

Journal homepage: <https://jll.uoch.edu.pk/index.php/jll>**Analysing Homosexual Identity Development in E.M. Forster's *Maurice*: A Study from the Perspective of the Cass Identity Model**<sup>1</sup> Sadaf Ashraf Talpur, <sup>2</sup> Dr. Muhammad Tufail Chandio, <sup>3</sup> Sanaullah Rustamani<sup>1</sup> MPhil Scholar, the Department of English Language and Literature, University of Sindh Laar Campus Badin, Pakistan<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, the Department of English Language and Literature, University of Sindh Laar Campus Badin, Pakistan<sup>3</sup> PhD Scholar, the Institute of English Language and Literature, University of Sindh, Pakistan**Article Info**

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\*Corresponding author: (Chandio, M.T)

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**Abstract**

The undertaken research aims to analyse the homosexual identity development of an Edwardian gentleman named Maurice Hall depicted in E.M. Forster's novel 'Maurice'. The qualitative data has been reviewed from the text of the novel to analyse the homosexual identity development in the protagonist of the novel from the vantage point of the six-staged Cass identity model (1979) based on identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis. The model further elucidates identity foreclosure, which is failure to complete any of these stages and stagnate the process of identity development. It has been found that Maurice Hall deems himself undesirable until he makes peace with his sexual identity by passing through each step of the Cass Identity Model.

**Introduction**

Homosexuality refers to the sexual and romantic attraction between members of the same sex. A homosexual person opts to have a sexual orientation towards the same sex. According to the American Psychological Association (2015), "Sexual orientation refers to the sex of those to whom one is sexually and romantically attracted" (p. 6). Tamagne (1919) further adds, "Homosexuality can be defined simply as a form of sexuality in which sexual interest is directed towards the same sex" (p. 5)

Before 1973, homosexuality was considered a 'Sociopathic Personality Disorder' and was put into The American Psychological Association's 'Diagnostic Standards Manual' (Murphy, 1992). It was considered a stigma, and the word was used as a derogatory term. If someone was to be called 'homosexual', it meant they were being humiliated and subverted (Plummer, 1975). This practice became more frequent during the reigns of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) and King Edward VII (1901-1910). Hynes comments "It is a period in which the British class system was very rigid" (Hynes, 1968, p. 79.) The discourse on same-sex love or even sexuality, in general, was completely shunned until 1967. Foucault (1978) asserts:

On the list of irrepentable sins, and separated only by their comparative importance, there occurred ... rape, spiritual or carnal incest, but also sodomy, or the reciprocal "caress." As to the judiciaries, they could condemn homosexuality ... What was taken into account in the civil and spiritual jurisdictions alike was general unlawfulness. Doubtless acts "contrary to nature" were formulated as especially abominable, but they were anticipated solely as an ultimate form of acts "against the law". (p. 38)

Homosexuality or anything related to mutual adoring was forbidden by both law and religion. Despite rigorous laws flouting homosexuality, it still was in practice during the Victorian and Edwardian Era. While referring to masculinity and homosexuality in Britain, Brady (2005) states,

Homoeroticism was tacit in many male friendships during that period. Late Victorian and Edwardian society tacitly acknowledged situations that were full of potential for sex between men, as long as these were not attributed in public conversation. When disclosed to sexual scandal, institutions of authority and newspaper journalists presented the "unnatural crime" as outstanding. (p. 4.)

Hence literature also tacitly represented homosexuality and homoeroticism to avoid legal and social persecution. The writers stayed camouflaged in their mention of homosexuality; however, solid textual traces pervading the literary works asserted its prevalence. E.M. Forster's novel *Maurice* is no exception. The novel was written in 1913-14, but it was published in 1971 after the death of Forster due to the extensive homophobic sentiments of the age. A note was

found on the draft manuscript which read: “Publishable but worth it?” Inferring to Forster’s fear of the book being liable to persecution. Though the script was read by some of the close friends of Forster, who were aware of Forster’s homosexual disposition, like the homosexual identity of the author the book remained unpublic and private.

The novel, set in the Edwardian period, depicts young Maurice Hall struggling with his homosexual identity. The study endeavours to analyse homosexual identity development and subsequent reconciliation, if any, in the protagonist of the novel from the theoretical framework of the Cass Identity Model.

