

# AFRICAN LITERATURE AND HOMOSEXUALITY IN ACHMAT DANGOR'S *BITTER FRUIT*

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## Abstract

Feminism and masculinity are significant themes in gender studies, whereas queer studies, which were long suppressed, are now gaining increasing attention in the West. On the other hand, homosexuality has not gotten much creative or critical attention in Africa. As a consequence, the lack of relevant literature would be filled by this study. Any same-sex relationship, from phatic communication to sensual communion and marriage, is considered to be gay, and this encompasses lesbianism, homosexuality and bisexuality. The condition is also categorized as psychopathological. The aim of this study was to examine how homosexuality is portrayed in Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit*, the factors that contribute to a favourable or unfavourable portrayal, and how heterosexuals and homosexuals view one another. The work incorporated queer and psychological theories. The study found that the selected wording stigmatizes gays and came to the conclusion that homosexuality is still mostly a closet problem even if it exists throughout Africa.

**Keywords:** Homosexuality, Bisexuality, African Literature, Pedophilia and Homophobia

## Introduction

In November 1948, in Johannesburg, Achmat Dangor was born. In addition to being a talented and active writer, Dangor is also a development specialist. Additionally, he has held executive positions in a variety of non-governmental organizations in South Africa. They include the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. (2001). Two of Dangor's important pieces are *Kafka's Curse* (1977) and *Bitter Fruit* (1980). Others are *Waiting for Leila to arrive* (1981). *Some examples* (2013)

include voices from William (1982), Bulldozer (1983), Majet (1986), The Z Town Trilosity (1990), Private Voles (1990), Strange Pilgrimages (1992), and The Z Town Trilosity (1990). In addition to three collections of short stories, Dangor has also written poetry. In addition to other literary honours, he was given the South African Bosman Prize for his book *Kafka's Curse*.

Dangor, like many South Africans of his generation, was propelled into politics by organizations like the Kagiso (Peace Trust), which Archbishop Desmond Tutu and other opposition leaders founded to aid political prisoners and their families (Publisher's Note: I ii, 283). Silas Ali's experience is described in Dangor's *Bitter Fruit*. In the years following apartheid, Silas, a capable South African lawyer in his fifties, resides in Johannesburg with his wife Lydia. He had been an active member of the covert MK anti-apartheid group for years. One of his MK employees, Kate, would ultimately drive lesbianism forward in the book. Silas and Kate work together again as liaisons between the government and Desmond Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Committee. This is a happy accident.

The plot will take a different turn once Lydia is raped by Senior Police Officer, Lieutenant Francois Du Boise, in front of Silas. Seventeen years later, Silas meets Du Boise in a cafe. He informs his wife about the chance meeting when he gets home. His wife becomes incensed by this and accuses him of not "doing anything" as a man. Her wine glass breaks when it hits the ground. Lydia sways out of control and twirls about on the broken bottle pieces. When Lydia is sent to the hospital and Silas is required to go and see her, Kate takes advantage of the opportunity to debauch Mickey, his daughter Ferial's age-mate. At this point, Mickey discovers through Lydia's journal that he is Du Boise's rape victim, which is a terrible realization. Mickey is currently 18 years old. The news of this finding breaks Silas' family. Mickey starts behaving incoherently, rebelliously, and promiscuously. Lydia moves and travels in her own way. As a result of Du Boise and another white father having incestuous relations with Mickey's friend Val's child, Mickey converts to Islam and kills them. Then he relocates to India.

### **The Concept Homosexuality (Gayness)**

A person chooses to live with his or her sexual orientation. It could be learned, innate, or inherited. Since the start of time, there have been gay people. Many individuals hold the view that Genesis Chapter 19 is the first place in the Bible to make reference to LGBT persons. Male-male or female-female love is often considered to be obscene; hence any writings that celebrate this love are susceptible to censorship, even if they do not contain explicit sexual details. There is considerable doubt that despite their protestations, most, if not all, governments worldwide have engaged in homosexual behaviour in one way or another. The term "gay" grew out of concepts of heterosexuality and homosexuality, where heterosexuality is viewed as normal and homosexuality as abnormal," claims Peter Nardi (1-11).

