the territory of our country, it is pathetically small, no more than two or three hundred meters long and no more than a hundred meters wide. It is limited to a small amount of land around a rectangular lotus pond in the New Park” (CB 11).<sup>2</sup> The park is so limited that the description of it is arranged in a few

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<sup>2</sup> 说起我们王国的疆域，其实狭小得可怜，长不过两三百公尺，宽不过百把公尺，仅限于台北市馆前路新公园里那个长方形莲花池周围一小撮的土地。

sentences but enough to give the readers an overall look. Such a small place has transformed itself into a special container carrying all emotions of a specific group of people. For most of them, the New Park is just a normal place where they can take a rest and play around. In contrast, for gay men, it is more than a public park but a site which can offer them an opportunity to demonstrate their real selves. From the description about the place, they imagine it as a country. From the imitation of the territory, borderlines, etc., civilians intend to build up an exclusive imaginary country just as the patriarchal society has done. Outside “the country”, the enemy exists and keeps waiting for incessant invasions all the time:

On the borders of our country, there are some overlapping and tangled tropical bushes: green corals, bread trees, old and shaven palms, and the row of kings who are sighing and shaking their heads all day long by the road. Coconut, like a tight fence, hides our country and temporarily isolates it from the outside world. However, we can feel sharply the threat outside the fence all the time (CB 11).<sup>3</sup>

In their imagination, their country is constructed around a rectangular lotus pond. The people living around it create a civilization while the outside world is such an uncultivated land that their enemy is primitive and ruthless. To a great degree, the notable contrast between the civilization of that “imaginary country” (the New Park) and the primitiveness of the outside land (the society) can reveal the intention of gay men of inventing a gay-friendly phenomenon. Therefore, it seems that the existence of the park can be a strong protest against the imposed heterosexuality. Also, its existence has been proof of a specific group of people who are subject to be

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<sup>3</sup> 我们国土的边缘，都栽着一些重重叠叠、纠缠不清的热带树丛：绿珊瑚，面包树，一棵棵老得须发零落的棕榈，还有靠着马路的那一排终日摇头叹息的大王椰，如同一圈紧密的围篱，把我们的王国遮掩起来，与外面世界暂时隔离。然而围篱外面那个大千世界的威胁，在我们的国土内，却无时无刻不尖锐地感觉得到。

eliminated by the authority.

On the other hand, gay people's imagination about their country can be considered as a sublime behavior of imitating heterosexual social structure. All the time heterosexuality is a dominant discourse in society while homosexuality has never been taken into account. The lack of knowledge of how to develop gay discourses leaves gay men no choice but only to copy the heterosexual norms even in the imagination. However, heterosexuality has been separating homosexuality from the main discourses by considering them as others. In this sense, the imitation of the homosexual discourses, in which heterosexuality becomes the otherness and is marginalized from the civilization, is indeed extending the power of heterosexuality. In her *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler mentioned a concept of imperialist strategy of Monique Wittig. In a defiant imperialist strategy, heterosexuality can be wholly deconstructed only by the means of "effectively lesbianizing" (153) the world. From my perspective, the imagination of the construction of "the country" is applying the imperialist strategy to some extent. Paradoxically, the sovereign of that false country is too fragile to resist the threats from the outside world. So, can the binary opposition help to accomplish the goal of constructing homosexual discourses in the dominant heterosexuality? In the conclusion of her book, Butler discussed the result of the practices of the parody: "practices of parody can serve to reengage and reconsolidate the very distinction between a privileged and naturalized gender configuration and one that appears as derived, phantasmatic, and mimetic—a failed copy, as it were" (186). The dominant heterosexuality is opposing against homosexuality while gay men are constructing norms on basis of a heterosexual ideology. To a great degree, the incessant imitation of the heterosexual norms can lead the queer group to a worse situation. It is aggravating the feelings of queer people of being others. The parody will result in "a politics of despair" which affirms that marginal genders will be inevitably expelled from the territory of the natural and real discourses. Bearing all in mind, we can foresee the final collapse of their imaginary country in the novel. The

characters have to keep seeking for or building their paradise in other sites.

From the broken home to a shabby park, there is not a better change for Qing. However, he could have obtained a chance to escape away from the suffering and to take a stable life when Master Yang, the headmaster of gay men in the New Park, offers Qing a job in a wealthy family. Eventually he returns to the park even if he gets pierced by the iron fences when he tries to escape. The New Park is a public place and belongs to every citizen, but somehow it has been embedded with certain meanings by a specific group of people. Gradually, those people are developing “a sense of place”. Through that feeling, those people are able to fulfill their self-value in the park. Therefore, the connection between the place and those people results from the sense of place. In the following section, I will examine the construction of that kind of connection by analyzing the sense of place profoundly from several aspects.

### ***3.1.2 The Construction of the Sense of Place***

Pai Hsien-yung sets his story in a public park in order to reflect the gay people from a lower class. The literary landscape has witnessed every story of those people while they live in it. Accordingly, the landscape in the novel is connected with them. In a chapter of the book *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (2012), Christopher Hartworth has discussed the production of the sense of place. Landscapes are interactive all the time. The cultural and economic interaction will always take place in a landscape. In addition, the landscape will offer a profound phenomenological understanding of a specific group of people’s activities. Hence, the sense of place results from the identification of those people. In other words, in a specific landscape, people can find themselves identified with others, who are marginalized from society as well. For instance, the protagonist Qing gives up his opportunities to obtain a better life and insists on returning to the New Park because he can find his own value and the identity there. In the park, he as a homosexual can

be thoroughly understood and normalized by his companions. The act of going back to the society somehow means that Qing has to camouflage his real identity and continues to be submissive to the patriarchal society. In the following paragraphs, I take a close look at the development of the sense of place and its connection with the construction of the identity of the protagonists.

The sense of place is created by all kinds of relations between people and landscapes. In his *Logical Investigations* (1982), Edmund Husserl put forward the concept of “intentionality” in order to explain his phenomenology. He considers that the presuppositions will necessarily be put aside or “bracketed”, and the process of bracketing those presuppositions, in his opinion, results from certain relationship between the consciousness and the directed objects. In other words, the consciousness will produce certain relationship with those objects, and thereby objects cannot exist without being connected with others. Different kinds of consciousnesses may be dependent on one object. For instance, the New Park in the novel is literally a public place for most of the citizens where they may take a rest or play around. Nevertheless, the same place means differently for some specific people. In this sense, the park has been directed to “an intended object”, which reflects the process of bracketing the presuppositions of those specific people. Their presuppositions are being accepted and normalized in the society. Their consciousness is dependent on the intended object. In other words, the park is perceived not only as a public place, but as a kind of private property for gay people to some extent. It has become their country and a home where they find their real self. In fact, the relationship of gay men with that landscape is unspeakably hidden owing to its sinful existence in the society.

The consciousness of gay men in the park is being converted gradually into a specific spirit which can represent that group of people. The concept of *genius loci* is dedicated to discussing the meaning of a place. In other words, one place is given a meaning owing to the birth of the spirit of that place. In the landscape of the novel, a certain spirit is being developed as more and more people from the same group move

into it. As time goes by, on the basis of the spirit, a culture is being formed in such a place. Gay men are no more limited to a material relation with the landscape, which provides a literal place for them to survive. Eventually, as the culture is formed, gay men are involved in an action of creating an emotional attachment to the place. They start to imagine a country where they can project their presuppositions. The emotional dependence on that imaginary country leads gay men into another field in which they could find their meaning of life and the self-values. This kind of emotional attachment can hardly be eliminated. For instance, Master Yang always repeats to his boys: “It's always like this. Do you think that the outside world is enormous and fantastic? One day, you will still fly back to our own nest” (*CB* 13).<sup>4</sup> The nest is the intended object which represents the specific spirit or the culture of those gay men. In the novel, Qing escapes from the life in the outside world and insists on returning. Somehow, the life outside provides him with a feeling of being locked up in prison. On the contrary, he seems to obtain much more freedom in the park with his companions. On the one hand, the spirit which he has taken in is quite repulsive to the dominant culture. The collision between two cultures takes him back to the nest. On the other hand, it is the dominant culture that exiles him to the park. From the beginning of the story, Qing is evicted by his father from home due to the act of having a sexual relation with a male guardian. Indeed, he never has a chance to go back to the so-considered normal life by the heteropatriarchal society.