### **Synopsis of the Novel**

The story commences with fourteen-year-old Maurice Hall who is going to change the school. His teacher, Ben Ducie, takes him to fields to explain to him the common questions of sex, lest the boy should get confused in the future because his father is dead and there is no male member in the family to advise him on such personal affairs. The teacher informs him about the normal relationship between males and females and makes him aware of the possibility of being attracted to females.

As Maurice grows older, he notices the sexual change and urge, but instead of being attracted to women, he is rather attracted to the boys in his school. He suppresses those thoughts dubbing them ‘evil and sick’ until he gets enrolled in Cambridge University, where he meets Clive Durham and is instantly smitten by his beauty. Clive is very open about his philosophy of same-sex love, and he introduces Maurice to ancient Greek writings about homosexuality. Clive is the first one to confess that he has feelings for Maurice; however, Maurice despite having an overwhelming intensity of the same love, denies such attraction. Eventually, the two form a love relationship disregarding all the ‘sexual intimacy’ as Clive thinks it ‘brings them down’. This goes on until Clive falls ill and upon his recovery he ends his relationship with Maurice, claiming that he is a heterosexual man and that he will marry a woman. Maurice is overwhelmed and ravaged by this incident; he goes into a state of self-hatred and contemplates suicide. He feels no one will accept his homosexual disposition and he will be socially discarded and othered.

Afraid to take himself anymore, Maurice decides to cure himself as he thinks that his condition is a ‘disease’. In the meanwhile, he receives a letter from Clive informing him that he is getting married. He books an appointment with a hypnotist, Mr. Lasker Jones, who refers to his condition as ‘congenital homosexuality’ and claims that there is a fifty per cent chance of his recovery. However, at the very beginning, it becomes clear that Maurice cannot be treated. Due to his constant visits to Lasker, Maurice stays at Clive’s house, who is now married to Anne. Upon his stay, Maurice fails to notice the strange behaviour of Alec Scudder, Durham’s gamekeeper. Although seen with many women, Alec discards all his previous relationships with them. As Maurice continues to stay at Durham’s place, Alec becomes considerate towards him. In all reciprocity, Maurice too gets attracted towards him on knowing that the gamekeeper has fallen in love with him. One night, when Durham and his wife are away, Maurice traumatized by the damnation of his fate calls out to the window. He is waiting for Clive and shouts “Come!”, but he knows that Durham is too far away to be here. The cry, however, is heard by Alec who climbs through the window and enters his room. They spend the night together. Alec stands willing to give his everything to Maurice and Maurice not being in the condition to reject it, intimately consummates it.

As dusk arrives, Maurice is filled with feelings of guilt, shame, and fear. He regrets sleeping intimately with Alec and fears that Alec may extort him for disclosing the secret of his being homosexual. Maurice flees back to his town and refuses to answer several letters that Alec sends him. The letters only convey Alec’s concerns about Maurice’s health, but Maurice does not answer with anticipation lest Alec should use it as proof. After weeks of inconsequent persuasion, Alec reaches London to meet Maurice. One is driven by the fear of being exposed and the other is driven by the betrayal of his feelings. In frustration, Alec threatens to extort him, for he feels betrayed as Maurice thinks of him like a dog to scurry along. However, it becomes evident that neither can harm the other as they continue to look at each other with fondness. They spend a night together again. Alec tells Maurice that he is emigrating to Argentina, to which Maurice suggests that he should stay with him. He suggests that they should put aside all their social standings and jobs and live together away from the homophobic society. Alec comments to him ‘daft!’ and claims that he cannot miss his ship because he has his whole future standing in front of him. Maurice, being heartbroken, decides to meet Alec at the harbour where his ship is departing. To his shock and surprise, he does not find Alec boarding the ship. Maurice goes to the boathouse, the place Alec likes the most, and finds him there and he confesses his love for Maurice. They unanimously decide that they will abandon all their social, religious, and material belongings and will go to live in a land where homosexuality is not a crime.