According to Deana F. Morrow and Lori Messinger, lesbians are women who are primarily attracted to other women and have romantic relationships with them. "Gay refers to people (male or female) whose primary personal affections and romantic interactions are directed towards other people of the same sex." Some women want to be called lesbians, while others prefer to be called homosexuals (7). The term "gay" was adopted as a descriptor for homosexuals in the English-speaking world in the 1960s. Gays and homosexuals will be referred to interchangeably in this paper. Having a sexual attraction to people in their own sex group has come to be referred to as "homosexuality" by both men and women. Daven Hiskey asserts that

By 1955 the gay now officially acquired the new added definition of meaning homosexual males. Gay men themselves seem to have been behind the diving thrust for this definition as they felt (and most still do), that "homosexual" is much too clinical sounding and is often thought as offensive among gay people due to sounding like a disorder. As such, it was common amongst themselves to refer to another as gay decades before this was a commonly known definition (reportedly homosexual men were calling one another gay as early as the 1920s). At this time, homosexual women were referred to as lesbians, not gay.

Homosexuality is defined as a same-sex relationship or marriage (Pollack, 1998: 207; Thompson, 1994: 357; Sarason and Sarason, 2002: 248; Aldrich, 2003:50; Allman, 2001:20; Sarason and Sarason, 2002: 248; Sarason and Sarason, 2002: 248; Sarason and Sarason, 2002: 248; Sarason and Sarason, 2002: 248). Homosexuality, according to McMahon and McMahon (1982: 30 and 2011:245), is a sexual connection between two people of the same sex. It is characterized by a desire for a member or members of the same sex.

But Nnachi (2011) sees homosexuality as a psychopathological condition. He argues:

The most basic definition of homosexuality is abnormal sexual attraction towards the members of the same sex. Thus, a homosexual may be considered a person with sexual desires directed wholly or in part towards members of the same sex. (p.245)

Desire is at the core of homosexuality, and individuals are said to be "wired" differently to nurture and pursue various impulses. To begin with, it is stated that all literary books are about want in some manner and that in the end, one loves one's desire rather than what is sought (Bennet and Royle, 2009:208). This backs up Pollack's (1998:206) point of view, which he expresses in a story about a little boy:

Being different, being gay..., I always knew I was different from the other guys, seventeen year old Bill explained to me. Whenever I went out to the movies with friends, most of the other guys were just dying for a cute girl to sit next to them. Nobody else seemed to realize it, but I was really hoping a good-looking guy would sit next to me. I don't think anybody had any idea what I was going through. (p.206)

Being homosexual, or gay, means that when a boy or girl develops into maturity, he or she will mostly be attracted to other men or women in a romantic sense. For example, gay men tend to fall in love with other guys and aspire to find a man with whom to spend their

adult life, rather than falling in love with women and pining for a woman as a husband. Similarly, just as heterosexual or straight boys do not "decide" to be heterosexual and do not "choose" to live a heterosexual lifestyle as adults, homosexual boys do not "decide" to be gay and do not "choose" to live a homosexual existence as adults (Pollack, 1998). However, this viewpoint is flawed because it seems to have eliminated humankind's option of choice, of options, and even of what individuals perceive to be opportunities as life develops via development. Thompson (1994) backs this up by claiming that homosexuality is a sexual orientation that goes hand in hand with sexual politics. Homosexuality is an act of defiance. "It's the revolution that went unnoticed" (Thompson, 1994). Homosexuality is the boundary that separates what civilizations consider "normal" (straight) sexual behaviour from aberrant sexual behaviour. Today, the theme has taken on a new and daring dimension. "Boys today are in significant difficulty," writes Pollack (1998), "even those who seem "normal" and to be doing well." Many people experience melancholy and alienation they cannot even define because of society's contradictory signals about what is expected of them. Despite people having different arguments about homosexuality, the major issue in it is just the domicile and abode of same sex bearing.

### **Gayness in the African Perspective**

Although their western colleagues have given the "gayness theme" so much attention in their creative works, African academics have been reluctant to write on the subject. According to Edward Gibbons, "I suppose and hope that Nigerians in their own country were spared from this moral ailment" (506). Few Europeans had travelled more than a few kilometres into interior Africa when Gibbon made the claim, as Stephen Murray notes (xi). According to Murray, Sir Richard Burton subsequently endorsed Gibbon's claim that "the Negro race is fundamentally unscathed by sodomy and tribalism" (246). Burton saw that many people in the Near East and South Asia were gay, which was different from what he saw in Africa, so he said this.