In relation to the New Park, more and more gay men gather there and have been developing a specific and exclusive culture. The relation between the landscape and those people is somehow constructed in an intimate and discreet way. The culture is being fostered as the new generation moves in while the mythology and the history of that place has also been inherited by them. In this sense, the new generation, such as Qing, has built his identity of homosexuality in such a homosexual phenomenon. The

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<sup>4</sup> 总是这样的，你们以为外面的世界很大么？有一天，总有那么一天，你们仍旧会乖乖的飞回到咱们自己这个老窝里来。

park has been transformed from a public place into a private one especially for those people. In a lecture of 1967, Michel Foucault mentioned about the space and the human life. He perceives that the human being lives inside a series of relations that “delineate sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another” (*Des Espace Autres*, 3). If we consider that the relation is something inside the culture, the park is given a certain meaning to redefine itself and to become distinct to other places. The connection between the directed place and gay people is so private and inner that it is hardly to be detected by people who are excluded outside the phenomenon.

A concept of “heterotopias” which Foucault puts forward (1986) has facilitated a lot my research of the discussion about the relation between the landscape and the outside space. Heterotopias are the utopias, sites which have a general relation of “direct or inverted analogy” (*Des Espace Autres*, 3) with the real places of the society. They are constructed in order to present the society in its perfected form. In other words, the construction of the heterotopias always serves for the society. The social function of them has determined their submissive position to the dominant society. In order to explicate the concept of heterotopias, Foucault has compared them to the mirror:

I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror. [...] I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror (*Des Espace Autres*, 4).

This binary relation between the real society and the heterotopias is quite revealing after that piece of description above. In her book *Gender Trouble* (1999), Butler has



explored various ideas related with sexuality. One of them which I prefer to utilize as an analogy is the idea of “women as absence” from Luce Irigaray (1985). In a binary structure, women are considered as the absence in a phallogocentric language. The female sex constitutes the undesignable signification with an imposed intention of reflecting the male domination. Always seen as the opposition of the male, women become a signifying object. To utilize such an idea for reference, the homosexuality has constituted the signifying object as well in order to reflect the heterosexuality.

Back to the novel, the New Park is built into a heterotopia especially for gay people living there. Compared to the dominance of the heterosexual authority, gay culture becomes a threat or an unorthodox phenomenon to which heterosexuality must apply a violent purification. Paradoxically, such a heretical section can hardly be eliminated, according to the idea of Foucault. Owing to the need to reflect the unchallengeable dominance of heterosexuality, the heterotopia which is invented by gay people must be kept alive and continue to exist. Nevertheless, in order to demonstrate the supremacy of heterosexuality, it keeps exerting violence to the gay community. In addition, the police as the performers of the political power must represent the justice of the law and supervises justly the illegal country of gay people. For instance, we can see that the invasion or the unexpected raids of the police which have been narrated in the novel several times: “As long as the police boots step into our territory from the palm bushes, without any communication we all will escape flying away and dispersing like birds” (CB 11).<sup>5</sup> In that territory, the existence of the police is threatening their living, so that they have no choice but to dwell in the darkness. The situation of the landscape reveals the harsh situation of homosexuality. That place has to endure the violence from heterosexuality. In this sense, the relation between the New Park and the outside world is built in a binary structure. In addition, the fragility of the gay community has become an essential trait for gay people to

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<sup>5</sup> 只要那打着铁钉的警察皮靴,从那片棕榈丛中,一旦侵袭到我们的疆域里,我们便会不约而同的,咻的一下,作鸟兽散。

develop eagerly the sense of place with their imaginary country. In some regards, the repression from heterosexuality is the main spur to foster the development of the sense of place for gay men.

### **3.2 The Corinthian Club ('the Corry') in *The Swimming-Pool Library***

After the analysis of the Chinese novel *Crystal Boys* by Pai Hsien-yung, I will continue the discussion of the relationship between the place and people in another homosexual novel, *The Swimming-Pool Library* (*SPL* hereafter). Alan James Hollinghurst published it as his first novel exploring homosexuality. Combined with his personal experiences, the stories which are narrated in the novel seem to be a series of research on sexuality. The process of experimenting plays a crucial role in the construction of identity. In the interview of 2015 published in *The glbtq Encyclopedia*, Raymond Jean Frontain has a thorough conversation with Hollinghurst about his personal life and his objective of writing his first novel. According to Hollinghurst's memories, it seems that the development of his sexual imagination commenced in his puberty. From ages seven to seventeen, he lived in the all-male environment of boarding schools. In addition, his obsession with the swimming pool originated when he was in school. The erotic nature of changing rooms and the sensual appeal of male bodies are significant sources for him to write his novel. On the other hand, through the novel, we can see that the writer Ronald Firbank and his works are mentioned several times. One of Firbank's major works, *Valmouth* (1919) has been of much importance. In that book, the stories take place in an English spa. It seems that such a scenario inspires Hollinghurst so much to create his own stories. Bearing all in mind, the choice of the swimming pool is consequently coming from Hollinghurst's childhood experiences and his appreciation towards Firbank.

When it comes to the relation between the place and people, the setting of the

novel leaves us a huge space to imagine and analyze. The stories are narrated by a handsome young man William Beckwith. From his experiences, the idle life of being gay is revealed explicitly. However, he suddenly changes his view of the actual situation of homosexuality when he starts to write a book based on an old man's life, Charles Baron Nantwich. Through Charles's diaries, Will witnesses the old-time life of gay men of Charles's generation, a homophobic reality. Will perceives that even through the environment for gay men is much more liberal at present, the hatred against homosexuality continues to exist under the dominance of heterosexuality. No matter in the past or in the present, living in such a difficult situation, gay men begin to gather in a club named Corinthian, where they could find themselves a romantic affair with others. Especially in the changing room, a phenomenon of the sensual nature is extended. In that place a specific group of people are exchanging eye contacts and conducting sexual activities stealthily. Will calls the place "a gloomy and functional underworld" (*SPL* 16) in the novel. An underworld that always detains him from his luxury home and beloved black boy.

To some extent, the club has become a significant place for characters. As for Will, it is a place where he releases his sexual desires on young boys; as for Will's best friend, James Brook, it is a place where he intends to find a companion with whom he could build an intimate relationship; as for other gay people, it is a shield to legalize their homosexual behaviors. The relationship between the place and those people is a key source to analyze the situation of homosexuality. In the following lines, I will focus on the construction of the significance of that place and thereby carry out a further research on how homosexual characters construct their identity.

### ***3.2.1 The Location of the Corinthian Club***

The writer has described explicitly indulging activities conducted by gay men at the Corinthian Club. They are revealed from the perspective of the narrator Will, a

wealthy aristocrat who drops out of the university of Cambridge. After having inherited a huge amount of money from his grandfather, he indulges himself in parties and drinks with doing nothing. Through his lifestyle, the life of gay men is depicted vividly. Apart from numerous bars, there is a place of much importance for him (the Corinthian club), because the club is a scenario where he can enjoy nude male bodies normally with certain natural desires and even meet someone to continue their intimate conversations at home. More and more gay men gather there so that the club has developed a specific phenomenon among them, a phenomenon in which they are understood and accepted by others. The club is an antique stylish edifice built by the architect Frank Orme. About the club, the description goes:

The Corinthian Club in Great Russell Street is the masterpiece of the architect Frank Orme, [...] Even as a child I saw him as a fraud and a hotchpotch, and I was delighted, when I joined the Club and learned that he had designed it, to discover just the same qualities in his architecture. Like Orme himself, the edifice is both mean and self-importance; a paradox emphasised by the modest resources of the Club in the 1930s and its conflicting aspiration to civic grandeur (*SPL* 15).

Will considers the club is the masterpiece of the architect, but we can deduce from the sentences that he is not fond of it. He projects his hatred against Orme into the description of the edifice and thereby the edifice seems to be personalized with self-importance. Will has also depicted Orme “as a fraud and hotchpotch”. On the one hand, somehow the edifice is cheating people. Apparently, for most people it is just a club where they can do exercise and relax, while for a specific group of people, it is their unacknowledged territory where they can conduct homosexual activities. To some extent, the edifice takes up a camouflage of the private sport club in order to normalize the homosexual desires in the changing room or beside the swimming pool:

“At first I used to feel embarrassed about getting a hard-on in the shower. But at the Corry much deliberate excitative soaping of cocks went on, and a number of members had their routine erections there each day” (*SPL* 22). Facing numerous nude male bodies, people will pay less attention to others’ erections. In this way, the demonstration of the homosexual nature can be carried out without being considered as abnormal. Such a phenomenon permits gay men to stay safe and to take off all camouflage of being a heterosexual man. On the other hand, the trait of hotchpotch is revealed through the novel as well. Different kinds of people come to the club such as the black people and Americans. Among them, the sexuality has been so ambiguous that no one is distinct to others or even abnormal.