### **Objective of the Study**

1. To analyse the homosexual identity of Maurice Hall from the vantage point of the Cass Identity Model

### **Research Question**

1. How does Maurice Hall negotiate his homosexual identity from the vantage point of the Cass Identity model?

### The Literature Review

#### Sexual Orientation

According to the American Psychological Association (2008), the sexual orientation of a person pertains to an enduring sequence of romantic, emotional, and sexual attractions towards the sexes (male or female). Furthermore, it also implies the identity of a person belonging to a group of people who share the same code of attraction. Usually, the sexual orientation of a person is divided under these sub-headings:

**Heterosexual:** These are also called the 'straight', they are romantically or sexually attracted to the members of opposite sexes.

**Homosexual:** They consist of the sexual minority that is attracted towards the same sex.

**Bisexual:** They feel romantically and sexually attracted to both sexes.

The underlying factors and causes constituting a person's sexual orientation are still unascertained; however, various studies have attempted to analyse the genetic, hormonal, and developmental influence on sexual orientation. Lamentably, no research has emerged to support any strong factor that could be associated with sexual orientation. Researchers came to terms with the fact that sexual orientation and sexuality are not fixed from birth; moreover, it is fluid and continuous (Grollman, 2014).

Kinsey (1948) establishes that sexuality is not black and white. An individual may feel sexually orientated towards one sex, but it is likely to change over time. Kinsey (1948) states:

While underlining the continuity of the gradations between exclusively heterosexual and exclusively homosexual histories, it has seemed desirable to develop some sort of classification which could be based on the relative amounts of heterosexual and homosexual experiences or responses in each history. A person may be appointed a position on this scale, for each duration in his life. A seven-point scale comes nearer to showing the many gradations that prevail. (p. 897)

It establishes that in the course of one's life, the sexual orientation of people may change according to their psychological and social aspects. An individual would have one specific position for each period of his life because of his changing nature and his developmental process.

#### Homosexuality

Homosexuality has prevailed throughout human chronology. Even though all religions have condemned it and have dubbed it as an evil, sin, or crime against nature. Its traces are also found in Plato's *Symposium*. In the book of Leviticus (18:22), the narrator asserts that homosexual activity is an 'abomination'. Generally, people refer to homosexuality as a lifestyle and a personal choice, whereas scientists establish that it is neither a personal choice nor changeable. As a result, in 1980 the term 'Sexual Preference' was changed to 'Sexual Orientation'. (American Psychological Association, 2008)

Burr (1993) states that sexual orientation asserts the rooted nature of sexual desire. Kinsey (1948) argues that it is a biological phenomenon, and it is natural to mention that sexual deeds which are demonstrably ingredients of the phylogenetic heritage of any lineage cannot be categorized as acts opposite to nature, biologically unnatural, abnormal, or perverse. Mustanski (2003) states that individuals have no control over their biological inheritance and hence homosexuals should not be held responsible for being gay. Freud (1935) adds:

Homosexuality is assuredly no benefit, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a difference in the sexual function elicited by a certain arrest of sexual development. Many highly respectable people of old and modern times have been homosexuals, several of the greatest men among them (Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, etc.). It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime, and cruelty too. (p. 423)

Researchers have affirmed that genetics plays a wild role in sexuality and sexual orientation. Whereas some suggest that sexual orientation and homosexuality may have strong psychological and hormonal components. Burr (1993) suggests that the sexual orientation of a child is influenced by the hormonal changes in the womb of the mother.

#### Sexual Identity

Sexual identity is determined on the basis of how one thinks of oneself in terms of to whom one is romantically and/or sexually attracted (Reiter, 1989). Sexual identity is a certain label that contains distinctive characteristics or traits that belong to the sexuality of that particular entity. Concerning that 'sexual' identity is about the inner person, an individual's sentiment of themselves and oftentimes it takes a collective social identity with a mob of other people (Haseldon, 2009).

A concrete argument is that a person can have a sexual identity while still being sexually inactive, which is to say that a person can still be gay even though he is married to a straight female.

### Methodology

The study is qualitative. Hancock (1998) says qualitative research is a form of research that helps in developing the rationale of social phenomena. Cresswell (2009) further adds that it is an inquiry procedure of understanding established on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore social or human problems. The data has been reviewed from the text of the novel to analyse the homosexual identity negotiation in the personality of Maurice, the protagonist of the novel from the vantage point of the Cass Identity Model for homosexual individuals.