In contrast, Daniel Hardy concurred with Gibbons' position in 1987, stating that "homosexuality is not part of traditional African cultures." These writers actively portray homosexuality as un-African in their writing. Examples of writers and their works include Awoonor's *The Earth, My Brother*, Ayi Kwei Amah's *Two Thousand Seasons*, Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters*, and Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy*. The collection of short stories by Jane Benett one piece of African literature that discusses lesbianism is *Porcupine*, which explores the symbolism of being both black and lesbian. Another is the lesbian romance novel *Lagos Na Wa I Swear* by Eidia Apolo. Additionally, some African works, like *No*, do not view homosexuality as an issue as a result of their exposure to Western society. For instance, Yulisa Amadu Maddy's book *Past, No Present, No Future* explores the experiences of three African immigrants to Europe. Joe Bengoh, a homosexual, is made fun of by his two co-workers, but he manages to get by on his own as he accepts who he really is. Despite being gay, he retains his integrity and self-assurance, so it does not wreck him. Even though some literary works about homosexuality still use the standard stereotype that homosexuality is taboo, foreign, not African, and was brought to Africa by the West, there are also works that do research on gays and show them in a positive light.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This work is based on the psychoanalytic literary theory. This theory looks at mental processes and is particularly well suited to such research since it can be utilized to delve into the brains of the characters in order to figure out why they act the way they do. According to Sau Mcleod, Sigmund Freud created psychoanalysis in his psychosexual phases in 1916-1917. "The goal of psychoanalytic treatment is to relieve repressed and made-unconscious emotions and experiences," he claims. Freud's work and the research he employs to establish his ideas are referred to as psychoanalysis.

Queer, like Marxism and feminism, began as a movement. Its purpose was to ensure homosexual men and lesbians' political, legal,

and economic emancipation. Through literature and criticism, queer theory seeks to elucidate these atypical sexual concerns as well as all connected topics. From the 1960s to the 1970s, queer people were a liberation movement demanding political, legal, and economic rights equal to those enjoyed by the heterosexual majority. Queer is a complicated term. Benneth and Royle (2009) put it this way:

Queer's a queer word. The entry of the word 'queer' into the English language is itself a study in the queer ways of words... Queer gained currency in the English language in the United States and elsewhere as (usually) a derogatory term for (usually male) homosexual. In the late 1980s and 1990s, however, partly in response to the spread of AIDS among gay men, the word took a queer turn: homosexuals themselves began to 'reclaim' the word. 'Queer' becomes a term of pride and celebratory of self-assertion, of difference affirmed and affirmative difference. (216- 217)

The term "manna" (Exodus 16:15) asks, "What is this?" This is because it seemed to the Israelites to be completely unusual at first glance. Queer, like manna, denotes anything weird, strange, controversial, bizarre, and unorthodox, capable of generating a wide variety of inquiries. "The abnormal" (queer) is seen as a chance to investigate and re-examine societal structures and behaviours in order to redefine how individuals perceive and understand themselves (Dobie, 2009:11). "Queer critique takes as its subject any sexual themes that are regarded as strange or peculiar-in other words, "queer" by implication," (Dobie, 2009). Consider the following situation:

Assume that two young lads, Abraham and Moses, who live in the same neighbourhood, say in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, marry. Everything was finally in place for the conventional wedding. The clothing worn by both the would-be husband and wife might be irrelevant since one or the other is almost certainly a transvestite. While the large gathering of both families, friends, and other visitors were busy exchanging pleasantries, the master of ceremonies happily stated the fact in front of the large audience. Without practice, the crowd would

most likely chant "Eemo, Eewo"—abomination! It's unlikely that anybody will stick around for the following item on the schedule. That is what it means to be queer.

A different scenario is painted below. It is the report of a gay wedding *Wall Street Journal*, June 8, 1994, p.1, cited in Sarason and Sarason, (2002):

Erik Ladefoged and Kim Norgaard, surrounded by 30 family members and friends, finally were able to formally tie the knot in 1989 after living together for more than 20 years. We were married between two heterosexual couples. The couple found, to their surprise that the wedding was an emotional experience, symbolic not only as a public declaration of their love, but as their nation's acceptance of them "I thought it would be a formality. But our friends were singing a traditional Danish song. I was happy all over. It was great to be gay and have the official handshake and smile of the state" (p.248)

"Mr Ladefoged was a school teacher, aged 49," the story continues. Whether or not society thought it was unusual, the individuals would agree that it was OK for them. More significantly, they were able to find a home. In Africa, however, this is not the case. It is, without a doubt, "a story of two towns."