The paradox of the edifice mentioned above can be associated with the life of gay men which is described in the novel. Apart from the narrator Will and his friends, most people coming to the club are from lower classes. Their modest resources cannot stop them from having an indulging life. For instance, Arthur, Will’s favorite black boy, assumes a lifestyle of parties and bars after he escapes from his family. At the same time, Will also indulges himself in such a contaminated life. However, that kind of orgy life does not provide a sense of security for them. Conversely, they will feel emptier inside. Taking Will as an example, the relation between Arthur and him is not developed out of love, but their need for security and protection: “I was the only person he had; the very melodrama of the case had repelled me before, but for a while I allowed myself to accept it” (*SPL* 38). Will wants to be loved because in this way he will feel secure. The sense of security is connected by him with the action of being loved. On the other hand, the reason why Arthur is willing to stay with him is for a need of seeking for protection. However, both of them will not obtain the security which they are eager for, because their relation is so fragile.

Interestingly enough, the comparison between the edifice and the architect Orme can somehow be related to the relationship between Will and the generation of his grandfather. His grandfather is the old aristocrat while Will can be considered as a

new aristocrat. In the idea of the generation of his grandfather, the homosexuality is a sin and queer people need to be punished for that. In fact, Will, as a homosexual and promising aristocrat, disagrees with those heterosexual norms. As for Orme, Will meets him at his grandfather's house. Apparently, Orme belongs to his grandfather's generation. Facing the aggressive ideas about homosexuality, Will perceives that people from the old generation are mean and self-important and thereby when he is describing the edifice, he utilizes several words not only to personalize it, but also to reveal his feelings. On the other hand, he uses the words "masterpiece" and "delighted" to strongly convey some irony. The edifice is a heterosexual prison for homosexuals. It is perceived as a masterpiece which serves for heterosexuals, while it eventually becomes a scenario where gay men socialize with each other.

Apart from the relation between Will and the architect, the paradox of sexuality is developed through the description of the edifice. The edifice is built in the old generation, and it should have been representative of that generation. Its function and values all serve for heterosexuality. In fact, it has gradually become a favorite place of gay men to conduct their homosexual activities. In other words, the homosexuality has become a prevailing phenomenon in such a representative place of heterosexuality. In the case of *Crystal Boys*, gay men have invented an imaginary country in order to demonstrate their protest against the dominant norms. To fulfill that, gay men have been imitating the systematic society of heterosexuality. However, those actions of recuperating homosexual discourses seem to be in vain, because they are utterly dependent on heterosexual discourses. Compared to that novel, queer people in the Corinthian club seem to keep dancing inside the heterosexual territory. They have to be submissive to a stealthy place in order to get rid of the supervision from the dominant norms.

In the changing room of the Corinthian club, a homosexual phenomenon is stealthily developing. For the narrator Will, it has become an essential place. Even when he is deeply in love with Arthur, he still cannot stop himself from stepping into

the place. Every time he is in the changing room, an unspeakable sensual feeling is extending and keeps fascinating him. Not only Will, but also Charles always stays in that place even if they do nothing. However, the two of them are connected with that place in different ways. In the following section, I will take a closer look at the development of the connection between Will and Charles, and I will also associate them with the construction of the characters' identities.

### ***3.2.2 The Connection of Characters with the Club***

The novel is mainly focused on the present life of gay people in 1980s. The intention of the writer of revealing their situation more specifically sets the characters in a plenty of places, such as night parties in bars and sensual reunions among Charles and his friends in someone's house. All those scenes offer an evidence of gay people's indulging life. In that period of time, the homosexual activities are conducted more and more explicitly. Even Will perceives that the society has become much more liberal to homosexuality than before. However, after reading Charles's diaries about his early life, Will realizes that his idea is quite naive. The dominance of heterosexuality has never been changed or alleviated so that homosexuality is still subject to being punished and supervised. Even he confirms his idea after he receives the message that James is arrested by the police for having sexual relations with another man. Living in such a situation, gay people have to find a place to liberate themselves or at least to breath for one second without assuming any responsibility from the outside world. The Corry club is such a place for Will. From the swimming pool to the changing room, each place becomes a paradise for Will to free himself. In the following paragraph, I will examine why the characters choose to build a connection with the club instead of other places, because to some extent, the connection is associated with the construction of identities of characters.

Related to the term "intentionality" coined by Edmund Husserl (*Logical*

*Investigations*, 1982), the connection with one place is constructed by developing different kinds of relations between people and the landscape. In the case of the Corry club, the swimming pool and the changing room are public places for all members of the club. Their functional goal is to fulfill people's needs of doing exercises and of taking showers. Nevertheless, for a specific group of people, the changing room not only fulfills its practical function, but has also become a place where gay people can take advantage of contemplating nude male bodies. For them, that is a stealthy place to show their inner desires. In order to reveal the trait of being stealthy, the Corry club is described like this: "Inside, the Club is mildly derelict in mood, crowded at certain times, and then oddly deserted, like a school" (*SPL* 16). A deserted place seems to exist as a terrible site, but on the contrary, for gay people it is a perfect site to stay. Including the description of the swimming pool, the writer adds: "The swimming-pool at the Corry is reached down a spiral staircase from the changing-rooms. It is the most subterranean zone of the Club, its high coffered ceiling supporting the floor of the gym above" (*SPL* 17). The setting of those places serves for gay people: in order to conduct their activities more discreetly, they have to stay in such places. However, the way the writer has described those settings is related to the construction of the identity of queer group. Gradually, the impression that homosexuality is related to the darkness and even illegality, and therefore needs to be hidden and such an image is being plugged into the head of all gay people. In this sense, during the process of the construction of their identities, they will take it for granted that they are inferior to heterosexual people.

On the other hand, more and more gay people gather in the Corry club in order to satisfy themselves in such a beautiful view and to meet other gays. In this way, the changing room has become an "intended object" which directs different kinds of relations to different groups of people. In other words, distinct groups of people socialize with each other and build various relations in the changing room. As for Will, he has been developing a certain relation with the club without noticing. The club has



also become a place where he keeps coming in order to meet and socialize with different kinds of gays. Somehow, his intention of sleeping with others is to make himself feel alive. In this way, he can feel his vigor, his youth and his dominance.

In consideration of Will's personal experiences, he cannot stop feeling void inside. Having inherited money from his grandfather, he lives without any economic troubles. At first, he thinks that all he needs is a stable relationship with someone. Then when Arthur appears, he falls in love with him quickly. After staying with him for several months, he gets tired of him, because he starts to realize that Arthur has become tame and submissive to him. His desire of dominating others leaves him no choice but to keep finding the next object. No matter Arthur or Phil, they are two boys who Will intends to dominate in order to obtain a sense of accomplishment. However, when Will is forced by Charles's servant to have sex with him, Will starts to realize his aging. There is no vigor and youth in him while he becomes the one to be dominated. Therefore, the Corry club is a place where Will can not only establish various relations with others, but also can show off his masculine dominance through those relations.

The practical function of the changing room has been changed to some extent. Gay people utilize that place to socialize and to explore the nature of homosexuality. No matter the changing room or the cottages, they are called lavatories in the novel. For the narrator Will, to become a gay seems to be a chemical process. Homosexuality needs to be explored so many times in order to obtain a result. In the binary relation between heterosexuality and homosexuality, it is unfair that one is born to believe that he is heterosexual. If he realizes that he does not fit in the social norms, he has to deviate into another path of being homosexual. During the process of defining himself as a homosexual person, he must experiment and explore the nature of homosexuality. In fact, no one is born to believe that he needs to explore in order to find out his heterosexuality. Homosexuality seems to be a shabby option in such an unfair relation.

Compared to Pai's *Crystal Boys*, the construction of the connection between gay people and the landscape is less related to the political discourses in *The Swimming-Pool Library*. In New Park, the sense of place is fostered by the repression of heterosexuality. Owing to its dominance, the bond between gay people has become more unbreakable. In addition, the development of the homosexual phenomenon in New park is always associated with politics. In other words, the existence of that phenomenon, to some extent, serves as a protest against the dominant supervision of the outside world. On the other hand, the Corry club is merely considered as a place where gay people can conduct their unacceptable activities. The existence of the club has offered them a chance to explore homosexuality. To some extent, in *The Swimming-Pool Library* the connection between the landscape and people is down to an individual level. The experiences in the Corry club can be perceived as a process of exploring the nature of homosexuality. Hollinghurst also intends to deal with the homosexuality in the political discourses, but he does it through revealing Charles's diaries and James's arrest. Therefore, the invention of the Corry club is more relevant to the exploration of sexuality.

## 4. The Emotional Space

### 4.1 The Emotional Regime of Filial Piety in *Crystal Boys*

Pai has set his story in the New Park, a public place where gay people gather and survive. Gradually, gay people develop a certain connection with that place. Owing to different kinds of relations, the connection is constructed by those people. The connection can be interpreted as a sense of place, which unites all gay people together. In this way, they feel themselves belonging to that place, in consideration of the situation of homosexuality at that time. The society imposes repression on homosexuality and being a homosexual means being marginalized. The intense relation between heterosexuality and homosexuality can be revealed by the activities of gay people living in the New Park. Apart from their relation with the place, they also maintain a certain invisible relation with society. When it comes to society and homosexuality, the emotional space is a crucial element in the process of the construction of the identities of queer people.