### Theoretical Framework: The Cass Identity Model

In 1979, Cass V. published the first model of homosexual identity formation. The article stirred and revolutionized the common understanding of sexual minority people. The six-staged model, ever since, has become a classic outline for the analysis of homosexual identity formation (McCarn & Fassigner, 1996). Advocates of the Cass Identity Model remark that it is detailed and comprehensive (Marszalek & Cashwell, 1999). It furnishes a “sophisticated approach” to identity construction (Cox & Gallois, 1996, p. 8) Furthermore, Frable (1997) postulates that Cass’s model of sexual identity is one of the most affirming descriptions of gay identity formed in literature. Hence Cass’s model of sexual identity and the gradual steps of coming to terms with one’s sexual orientation forms a rationale for a variety of helping interventions with the sexual minority population (Mobley & Shirley, 1996).

The Cass Identity Model is one of the most fundamental and crucial theories of LGBTQ identity development. Given in 1979, the model was among the pioneers to treat homosexual people as normal in a society where heterosexism was dominant. Vivienne Cass described the process of six stages of LGBTQ identity development. The stages are sequentially forward but some might experience going forward and backward considering their mental and physical condition.

The Cass Identity Model is developed from a psychosocial perspective (Levine, 1997), and it is established on interpersonal congruency theory (Cox & Gallois, 1996) which posits that an individual is likely to be motivated to develop because of his/her need to improve or ameliorate the incongruence (incompatible) that each stage moulds into his/her behaviour with reference to society (ibid). An individual may gradually come through all the six stages, may withstand at a particular stage through their life, or may progress backward and experience foreclosure of their identity (Cass, 1979). The stages of the Cass Identity Model are as follows:

#### Identity Confusion

Identity confusion is the first stage of the Cass Identity Model. It is characterized by the first conscious awareness that homosexuality has in some way relevance to oneself in relation to one’s thoughts, behavioural pursuits, or feelings. During this stage, a person realizes that their feelings or behaviour can be judged and defined as homosexual (Cox & Gallois, 1996). It leads to the individual questioning his identity if they could be gay, lesbian, or bisexual. It is also filled with internal distress and personal alienation (Cass, 1979). This gradually develops into the next stage unless the identity foreclosure occurs.

#### Identity Comparison

Identity comparison is characterized by a hesitant and tentative coming-in-term with the homosexual entity within oneself. The major element of this stage is to handle the social estrangement that follows when one becomes increasingly aware of the difference between himself and society (Cass, 1979). There are numerous ways how people face this social alienation: some respond affirmatively to the notion that they are different from others and thus become further motivated to accept their homosexual self, while others recognize that they are homosexual and different hence they must be ‘undesirable’ and therefore they seek to change their perception of being homosexual. Individuals who fall into the latter category may choose to seek solace in heterosexual relationships to ‘pretend’ that they are heterosexual if they choose to act on it. They also persuade themselves that being homosexual is temporary or they may try to blame someone else for making them homosexual just to preserve their self-esteem and self-innocence (Cass, 1979). Given social norms and approaches, some may seek to voluntarily change their behaviour because of the perceived undesirability of homosexuality (Cass, 1979). The final occurrence of this stage is individuals attempting to change their perception of themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual as well as terminating any behaviour that is considered homosexual. If the individual succeeds, identity foreclosure occurs seizing any further progress. If it is unsuccessful, there is usually a hazardous amount of self-hatred and an elevated risk of self-harm (Cass, 1979).

#### Identity Tolerance

This stage starts when an individual manages to healthily adapt to the fact that ‘I may be homosexual’ as a result, one moves forward to accept that ‘I probably am homosexual’ (Cass, 1979, p.229). The sense of social otherness is heightened, and the person often seeks the company of sexual minorities to alleviate his feelings of otherness and vacancy (Cox & Gallois, 1996). The crucial factor of this stage is contact with other gays, lesbians, and bisexual people (Cass 1979). Before this stage, the individual will likely perceive being homosexual as undesirable, and hence coming in positive touch with other homosexuals may re-evaluate the negative prejudice of the individual. If the

contact with another homosexual does not turn out to be a positive one, it deepens the picture of desirability and creates a negative self-image, eventually leading to identity foreclosure. If the identity foreclosure does not occur, the person moves to the next stage.