In his book *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (2001), an American historian William Reddy constructs an innovative framework about emotions. He has put forward a concept of the “emotional regime” in order to explicate that framework. In the book, he considers an emotional regime as “the set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcated them” (129). The emotional regime is mostly determined by the society or the dominant norms. The construction of the emotional regime facilitates people to self-discipline. Such a concept of the emotional regime makes me associate it with the panopticon theory of Foucault, in which self-discipline is added as a patriarchal tool to shape people’s ideology. In her article “Worrying about Emotions in History”, Barbara Rosenwein has come up with another interpretation of the emotives, which indicate the possibility of expressing “the inexpressible” by individuals (2002, 837).

Sometimes, the change of emotive can trigger a change of emotional regime. The process of changing emotives can motivate self-exploration in the emotional regime, which will be illustrated in the examples of *Crystal Boys*. When it comes to the emotional regime, emotives are expressed through “emotional effort,” “emotional suffering” and “emotional liberty” (Reddy, 2001, 129). Emotional effort is focused on the process of realizing a goal in the emotional regime. At the same time, emotional suffering occurs when there is a conflict about fulfilling that goal. Emotional liberty is referred to the possibility of realizing the goal while the accomplishment of the goal may trigger certain change of emotions of a member in the emotional regime. In fact, when emotional suffering is too much to make more emotional efforts and obtain emotional liberty, “an emotional refuge” will appear in the emotional regime for that member to escape and hide. In the following part, I will take a closer look at the development of emotional regime in *Crystal Boys*.

#### ***4.1.1 The Disruption of the Emotional Regime***

In the emotional regime of *Crystal Boys*, the most significant norm is the concept of the filial piety or the filiality (it is called Xiao in Chinese). At first, the idea of the filial piety is that the children should support their parents physically. The filial piety is always playing a crucial role in construction of the relationship between families, especially between children and parents. In fact, that kind of idea has been changed gradually into a new mode of obeying parents and sustaining the family’s glory. In his article “The Ru Reinterpretation of Xiao” (1995), Keith Knapp argues that the idea of the filial piety in Chinese families also includes “selfless devotion to one’s elders” (195). In Chinese history, filial piety facilitates the development of family harmony, while the loss of it refers to a broken relationship between children and parents. For instance, the Chinese title “Nie Zi” of *Crystal Boys* reveals explicitly the importance of the filial piety. This title refers to a sinful or evil son who has disobeyed the filial piety. The protagonist Qing destructs the filial piety because he is expelled from

school for having a sexual relation with a man. Such an event is utterly a shame to the whole family and discredits the family honor. In this way, Qing has been renamed as a “Nie Zi”, and that kind of sin keeps haunting Qing throughout the whole novel.

In another article “The Confucian Tradition in China” (2012), Knapp has discussed that the idea of filial piety is being extended to a national level. The harmonious relations that children should keep and seek for are not only limited to families. They should intend to serve the country, because that would bring glory to the family. In this sense, filial piety is not only a family issue, but also a national one. In the novel, the idea is well explicated with the examples of characters. For instance, the protagonist Qing has been an outstanding student in military courses. Such achievements make his father proud of him. At the same time, his father is a retired soldier from the war and thereby the father always hopes that his son could follow his steps and go to the military school.

Qing’s experiences are similar to Wei’s. Wei’s father (Grandpa Fu) serves in the Nationalist army. As his father’s expectation, Wei has never failed his father in both of the academic and military areas. Even when he was very young, he revealed his military talent for dominating a horse by himself. Since then, his father believes that his son is capable of obtaining military success as he does.

As we can see, sons have to meet the demand of the parents. The role of the filial piety is obliging sons to fulfill the responsibilities imposed by parents. In parent’s view, serving the country is a way to gain a huge honor for the family. On the other hand, under the influence of the filial piety, parents take it for granted that their sons should obey them out of their respect in all aspects, even if such a relationship is unhealthy for them. However, in *Crystal Boys*, the failure of fulfilling the filial piety is the direct reason for the emotional suffering of all characters. Furthermore, intolerant emotional suffering sometimes triggers the change of the emotional regime of characters. Since *Crystal Boys* mainly describes various relations based on the filial piety, which later is interrupted by the homosexuality, it is quite essential to explore

the emotional regime based on the filial piety by means of discussing the experiences of Qing and Wei.

In the novel, Qing intends to be excellent in military academy in order to satisfy his father. To realize that goal, he has to oppress his homosexual love, because the homosexuality is prohibited at that time and even being a homosexual is a huge shame to his family. Such behaviors for Qing are his emotional efforts. However, the secret cannot be hidden forever. Qing is expelled from school. His behaviors are discrediting his father's honor and also being expelled means that he has no chance at the military school. In the emotional regime, Qing's behaviors are prohibited in threefold layers: first, the sex in public is not allowed; second, he cannot be allowed to have sex with a teacher; third, homosexuality is not allowed. In this sense, Qing is breaking the conventions of the filial piety. As for his father, he initiates a disruption of the relation with his son by expelling him from home as well. At that moment, he is all in rage, shouting "Chu Sheng" (meaning bastard). The conflicts between Qing's behaviors and the emotional regime bring the father certain emotives: fury, shame and disappointment. His emotives are revealed by facial expressions, such as "white hair" and "blood-shot eyes", and emotional gestures, such as "standing straight up" and "screaming in a trembling, hoarse voice" (CB 13). To a great degree, those emotives are evidently showing the father's emotional suffering. In order to deal with his emotional suffering, he chooses to avoid it, which means expelling his son from home.

However, compared to the emotional regime of Qing's father, having the similar background and experiences, Wei's father (Grandpa Fu) has changed his emotional regime and initiate self-exploration after Wei's death. Wei has been expelled and accused of having sex with male soldier. After that, grandpa Fu is experiencing the same as Qing's father. The shame and the fury occupy his head deeply. He never thinks of accepting those behaviors of Wei. Even if Wei intends to explicate, he shuts his ears to nothing. The emotional suffering of grandpa Fu leads him to avoid the fact

as well. Consequently, Wei commits suicide. Suddenly, the emotives of the fury and the disappointment have been changed into the intolerant emotive of despair. Then, that emotive incites grandpa Fu to self-exploration. For instance, after Wei's death, he always dreams about his actions of killing his soldiers in the war for homosexuality: "One night when I woke up in a cold sweat, I saw that face again in my sleep. [...] A small soldier shot in front of the battle. [...] One night I went to the front line to patrol, and my subordinates captured two soldiers who had escaped from the trenches, and they had sex in the field." (CB 263) Too much emotional suffering eventually changes his emotional regime and thereby he begins to help homosexual people in New Park.

It seems that the disruption of the conventions of the filial piety occurs because of homosexuality. The parents prefer to cutting down their relations with children rather than disobeying the social conventions. In this sense, no matter Qing and Wei are expelled passively from home and also from the society. In consideration of the filial piety, children have no choice but to accept every decision made by the parents, including the disruption of the relations. And the oppressed homosexual love does not make them a better situation. Fu Wei's disruption of the emotional regime ends with his death, because of his father's rejection. All the time, Wei is receiving passively a plenty of responsibilities and expectations from his father. In order to realize that goal, the intention of the emotional efforts is to oppress his homosexual love and to listen to his father. In the conventions of the filial piety, the role of children is so passive and submissive that they are always waiting to be chosen or accepted. Consequently, Wei's emotional liberty is death.

However, the disruption of the emotional regime of the protagonist Qing has been fostered in twofold layers: first, he is expelled by his father to the New Park; second, it is him who chooses to leave home and his family. At first, his deconstruction of the emotional regime results from his father's rejection. In such a situation, he has to seek for another place to reconstruct his new emotional regime. Homosexuality has become the main reason for that disruption. Controlled sublimely by the conventions

of the filial piety, he is suffering emotionally from being a homosexual, and his emotional suffering results from the conflicts between heterosexuality and homosexuality. The figure of the father in family symbolizes the dominant power in the patriarchal society. In the family level, for being a homosexual Qing is being marginalized and expelled. He never has a second choice because the conventions of the filial piety teach him to obey his parents, and thereby all the time, he is constructing his emotional regime submissively. Even the day when he is expelled from home, he can utter nothing to justify himself. In this sense, his exile and the disruption are results from his father's dominant power. When we amplify the idea of the filial piety into a national level, the disruption of Qing's emotional regime is a consequence of the heterosexual society's selection. Therefore, the first time when he leaves home, he barely feels any emotional suffering. The only thing that preoccupies him is his younger brother. Before he comes home again, the homesickness remains in his emotives.

Then, when he comes home for the second time trying to convey a message of his mother's death to the father, he feels that nothing in the house has changed but also everything has changed. This time when he leaves, he feels so depressed and sad that he runs away crying all along the road. During his stay in New Park, the emotional regime that he has reconstructed is quite distinct to the old one. In New Park, without the conventions of the filial piety, he can start to know himself and even homosexuality. He builds a sense of place there and a certain connection with people like him and who accept him unconditionally. Under a new phenomenon, he constructs a new emotional regime of homosexuality, which is utterly opposite to the dominant regime. Therefore, for the second time, he makes the disruption of the filial piety. He chooses to leave rather than to be exiled. The second disruption is more complete and active. Consequently, his emotives have been changed into sadness, the joy and a little bit of anger. All emotives he has are expressed by his tears. On the other hand, the emotional efforts of realizing his father's dream have converted into



different kinds of efforts of finding his existential meaning as a homosexual, even if it is detested by society. Eventually, the emotional liberty which Qing tries to gain is living accepted as a homosexual, even if it is barely realized in a heterosexual society.

Throughout the novel, we can perceive that the emotional regime is based on the conventions of the filial piety. It does maintain the harmony in families, while it imposes too much pressure on children by obliging them to obey parents selflessly. At that time, homosexuality is not allowed and thereby their emotional efforts are to oppress a homosexual desire and obey parents to follow their steps. At the same time, the characters have chosen to deconstruct their emotional regime also because of homosexuality, even if it is not an easy task in a patriarchal society. The appearance of emotional suffering results from the conflicts with the old emotional regime which characters will encounter when they are about to build a new one. As for the emotional liberty of being accepted as a homosexual, it can be barely gained due to the dominant autocracy of heterosexuality. In the following part, I will exemplify the reconstruction of a new emotional regime of the characters in the novel.

#### ***4.1.2 The Reconstruction of the New Emotional Regime***

The disruption of the emotional regime leads both parents and children to suffering, because it symbolizes the deconstruction of the family harmony. Through the family harmony maintained by the filial piety, we can perceive that the relation between the country and the civilians is also based on the conventions of the filial piety. Therefore, when characters in the novel are not able to realize their emotional liberty in the emotional regime, they would experience a series of emotional suffering, which comes from a collision between the prevailing norms and homosexuality. In fact, too much emotional suffering will impose unbearable burdens on the characters. In order to relieve themselves from that, they will seek for an emotional refuge. In this sense, emotional refuge serves as “a safe release from the prevailing norms” and “a

relaxation of emotional effort”, while the construction of the emotional refuge may “threaten the existing emotional refuge” (Reddy, 2001, 129). Since the failure of the one to realize the emotional liberty through his emotional effort within the emotional regime, the construction of the emotional refuge is a necessary process of the transmission of the emotional regime. In the novel, the emotional refuge is associated with the homosexuality. As a controversial sexuality detested by the prevailing norms, the intention of homosexual people is to seek for an emotional refuge where they can find certain acceptance of themselves. In the novel, the characters accomplish the transmission from an existing emotional regime to another one within the emotional refuge.

In fact, the construction of emotional refuge is a complicated process sometimes. The emotional liberty there is a certain acceptance, while to be accepted is a mutual process all the time. In the novel, when the character Wei is found out as a homosexual person, he fails to build his emotional refuge after Grandpa Fu’s refusal to listen to him. Consequently, without an emotional refuge as a relaxation, too much emotional suffering overwhelmed him and led him to commit suicide. The transmission of Wei’s emotional regime is left unsolved.

When the family harmony based on the filial piety is destroyed, the emotional suffering not only strikes the children, but also the parents. Similarly, parents need to build a certain emotional refuge as an emotional release. In the novel, the construction of emotional refuge of Qing’s father and Prince Dragon’s father is absent. Conversely, Grandpa Fu completed his construction of emotional refuge, especially after the unbearable strike of his son’s death. Within the emotional regime, he realizes his own emotional liberty via a series of emotional efforts of helping other young boys who are struggling in a similar situation as Wei. In his emotional refuge homosexuality is not an element which threatens the existing emotional regime, but a special bond which connects him with his son.

"This was originally my son Fu Wei's bedroom. His things were all left behind." Grandpa Fu paused. His back arched and kept facing me. The head covered with gray hair, lies on the tabletop, "You can use it if you want."

"Your figure is similar to Fu Wei. You can wear these clothes" (CB 231).

We can perceive that Qing reminds Grandpa Fu of Wei. Through helping boys like Wei, he may obtain an emotional release. In this way, the existence of his emotional refuge plays a quite significant role in dealing with the emotional suffering. At the same time, the appearance of Qing seems to be a comfort for him.

Since Qing is expelled from home, he exiles to the New Park, just like another character, Prince Dragon who escapes to New York. Qing and Prince Dragon keep seeking for an emotional refuge in order to alleviate their emotional suffering. In the case of Prince Dragon, he was meant to be a diplomat. However, he falls in love with another guy in New Park. Unfortunately, their romantic relation ends with Prince Dragon's killing his lover. For his father, it is counted as a huge blow. The actions of Prince Dragon are not allowed in twofold layers: first, he has murdered a person; second, homosexuality is prohibited. In this way, such a scandal has discredited his father's honor as a prestigious chef in local government. In that situation, Prince Dragon is sent abroad in order not to be arrested. From New York to Taipei, two of them are looking for an emotional refuge. Having lost his lover, Prince Dragon commences to help homeless people because they remind him of his own situation. In New York, he discovers an advanced gay culture which is the main motivation of the reconstruction of his emotional regime.

The emotional refuge built by Qing is revealed by various relations with his place and his companions. Staying with his companions, he feels more comfortable and accepted. He even takes an abandoned child (named Gold Treasure) home and takes care of him. The new relation sometimes reminds him of his dead brother and of the

brotherhood they had. Therefore, when Gold Treasure is taken to the orphanage, he dashes into the rainstorm trying to find him back. To some extent, losing that child means losing his emotional refuge.

In addition, the home of Grandpa Fu is a central part for Qing's transmission of the emotional regime. For Qing, Grandpa Fu can be considered as an emotional refuge. In that place, they have developed a new mode of living. To some extent, Grandpa Fu takes care of Qing as his son, while he also is becoming a father figure for Qing. Within a new emotional regime, the harmony is not based on the filial piety, but on a mutual understanding, so that Qing never wants to escape from that place, in consideration of his anterior experiences of keeping escaping from the families which Master Yang appoints. Such a harmonious relation between Grandpa Fu and Qing is the main impetus of the reconstruction of a new emotional regime. That kind of family relation is exactly the one which Qing is seeking for and hopes to build with his real father. On the other hand, Qing's participation in Grandpa Fu's funeral is quite crucial to fulfill the responsibility of the filial piety (Xiao). From the beginning to the end, the emotional effort which he intends to realize is to mend the broken relationship with his father. Even before completing the transmission from the prevailing emotional regime to another one, Qing tries to go back to the emotional regime of filial piety.

“A-qing, tell me,” Little Jade cocked his head with a mischievous grin, “do you have a father?”

“What kind of dumb question is that?”

“What's his name?”

“Li! What do you think!” I resented his question, but covered up my anger by taking a big drink of lemonade.

“Is that really his name? Do you really know who your father is? Hm?” The grin turned malicious.

“Fuck you!” I threw a punch his way.

“Heh, heh.” He was extremely pleased with himself. “How can you get so mad over an innocent question like that?” (CB 86-87)

The recognition of his father is still possessing him. In the conventions of the filial piety, it is taken for granted that children will take the father’s surname. To some extent, the question there is doubting the existing emotional regime which Qing still insists on. In fact, Qing cannot gain a recognition of his sexuality from his biological father.

What is more, the emotional refuge is quite temporal and fragile. Grandpa’s death symbolizes the end of the existing emotional refuge. To some extent, the participation of Qing and Prince Dragon in Grandpa Fu’s funeral can be viewed as a reconciliation between heterosexual father and homosexual son. The proper care of his body can be vitally considered as a fulfillment of the filial piety.

Within a new emotional regime, Qing does not gain the emotional liberty via his emotional effort due to the oppressive situation of homosexuality. The novel ends with Qing’s meeting Luo Ping. In a freezing winter, Qing has given him Wei’s scarf. To some extent, it is an action of inheriting “the spirit of New Park” to the younger generation. The emotional liberty of the homosexual group is still left unsolved. In consideration of the social situation of LGBT in Taiwan at that time, Pai, as an activist of the rights of the queer group, intends to convey a message of that the real freedom is a result of everyone. The social recognition of homosexuality is the emotional liberty which he keeps seeking for. Therefore, from the existing emotional regime to another one, it is a process which takes a lot of time to succeed.