#### **Identity Acceptance**

This stage is marked by increased contact with other homosexual people and the person starts to feel normal (Sophie, 1986). Sexual minorities play a vital role in the individual's life. When the contrast between how one sees himself as a homosexual person and how others perceive and treat him is elevated, the individual accepts himself, and subsequently, the person gradually develops into the fifth stage.

#### **Identity Pride**

The fifth stage of the Cass Identity Model is denoted by an 'almost' complete acceptance of oneself as gay, lesbian, or bisexual and profound awareness and knowledge of the acceptance of homosexuals into society (Cass 1979). For the individual, the world often seems rigged into two sides: homosexual and heterosexual. This is the stage where one becomes protective of his identity and his community, oftentimes leading to activism and purposeful altercation with the establishment (Cass 1979). The homosexual identity of the person becomes his primary identity, superseding all other aspects of his life. This stage is marked by an increased amount of a person's disclosure of sexuality to others. If disclosing their homosexual identity to others, especially heterosexuals, results positively then the person moves to the sixth and last stage which is identity synthesis.

#### **Identity Synthesis**

The last stage of the Cass Identity Model is reached when individuals belonging to a sexual minority can incorporate their homosexual selves with other vital aspects of their life and their identity. Being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is no longer perceived as one's primary identity, but it remains a part of the picture of who one truly is (Cass, 1979). In this stage, the person also increases his contact with supportive heterosexuals.

#### **Identity Foreclosure**

Identity foreclosure can occur at any stage of an individual's course of life. It is the condition when growth stagnates, and the person fails to achieve complete development of his/her sexual identity. The reason could be categorized into two kinds: external and internal. A person can grow out of identity foreclosure and continue his/her identity development.

### **Discussion and Analysis**

#### **Identity Confusion**

For young Maurice Hall, Identity confusion begins at the very beginning of the novel. Maurice's response to Mr. Ducie's discourse on marriage and women tells at the best of his confused state of self-identity: "And suddenly for an instant of time, the boy despised him. 'Liar' he thought. 'Liar and coward', he told me nothing" (Forster, 1937, p. 14).

Maurice Hall begins to notice the things that would differ between him and others of his age. It is very crucial to notice that whenever any thought relating to his identity comes into Hall's mind, Forster brilliantly proceeds the description with an eerie resemblance of Hall's internal turmoil such as, "then the darkness rolled in again, the darkness that is primeval but not eternal and yields to its painful dawn" (Forster, 1937, p. 14). This aligns with the Cass Identity Model, inner turmoil and feelings of personal alienation characterize this stage (Cass, 1979).

The second crucial scene that defines the state of identity confusion starts when Mrs. Hall intervenes and tells him about how proud she is that Maurice is going to the same school that his father went to, "in order that you'll grow up just like your dear father in every way", and Maurice gets shattered and "a sob interrupted her, the boy was in tears" (Forster, 1937, p. 17). Maurice repeats the same wording and mouths, "I'm overtired" (p.17). Cass (1979), in the model, establishes "With continuing personalization of information, the awareness of these alienated feelings grows to a point where it cannot be ignored" (p. 222). Likewise, the same realization overwhelms Maurice, "and a great mass of sorrow that had overwhelmed him by rising to the surface began to sink. He could feel it going down into his heart until he was conscious it was no more" (Forster, 1937, p. 18).

The most crucial element that awakens sexual alienation in Maurice is George, their garden boy whom Mrs. Hall has kicked out a couple of days ago. Maurice found solace in George but not the kind of solace he would find in his mother or sister. "As he (Maurice) opened his gaze to look whether the blots had grown smaller, he remembered George. Something stirred in the unfathomable depths of his heart. He whispered 'George, George' but who was George? Nobody- just a common servant. Mother and Ada and Kitty were far more important" (Forster, 1937, p. 225). It should be noticed that amid all this confusion, Maurice does not seek help, nor does he talk about it with someone else. According to Cass, it is rare for an individual to disclose his inner turmoil at the first stage; most individuals attempt to resolve their confusion on their own.

Another significant description of imagery of homosexual feelings is Maurice's dreams. Since he lives in a religious family, in the old Victorian era, where homosexuals are unknown and are considered unnatural, hence Hall suppresses all of his feelings, but they unconsciously appear in his dreams. According to Sigmund Freud (1913), "Dreams are a form of wish-fulfilment. If I eat strongly salted food and get thirsty before going to bed, it is likely that I will dream about drinking water. What we cannot get is what is already achieved in the dream" (p. 282). Maurice dreams two things, both are suggestible to his homosexual identity.