## 4.2 The Emotional Regime of the Heterosexual Dominance in *The Swimming-Pool Library*

Within the emotional regime, people are always connected by various relations. Those relations have rendered the meaning of life. In *The Swimming-Pool Library*, Hollinghurst intends to depict of the indulging life of gay people in order to reflect the real situation of that group of people. It seems that gay people are always conducting sexual activities because of the explicit descriptions. However, their behavior is all the time supervised by society, and thereby the relation between gay people and society is quite complicated and intense. Taking the concept of the emotional regime, a set of emotional norms is limiting the activities of gay people, including hindering their lives. In order to avoid such a permeating supervision from the heterosexual society, gay people have to find a safe place to hide themselves. Consequently, they have developed a homosexual phenomenon only belonging to gay people. A mode of building and maintaining relations is also constructed in homosexual culture.

In various relations between characters, the development of relations of Greek Pederasty is prominent in the novel. In his article “Pederasty, Heroism and the Family in Classical Greece”, John Ungaretti has explicated the origin of the relation of pederasty as a function of “supporting the family and the continued primacy of masculine values and ethics” (2010, 291). The relation of pederasty is perceived as “a social endorsed hierarchical relationship between the older lover (the *erastes*) and the younger beloved (the *eromenos*)” (Ungaretti, 2010, 291). Within such a brotherhood, the lover will educate the younger beloved with the concept of the heroism and of the ideal warrior. In other words, the relation of pederasty functions to train more soldiers and to develop a prevailing phenomenon of the heroism. However, the introduction of various religions forces pederasty to cede its dominant place, in consideration of the ascetic norms and the prohibition of homosexuality. The decline of pederasty makes homosexuality marginalized. However, because of the inerasable importance of pederasty, that mode of relationship keeps being revealed in the novel. In order to

explicate further the development of that relationship between characters, I will take Will, Phil and Charles as examples.

#### ***4.2.1 The Greek Pederasty***

The relationship of Greek Pederasty between the older lover and the younger beloved plays an essential role in shaping the mode of various relations of homosexuality. Since the Greek Pederasty is the only and classic source of the origin of homosexuality in history, Hollinghurst has plugged that relationship into his novel, such as the relationship between 25-year-old Will and 18-year-old Phil. In an interview of *The Guardian*, Hollinghurst has talked about his obsession with the idea of an older man acting like “a guardian and guiding a younger one to the rituals and mysteries of the gay scene” (2017). In ancient Greece, the pederastic relationship between the older lover and the younger beloved functioned to support the development of the heroism in order to train more warriors. In this way, the older lover as a guardian maintains a homosexual relationship with the younger beloved so as to educate them with masculine values at that time, while the older lover guides them into the battlefield. The relationship of pederasty is not erotic at all, but a proper method of running the country in a war situation. Nevertheless, more religions are imported into the Europe. The religious phenomenon of being ascetic has become prevailing. In the Old Testament, the prohibition of the same-sex relationships has directed the construction of a series of anti-homosexual norms. Gradually, the decline of pederasty is excluded from the society, and thereby the existing pederastic relationship was transformed into another one, which is mainly focused on the function of the older lover as a guide of leading the younger beloved to building an emotional regime.

In the novel, the existing emotional regime is mainly based on Christianity in which homosexuality is not allowed. Since the homosexuality threatens the prevailing

emotional regime, the norms will exert oppression on homosexuality. Compared to the emotional regime of *Crystal Boys*, the novel no more focuses on the transmission of the emotional regime of gay people, but on the exploration of the history and of the future. In this way, a different kind of emotional regime for Will and Charles is completed in the novel. On the other hand, the relationship of pederasty can be considered a notable way to guide the younger generation to accomplish the transmission of the emotional regime.

The relationship of pederasty between Will and Phil is quite interesting to analyze. At first, they barely know each other. Without any conversations, they seem to be strangers. However, Will commences to notice Phil because of a certain competitiveness with Bill. In consideration of Will's personality as a competitive person, he wants to win an absurd imaginary competition: "I realized that Bill's taste for him had made me want the boy too, and I looked at him lustfully and competitively" (*SPL* 31). Related to the concept of the original motive of the pederastic relationship, Will has demonstrated a certain heroism in him. He compared himself sublimely to a warrior who is thirsty for a victory. In this way, for their relationship, Will's intention is to dominate Phil, but gradually, he becomes a mental guide for him. As for the figure of Phil as the younger beloved, Hollinghurst seems to highlight his heroism of him with a description of his body: "He was the sort of boy who might be in the army, except that his weight-training suggested a labor towards some private image of himself, a solitary perfection" (*SPL* 31). Phil is depicted as a robust boy like a young soldier. His curved body seduces people all the time. However, Hollinghurst has made a change of the goal of the pederastic relationship. In ancient Greece, the relationship of pederasty is a way to foster heroism and the dominance of masculine values, thereby in order to form more army force, while in the novel the guide of Will leads Phil to construct his emotional regime by reading. Under the influence of Will, Phil starts work as an attendant in a hotel, and employs his free time in doing a lot of reading. The mental enrichment urges him to a process



of knowing sexuality. From the very beginning, he is a very discreet boy and easily gets in panic when in contact with other gay people. About his sexuality, he barely knows nothing. The first time that he sneaks into a cinema trying to conduct some sexual activities, he gets frightened and runs away. Then, with Will's guide, he eventually builds his emotional regime. In this sense, the application of the relationship of pederasty between Will and Phil functions to foster the development of his emotional regime. On the other hand, the emotional regime is of importance because to some extent it plays a great role in forming Phil's identity as a homosexual person.

Within the relationship of pederasty, since Phil has fulfilled his goal, Will will lose his values. Then he will emotionally suffer from his uselessness. Especially after he is raped by Charles's servant, his masculine heroism declines. In such a situation, his emotives are represented as anger, aggressiveness and depression. For instance, facing a gang, instead of running away, he chooses to make fun of them. It seems that he intends to demonstrate his masculinity via those behaviors. Unfortunately, he is beaten and almost dies at the hospital. Knowing the gradual loss of his values as a guide, he intends to regain the original relationship with Arthur, but finally it does not work. Too much emotional suffering makes Will seek for an emotional refuge. In the novel, the emotional refuge for Will is double: the Corry and Charles. The importance of the Corry has already been in the session on the construction of the sense of place. Here, I will mainly focus on Will's relation with Charles.

Since Will saves Charles from the threshold of death, they develop some intimate relationship. Associated with the concept of pederasty, Charles can be perceived as a mental guide for Will, and he intends to lead Will to explore the history of the homosexuality with a favor of rewriting his diary into a biography. On the contrary, Will refuses it at first, but he starts to read the diary after his best friend James persuades him. However, the rewriting is not constant. Every time Will resumes reading it, he has experienced something which inhibits his masculine heroism.

Therefore, the action of reading the diary symbolizes the action of entering the emotional refuge. Within the emotional refuge, he replaces himself in a third place so as to exclude himself from his negative emotives.

Hollinghurst emphasizes the exploration of history, even if the history of the homosexuality is not clear and quite limited. The Greek pederasty, as the only acknowledged written source of homosexuality, plays an essential role in the exploration of history. In this way, the writer is willing to introduce that relationship into his novel. However, apart from the history of Greek pederasty, the homosexual history is majorly absent. In her paper “Wolfskins and Togas: Lesbian and Gay Historical Fictions, 1870 to the Present”, Sarah Waters has put forward a concept of “lost diary” when she discusses the unconformable history of homosexuality (1995, 246). Due to the limits of specific homosexual discourses, its history is mainly revealed by novels in a form of diaries. Back to the novel, the homosexual history is also revealed by Charles’s diaries. The novel keeps narrating Charles’s personal experiences from Will’s perspective in order to show the situation of homosexuality and its development to the present. To some extent, the revelation of the diary is making Will start to reflect on the social supervision over homosexuality, and thereby he commences to realize that the actual situation is not good as he imagines.

#### ***4.2.2 The Dominance of Colonialism***

Among various relations, the novel develops the relations between Will Beckwith and Charles Nantwich, who belongs to the generation of Will’s grandfather. At first, Will meets Charles in a public lavatory in Kensington Gardens, a place where old gay people conduct a series of homosexual activities of peering and gazing. It is Will who rescues Charles from the threshold of death. From then on, he invites Will to his club and his house and thereby they become more familiar. Like Will, Charles is an ex-Winchester boy and an Oxford graduate. Those similarities foster a certain bond

between the two. Eventually, Charles hands over his journals and diaries to Will and asks him to write the story of his life. His diaries reveal Charles's experiences in Africa as a former colonial officer and his sexual appetite which he developed in the continent which is full of young black boys. Along the history of Charles in Africa, the novel contextualizes Will's sexual attraction to black men.