Where all is obscure and unrealized the best similitude is a dream. Maurice had two dreams at school; they will interpret him. In the first dream, he felt very cross. He was playing football against a nondescript whose existence he resented. He made an effort and the nondescript turned into George, that garden boy. But he had to be careful or it would reappear. George headed down the field towards him, naked and jumping over the wood stacks. I shall go mad if he turns wrong now, said Maurice, and just as they collared this happened, and a brutal disappointment woke him up. He did not connect it with Mr. Ducie's homily, still less with his second dream, but he thought he was going to be ill, and afterwards that it was somehow a punishment for something. (Forster, 1937, p. 23)

Maurice's dream about George can be described as his unconscious homoerotic feelings for the garden boy. Maurice considers the dream very disturbing and thinks that he has dreamt something wrong. Cass (1979) argues that "individuals accept the potentiality of homosexual self but unwillingly. This marks the beginning of a very negative and self-hating identity". (p. 224)

### **Identity Comparison**

The second stage starts when Maurice is in Sunnington. The second stage in Cass's model aligns with coming somewhat tentatively in terms of the homosexual identity and it is particularly characterized by the individual coping with the social estrangement that follows (Cass, 1979, p. 225). Maurice goes through this stage by bullying his way out, not because he 'wants' to but because it's a social dogma. "Beneath it all, he was bewildered...Maurice forgot he was ever sexless, and only realized in maturity how just and clear the sensation of his earlier days must have been" (Forster, 1937, p. 23).

Maurice would often daydream about his friend but now he held a genuine understanding that he did not have a friend of that sort. Maurice feels alienated, "because his friend wished it...Misery was somehow mixed up with all his happiness. It seemed certain that he hadn't a friend" (p. 23). Maurice's response to his feelings is to alienate himself from society, this aligns with the Cass Identity Model as individuals in this stage have a range of possible responses; everything from grief to compartmentalizing their lives (Burns, 2008).

### **Identity Tolerance**

The third stage starts when Maurice is enrolled in the second year of his college. The integral part and main feature of this stage is the individual tentatively coming to terms with the fact that 'he might be gay' to the fact that 'he is gay' and for Maurice, this step is combined with his own internalized homophobia. According to Cass (1979), this is the stage where the individual "seeks someone's help for his identity and seeking help is viewed as something that has to be done" (p. 229). In the case of Maurice, his acquaintance with Risley paves the way for identity tolerance. Maurice is fascinated with the openness and unhesitant expression Risley. "Now he was sure the man had an inside and he wondered whether he should see him again" (Forster, 1937, p. 33). Subsequently, Maurice's fascination leads him to find Clive Durham through Risley. Maurice is smitten by Clive's beauty claiming that he looks more like a freshman than a third-year student. It is this company that helps Maurice undergo the transition from 'I may be gay' to 'I probably am gay'.

### **Identity Acceptance**

In Maurice's life, this stage is more focused on letting go (or rather trying to let go) of his broken self-image as an 'undesirable'. It is crucial to notice that Maurice accepts himself as 'desirable' when Clive shows his interest and soon, they form a fascinating relationship. It unfolds,

The next two years Maurice and Clive had as much happiness as men under that star can expect. They were affectionate and consistent by nature, and, thanks to Clive, extremely sensible. Clive knew that ecstasy could not last but could carve a channel for something lasting, and he contrived a relationship that proved permanent. If Maurice made love, it was Clive who preserved it and caused its rivers to water the garden. He could not bear that one drop should be wasted, either in bitterness or in sentimentality, and as time went on, they abstained from avowals ("we have said everything") and almost from caresses. Their happiness was to be together; they radiated something of their calm amongst others and could take their place in society. (Forster, 1937, p. 98)

When Maurice accepts himself as gay, his life and relationship with Durham become more soothing and attractive. Now he refuses to go to the church, rebels against his mom, and finds solace in reading 'Symposium' by Plato and being with Clive. In accordance with Cass (1979), this stage is impacted by the featured validation and normalization of homosexuality.