Within the context of the aftermath of the British Empire, the dominance of the colonialism is invisibly affecting the relations which Will has developed. The most notable point is revealed in the relation between Will and Arthur, a black young boy from Stratford East. The description of Arthur, from Will's perspective, always has a sexual connotation, such as "his sexily weak chin" and his "beautiful, cocky, sluttish Arthur" (*SPL* 8). Will encounters him in a bar. Narcissistically with his own youth and beauty, Will considers Arthur as an object which he needs to conquer. Through Arthur's young black body, Will releases all his sexual desire. Apparently, Arthur has become an imaginary fantasy for Will to accomplish his sense of dominance: "I took a slightly creepy pleasure in imagining Arthur in the flat alone, absorbing its alien richness, looking at the pictures, concentrating of course on Whitehaven's photograph of me in my little swimming-trunks, the shadow across my eyes..." (*SPL* 8). From the description of Will's imagination, the colonial fantasy is revealed evidently. Will has located his Arthur in alien richness belonging to the white. The stereotype of the black people is fostering the sense of priority of the whiteness. Even in homosexual discourses, the black has become a sexual fantasy for the white people. The relationship between Arthur and Will has never been fair, because Arthur as a black boy is being objectified. When Arthur has to hide in Will's house owing to a murder, at first Will feels that Arthur is burdened by his need. Gradually, he begins to feel tired of "his little toy" but at the same time he enjoys enslaving his toy: "I saw him becoming more and more my slave and my toy, in a barely conscious abasement which excited me even as it pulled me down" (*SPL* 38-39). The colonial action of objectifying Arthur excites Will. The undetectable dominance of the colonialism in

the whiteness makes Will a male explorer. Conversely, Arthur, as a black boy, is willing to be enslaved: “Now it became a murky business, a coupling in which we both exploited each other, my role as protector mined by the morbid emotion of protectiveness” (*SPL* 38). In the novel, the colonial behaviors of white people of exploiting the black have been justified, and the superiority of the whiteness is taken for granted. The imaginary fantasy is prevailing in the context of the aftermath of the British Empire.

The fetishism of the blackness is another trait in the relationships. In the novel, black boys are objectified as imaginary fantasies of white men. The action of objectifying tends to reflect the fetishism in the context of post-colonialism. About the concept of the fetish, Anne McClintock has described it in her book *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*:

The displacement onto an object (or person) of contradictions that the individual cannot resolve at a personal level. These contradictions may originate as social contradictions but are lived with profound intensity in the imagination and the flesh. The fetish thus stands at the cross-roads of psychoanalysis and social history, inhabiting the threshold of both personal and historical memory. The fetish marks a crisis in social meaning as the embodiment of an impossible irresolution. The contradiction is displaced onto and embodied in the fetish object.... By displacing power onto the fetish, then manipulating the fetish, the individual gains symbolic control over what might otherwise be terrifying ambiguities (1995,184).

In the social history, colonialism originates the fetish of white men among black people. The sense of dominance on them has been developed invisibly in the context of the aftermath of the British Empire. By manipulating the objects, the individual

will gain a sense of accomplishment and he enjoys the power of controlling.

In the history of Charles, he works as a colonial officer in Africa. In order to fulfill his fantasy for black boys, he exerts his power. In the colonial continent, he is a male explorer with homosexual desires. He possesses power and title, while he is also a prisoner for indecent behaviors. The fetish is considered by Charles as a perfect way to resolve his contradictions. He continues as a master and a slave-owner, but he is also criticized for being a homosexual. On the other hand, his friend Ronald Staines is another character in the novel who is obsessed with the fetish. Staines commences his pornographic exhibition in a name of art photography. The boys who are hired in that show are manipulated as dolls. Submissive, they obey every instruction from Staines, while Charles and Will are enjoying that show and contemplating their young bodies.

I spotted young Aldo at once, in his role of the Baptist, his naked torso broadening into brightness, his stiff little pennant at an angle over his head, an expression of faint surprise about his sleepy dark eyes and stubble-roughened jaw. [...] Sebastian was a boy of tedious, waxen beauty, with a little loincloth about to tumble down. They had been cleverly posed against a projected backdrop taken from some Tuscan master, but for all the quattrocento piquancy of their gestures they reminded me of nothing so much as those queenly fashion spreads in *Tatler* and *Uomo Vogue*.... I finished my glass of wine and downed most of another while I looked at the handsome bearded St Laurence with his dinky little gridiron, and the St Stephen who crouched appealingly in a shaft of light while above him the shadowy form of an immense black whom I would have liked to meet held a stone aloft (*SPL* 268-9).

Young black boys become the object of fetish of white gay men. In the show, the toys are renamed and given identities. In the relationship, the photographer and the

audience are playing a role of colonizers and explorers with homosexual desires. They are up to manipulating these gay models in order to satisfy their sensual needs. Without caring about these model's feeling, white people in the room consider these young boys as fetish objects. And Will, as a naive blond young boy taking part in that show, is unconsciously committing a series of colonial activities under the influence of Charles and Staines. On the other hand, these gay models seem to be willing to be submissive to the action of white people objectifying them. In exchange of some economic rewards, they are up to selling their bodies. Facing all the cameras, they never show up a sign of awkwardness. They seem to be natural with those greedy machines. Under the structure of capitalism, they are reduced to the fantastic toys of white people. In this way, the dominance of colonialism is being reflected by them.

Hollinghurst seems to intend to distance himself from the fetishism within the whiteness and to offer the readers a chance to judge, when Will picks up a young Argentine boy named Gabriel. They encounter each other in a bar. Then attracted by his young beauty, Will follows him into his hotel room. The scene is quite funny and paradoxical. The sexy boy Gabriel is utterly being sucked into the global industry of pornography of the Empire, when he speaks the language of "crudely dubbed American porn films":

'Yeah,' he would croon, 'suck that dick. Yeah, take it all. Suck it, suck that big dick.'

I took a pause to say, 'Um—Gabriel. Do you think you could leave out the annunciations?' But it wasn't the same for him without them, and I felt unbelievably stupid appearing to respond to them (*SPL* 270).

The obsession with the porn industry leads Gabriel to being tramped in the web of the capitalism. Gradually, he has converted himself into a product of the global economy

of the Empire. Facing such a situation, Will's horror is depicted vividly: "Close to I could see only his large brown pupils and the whites of his eyes, blurred for a split second if he blinked, like the lens of a camera" (*SPL* 271). The relationship is being inverted utterly to another: Will becomes the object under the camera while Gabriel takes control of the power. When Will is relocated in the position of being the fetish object, he plays the role of being exploited. What is more, there is an ironic scene between the two when Gabriel says to him: "I could whip you, for what you did to my country in the war" (*SPL* 272). In such a situation, the superior whiteness is undergoing a kind of colonial violence.

In short, Hollinghurst intends to write about homosexual desires, which he intersects with different topics such as politics, culture and colonialism, because all these elements can be traced in history. In London, the black or the working-class have converted into the prey to the white old aristocrats. Hollinghurst's exposing the colonialism and the violence of the Empire provides the novel with more dynamic discussion. The dominance of colonialism is not only contaminating the heterosexual society, but also the homosexual communities. Beautiful black boys are reduced to a certain compromise fetish with a function of satisfying the sensual desires of white people. In this way, black bodies symbolize the white lust, fear and disappointment (when it comes to the contradictions of fetishism). Within the emotional regime, the colonial violence of the Empire has become a hardcore of character's relations. Therefore, compared to *Crystal Boys*, the emotional liberty in the novel is always inhibited by a set of social norms in a context of post-colonialism.

## 5. Conclusion

Pai's *Crystal Boys* and Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library* explore the existentialism of being a homosexual in 1980s. No matter in Taiwan or in London, the queer group never gives up seeking for a chance of constructing relations with places and people. Being marginalized in society becomes the major reason for the necessity of building these relations. Based on them, people discover their existential identities, which is associated with Martin Heidegger's idea of being in the world. The human being cannot exist as every independent individual, but exist among a plenty of relations built daily. In this way, the identity is granted by the group or society. However, in the heterosexual society, homosexuality is prohibited and thereby the queer group have to find themselves a specific place in order to construct their identities. These processes are quite different in two cultural phenomenons, but both of them are investigating the inner relation between gay people and the specific place and also the relation between gay people and the heterosexual society.

In *Crystal Boys*, the relation between the gay people and New Park plays an essential role of directing the construction of identities of characters. From the physical appearance, the park is a retransformed palace of Qing dynasty. After the colonial period, the government builds a Chinese-stylish pavilion in the center of the park which serves as a demonstration of the central power of the government. In this way, the park is located in a political situation. The gathering of gay people in the park can be considered as an evident protest against the government at that time. Within a political context, the park is imagined by gay people as their new country, a different unified territory where only gay men dwell. They set up their imaginary country where they are representatives of the civilization, compared to the outside primitive society. Such a self-comforting imagination makes gay people who live in New Park find a sense of security, even if we can find out that their country is so fragile that the outside world does not think them as a big deal. They cannot even resist the unexpected invasion of the police into such their "civilized country". Under



the dominant supervision of the heterosexual society, they are reduced to hiding them in their imaginary territory.

On the other hand, the construction of the imaginary country can be considered as an ironic imitation of the heterosexual society. The loss of homosexual discourses in the history leaves gay people an awkward position to fit in. They intend to build an ideal country where homosexuality is no longer prohibited while heterosexuality is located in an inferior place. However, the intention of realizing that dream is utterly in vain. They just imitate the system of heterosexuality. From another perspective, the action of imitating a heterosexual society can be reflecting a kind of extension of the dominant power of heterosexuality.

No matter how the imaginary country is built. The New Park is still an emotional shelter for all gay people who are coming. The sense of place is gradually constructed among them. Within the relation between people and the place, the park is transformed into an “intended object”, which offers an extra function for a specific group of people. The park not only serves as a public park for people, but also as a safe place where a series of homosexual activities are normalized and permitted. In such a place, a specific homosexual phenomenon is formed and at the same time, the phenomenon foments the construction of the sense of place. A kind of intimate connection between gay people and the place is being developed, especially being fostered under the oppression of the heterosexual society.

About the relation between the place and specific people, *The Swimming-Pool Library* has showed it differently. Hollinghurst employs a paradoxical comparison between an edifice and an architect. From the perspective of the narrator Will, he is not fond of that place, but he considers it as a masterpiece of the architect Orme, who belongs to his grandfather’s generation. It is a conflict between a young generation and an old generation, in whose ideology homosexuality is utterly not allowed and being a homosexual person needs to be punished severely. However, such as edifice of representative of traditional ideology, has become a favorite place for gay people.

The action of gathering more and more gay people is reflecting a protest against the traditional ideology. Compared to *Crystal Boys*, there is less political connotation in *The Swimming-Pool Library*.

The characters also feel connected with the place in the novel, especially with the swimming pool and the changing room. The changing room has been granted a function of being an “intended object”. For most people, it is a public site where they can take a shower and get dressed. However, its existence offers opportunities for gay people to satisfy their homosexual desires. The nature of homosexuality is being explored there and among all different kinds of people, being a homosexual person is normalized. Gay people can easily hide themselves in such a male phenomenon. On the other hand, various relations are being built in that place. The protagonist Will always feels a necessity of coming to the changing room, because it is an important scenario where he can narcissistically demonstrate his beauty and charm. The changing room becomes a battlefield for his aggressive heroism, and young boys are his preys.

In *The Swimming-Pool Library*, the sense of place is built on the basis of the need of releasing homosexual desires. There is no ideal country for homosexual people, but a place where they explore their needs and their sexuality. In such a place, the sexuality tends to be ambiguous. Apparently, the ambiguity of sexuality offers gay people the sense of security in the room. All characters are going between two worlds. When they are in the Corry club, they take off all the camouflage of being a so-considered normal person in the heterosexual society. In this way, the frontier of the sexuality is more vague in the Corry club. Conversely, in *Crystal Boys*, the sexuality is distinct. Being a homosexual person means to be exiled into another world.

The inner relation between specific people and places has offered a chance of seeking for the peace of mind and the sense of security, even if they are artificial and barely reliable. Owing to the dominance of heterosexuality, that relation keeps being

challenged for being a threat to society. Therefore, the intimate relation between the two is never independent from society. It has to be built as a rebellious enemy against the prevailing norms but at the same time, it is based on them.

On the other hand, the connection between the places and people serves as a reflection of the relationship between people and society. The oppression from society keeps being imposed on some specific groups of people. In both novels, the queer group is subject to the violence exerted by the dominant heterosexuality. Due to its challenging existence against heterosexuality, homosexuality has been suffering from a violent supervision. And such an oppression is reflected by the harsh life conditions of homosexual people in society. In order to analyze thoroughly the relationship between homosexual people and society, the introduction of the emotional regime plays an essential role.

In *Crystal Boys*, the emotional regime is formed on the basis of a series of conventions of filial piety, which is the hardcore of the values of Chinese people in history. In the conventions of filial piety, homosexuality is utterly prohibited. Consequently, the protagonist Qing, as a homosexual person, is expelled from the school and his family. Being a homosexual means a breakup of the conventions of filial piety in Chinese society. Therefore, Qing escapes to the New Park and keeps seeking for an emotional refuge. The Grandpa Fu becomes a substituted father figure for Qing. Since the death of his son Wei has triggered the transformation of Grandpa Fu's emotional regime, he is willing to accept Qing into his house. Within a new emotional regime, Qing has developed a mutual understanding with Grandpa Fu. Consequently, the transmission of Qing's emotional regime is taking place within the emotional refuge.

From the disruption of the emotional regime to the reconstruction of it, Qing is undergoing unbearable emotional suffering. The prohibition of homosexuality has cut down his relation with his father and leaves him no chance to realize the emotional liberty within the old emotional regime. In this way, he has no chance but to transmit

his emotional regime into another one. However, their emotional effort which he has assumed cannot lead him to gain the eventual emotional liberty of being accepted in consideration of the situation of homosexuality at that time. Therefore, Pai ends the novel with a lot of blank space, since he intends to convey the message that the problems of homosexuality need to be put on the table and there is still a long path to obtain the social acceptance.

In the case of *The Swimming-Pool Library*, Hollinghurst's intention of exploring the history of homosexuality offers his readers a different perspective from *Crystal Boys*. In European history, the prevailing relation of pederasty in ancient Greece is always considered as the original myth of homosexuality. Since more and more religions are introduced into the occidental continent, the influence of that dominant relation is decreasing. Due to the ideology of Christianity of crudely prohibiting homosexuality, the decline of that sexuality is having homosexual people trapped in an anguish situation in which they easily become subject to violent oppression. Within the emotional regime of Christianity, the development of the pederastic relation has to be discreet, and thereby it takes place in the changing room of the Corry club.

In spite of the decline of homosexuality, the pederastic relation plays a significant role in directing behaviors of characters, such as the attachment of Will to his young lover Phil and the unaccepted relation between Bill and his student. It seems that Hollinghurst has paid a tribute to the traditional phenomenon in ancient Greece. The heroism of Will is reflected in his protectiveness of a black boy, Arthur, and his desire of winning over Bill. Those traits of Will are revealing his role of being the older lover in the pederastic relation. On the other hand, within the relation between Will and Phil, Phil becomes the young beloved and keeps receiving the influence from Will. For instance, he has developed a habit of reading and he is more willing to explore his homosexual identity, compared to his previous discreet and serious figure. Through such a relation, Hollinghurst intends to depict vividly the indulging life of homosexual people and at the same time he tries to expose explicitly the serious

problems of homosexuals at that time, such as the unreasonable discrimination and the violence against them.

Apart from the pederastic relation between Will and Phill, Hollinghurst has intersected post-colonialism with the homosexuality by creating the relationship between Will and the black boy Arthur. The vivid contrast between the protectiveness of the master and the submission of the slaves are constantly revealed through white people. Charles and his friends, all of the old generation of Will's grandfather, are taking advantage of their position and economic power to manipulate black boys. In a photo exhibition whose real aim is to make pornography, Staines proceeds his pornographic career. Under the camera, those boys are being objectified. They are reduced to the fetish toys of white people, but it seems that they are happy to be tamed. That problem in British society is being exposed explicitly through a series of homosexual relations in the novel.

Compared to *Crystal Boys*, *The Swimming-Pool Library* is not only dealing with the problems of sexuality. Hollinghurst's intention of exposing them is mainly focused on the higher class. The corrupt ideology of colonialism is dominating society, especially in the context of the aftermath of the British Empire. The description of the indulging life of homosexual people can be seen as a mirror of the social situation at that time. It seems that Hollinghurst intends to convey a message of reviving society through the novel.

Two novels deal with the problems of homosexual group, but from different perspectives. *Crystal Boys* is mainly focused on various relations between characters. In the novel, the topic of the family harmony has become the hardcore of the construction of homosexual identities, and the novel is up to exposing the conditions of homosexual people from the lower class. It seems that Pai intends to demonstrate the humanity of homosexual people and thereby the revelation of the social situation of homosexual people is much related to the social oppression at that time. On the other hand, *The Swimming-Pool Library* intends to intersect with many topics and

thereby homosexuality seems to be a mirror to reflect social problems in London. The main characters are from higher class; consequently, behind the luxury life, the corruption is being revealed. Therefore, both novels are outstanding works related to homosexuality whose goal is to convey certain thorough messages to readers.

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