### **Identity Foreclosure**

Under normal circumstances, Maurice should have moved to the next stage of identity pride, but he cannot. The underlying reason is the separation of Clive. Clive develops his relationship with Anne and abandons him. Maurice crumbles when Clive announces that he has now “turned heterosexual” and would like to love women. “Clive must love him because his whole life was dependant on love and here it was going on as usual” (Forster, 1937, p. 126).

As it turns out, Clive does not return his love anymore. Maurice, during this period, becomes mentally unstable and even develops suicidal tendencies and ideation. The text of the novel reveals, “He (Maurice) had no initial fear of death...He knew that loneliness was poisoning him. Under these circumstances, he began to compare ways he would shoot himself” (Forster, 1937, p. 136)

During this stage, two things help him to develop further and break the identity foreclosure. One is the death of his grandfather. Always wanting to die, when Maurice has the first-hand experience of seeing death, he grows impeccably aware of how horrible death in real terms is. Consequently, he feels that he should give himself a chance. The second and most important is when he meets Alec Scudder, the gatekeeper of Durham. Maurice goes to stay at Durham’s house so that he can consult and visit the infamous hypnotist, Mr. Lasker Jones, and get cured of his ‘disease’ i.e. homosexuality. One night, Durham has gone out and he feels unendurably distressed, he calls out through the window, ‘friend’ knowing the fact that no one is there. Upon hearing Maurice, Alec, the gatekeeper of Durham, climbs up the wall and reaches him, stroking and caressing. He says, “Sir, was you calling out for me? Sir, I know...I know” (Forster, 1937, p. 192).

Unlike the verbal and emotional relationship between Clive and Maurice, the relationship between Maurice and Alec is more physical. His bodily desire is fulfilled, and he no longer feels distressed. At this point, the identity foreclosure breaks because now the self-hatred image of Maurice as ‘undesirable’ has shattered, and he develops a new and more positive image.

### **Identity Pride**

The fifth stage of the Cass Identity Model augments when the person comes to terms with his sexuality and becomes protective about it being genuinely aware of the differences that exist between his concept of self and rejection of it by society (Cass, 1979, p. 233). In Maurice's case, this stage occurs when he falls in love with Alec, who is also equally smitten by him. They both come to terms with it and propose their love to each other, “and now we shall be parted no more, and that's finished” (Forster, 1937, p. 182).

This is where he fully accepts himself as gay and becomes proud of his identity. He proudly informs Clive about his relationship with Alec. Clive is shocked upon hearing about his love for Alec “I am so disappointed to hear you talk like that. You brought me to believe that those thoughts were behind you” (Forster, 1937, p. 184). When Maurice adds that they have consummated their relationship, Clive “sprang up with a whimper of disgust. He wanted to smite the monster, but he was civilized” to which Maurice replies “You don't love me. I was yours till death if you'd care to keep me once but now, I'm someone else's now and he is mine in a way that shocks you. So why don't you stop being shocked and attend to your own happiness?” (Forster, 1937, p. 185).

In Maurice's story, this would have been the last fitting step as the story abruptly comes to an end without the intervention of the ‘Gay Rights Movement’. It is perhaps because the novel was written earlier to the Cass Identity Model and the then society was highly homophobic and conservative. As a result, E. M. Forster along with his sexual identity kept this book private and did not make them public. However, after his death the personality disposition of the author and the book became public.

### **Stages of Homosexual Development in Maurice Hall**

Young Maurice Hall, born and brought up in a religious family in the late Victorian era is completely alienated from the concept of homosexuality. Maurice’s family consists of his mother Mrs. Hall, and his two sisters Kitty and Ada with no father or any other male figure. His alienation from sexuality is an offshoot of the ignorance of Mrs. Hall. Her reaction to Mr. Ducie’s explanation of the mystery of sex nearly “bore no relation to his experience” (Forster, 1937, p. 13). Further, Maurice’s experience of attaining puberty is described as descending into the “valley of the Shadow of life” (p. 22). Thus, Maurice comes to believe that sexuality and anything related to it is a matter of shame and embarrassment. Since the novel refers to the late Victorian and Early Edwardian era, Forster illustrates the taboo topic of sexuality being analogous with darkness: “then the darkness rolled up again, the darkness that is primaeval and not eternal, and it yields to its own painful dawn” (Forster, 1937, p. 20). This whole build-up and interrelatedness of ‘darkness’ and ‘sexuality’ refer to Maurice’s internal turmoil which leads him through the various stages of his sexual identity negotiation. The trajectory of his identity negotiation from the vantage point of the Cass Identity Model is as follows:

<b>Identity Confusion</b>	Maurice's adoration for George; his unconscious dreams
<b>Identity Comparison</b>	When Maurice compares himself to other boys in his school and comes to the conclusion that he does not fit the social dogmas of his age
<b>Identity Tolerance</b>	When Maurice gets enrolled in Cambridge and meets Clive
<b>Identity Acceptance</b>	When he falls in love with Clive and accepts that he is no lesser man for loving
<b>Identity Foreclosure</b>	When Clive leaves him and marries Anne
<b>Identity Pride</b>	When he meets Alec who tells him to love beyond all conventions

### Conclusion

Homosexuality was considered as a social taboo during the Edwardian Era (1901-1910). It was referred to with derogatory connotations and the subverted were humiliated and disregarded publicly (Plummer, 1975). Young Maurice Hall is brought up with the conditioning and a mindset that homosexuality is disgraceful and a matter of shame. Living in a house full of women, he is not provided with the proper education on sexuality, consequently, he does not understand why he is so upset about the departure of his former servant, George. He always dreams about Georges as naked and deems such thoughts as evil and immoral. However, with the passage of time, his sexual identity dawns upon him when he compares himself to other boys of his age, "They were what he pretended to be" (Forster, 1937, p. 30). Thus, he becomes aware of his homosexual trait, but because homosexuality is the subject of unspeakable dishonour and disgrace in Edwardian society, Maurice grows the feelings about himself that he is damned and undesirable.

The six steps of the Cass Identity Model include identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis. For Maurice, his Identity confusion starts when he is fourteen years old. He holds a special relationship with George, even though the relationship remains unknown throughout the novel, yet Maurice would often dream about George being naked and walking towards him. His second stage starts in his adolescence when he joins college. He starts bullying other boys so that he can be seen as "tough", but when he is alone in bed, he often dreams of a friend "he would die for and who would die for him" (Forster, 1937, p. 22). His third stage starts, when he meets Clive Durham and forms a companionship with him. At this stage, he develops the fundamental knowledge regarding homosexuality. The fourth stage of identity acceptance starts when the companionship between Clive and Maurice develops into a love bond. He accepts his disposition for homosexuality and loves Clive with his all intensity and fervour. When Clive suddenly breaks the relationship,



Maurice undergoes a temporary identity foreclosure and goes into an intense state of inner turmoil where he contemplates suicide. However, his identity foreclosure is broken, when Alec Scudder comes into his life. Alec falls in love with Maurice and shows him what true love is and thus Maurice is motivated to accept his homosexual identity. It takes thirty years for Maurice to attain identity pride. Afterwards, Maurice and Alec decide to live together in an isolated place away from all the homophobic world. In the meanwhile, Maurice wants to meet Clive and tell him about his relationship with Alec and their plan. Clive disregards Maurice for still being homosexual, and Clive is “disgusted” at the state of affairs with Maurice. Consequently, Maurice also feels discomfort, and he rebuts and disregards Clive’s feelings of jealousy and shock. Maurice proudly claims, “He (Alec) is mine in a way that shocks you...so why don't you stop being shocked and attend to your own happiness?” (Forster, 1937, p. 245).

Maurice Hall comes to terms with his sexual identity and achieves sexual contentedness by passing through each homosexual identity development stage referred to in the Cass homosexual identity model (1979). It has been found that Maurice undergoes the tedious process of identity negotiation and subsequent identity contentedness and pride. In the beginning, Maurice considers himself “undesirable”, but with the passage of time, he starts to reconcile with his homosexual trait and learns that it is not a crime. It is obvious that throughout Maurice Hall’s life, he is inclined to love someone else to provide validation to his feelings. Maurice accepts himself as homosexual when Clive shows interest and reciprocates with the same sentiments. Maurice becomes proud of his identity when Alec starts loving him, and they develop a lasting bond of peace and pride. Maurice and Alec accept their homosexual identity and choose to live together with their own choice and freedom irrespective of the cultural norms, taboos, and conservatism.

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