In this research, queer theory was able to accomplish the following:

- (i) assisted in determining the sexual status of the characters;
- (ii) helped with character characterization and representation; and
- (iii) Assisting in the understanding of Africans' general attitudes towards the issue.

## Methodology

This work made use of Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit* as the primary source and the secondary sources are the relevant literature on the same topic. In the analysis of the text, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of three levels of the mind: conscious,

subconscious and human development which implores id, ego and superego were used in analysing the selected text. The three levels of the mind were used to investigate the workings of the minds of some of the characters especially the gay ones.

### Synopsis of Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit*

In November 1948, in Johannesburg, Achmat Dangor was born. Dangor is not only a prolific and accomplished writer but also a working professional in development. In certain South African non-governmental organizations, he has also held executive posts. The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund stands out among them. Dangor's best-known pieces (2001) are *Kafka's Curse* (1977) and *Bitter Fruit* (2001). *Leila* is awaited by others (1981). *The Z Town Trilosity* (1990), *Bulldozer* (1983), *Majet* (1986), *Voices from William* (1982), *Private Voles* (1992), and *Strange Pilgrimages* (2013). Dangor has also written three books of poetry and short tales. In addition to the South African Bosman Prize for *Kafka's Curse*, he has won a sizable number of literary awards.

Like many South Africans of his generation, Dangor felt compelled to enter politics. He worked with groups like the Kagiso (Peace Trust), which was founded by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and other opposition leaders to support political prisoners and their families (Publisher's Note: I ii, 283). The life of Silas Ali is told in Dangor's *Bitter Fruit*. A bright South African lawyer in his 50s, Silas resides in Johannesburg with his wife, Lydia, during the post-apartheid era. He had spent years working with the MK anti-apartheid movement, which goes by this acronym. Kate, one of his co-workers at the MK, would eventually become the novel's central figure for lesbianism. As liaison officials between the government and Desmond Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Committee, Silas and Kate are once more brought together by fate.

The rape of Lydia by a Senior Police Officer Lieutenant Francois Du Boise, in plain view of Silas will change the course of events in the story. Silas meets Du Boise in a restaurant seventeen years later.

He tells his wife about the fortuitous encounter when he gets home. Because of this, his wife becomes upset and blames him for failing to "do anything" as a man. She loses her balance and breaks the wine glass she is carrying. Inadvertently dancing on the bottle fragments, Lydia loses control. Kate takes advantage of the chance to debauch Mickey and his daughter's age-mate, Ferial, while Lydia is hospitalized and Silas must remain at her bedside. This is the time when Mickey discovers, to his horror, that he is the offspring of Du Boise's rape and has access to Lydia's diary. As of right now, Mickey is 18. The family of Silas is torn apart by this news. Mickey turns rebellious, errant, and promiscuous. Lydia changes her address and departs on her own. In the end, Mickey becomes a Muslim and murders another white parent and Du Boise for having an affair with Val, a friend of Mickey's. Finally, he moves to India.

### Lesbianism

In literature, homosexuality is compared to a sour fruit. Although most fruits are pleasant, homosexuality is considered to be a bitter fruit. Silas is the main character in *Bitter Fruit* (Ali). Although LGBT acts are casually and openly acknowledged throughout the novel, he is heterosexual. Silas' wife, Lydia, queries him:

You think Archbishop Tutu has ever been fucked up his arse against his will? (p. 16)

Despite being married, Kate identifies as a double adapter, a lesbian and bisexual. The tough marriage's child, Ferial, is born. Following is how Kate is represented as a lesbian queen:

Oh God, the lesbian queen doesn't have her car with her... what a demanding bitch she can be. (p.45)

This lesbian queen's soul mate is Marguerite. The novel portrays lesbianism as a mystical kind of hospitality. If this hospitality vanished or was lost, there would be a gaping hole. The narrator claims that both parties are well-known lesbians with an obsession for the "fruit":

The subject of Marguerite usually brought out in Silas a caustic, township humour. Marguerite was Kate's former lover who had turned up unexpectedly from Europe, after almost ten years, silently demanding the same hospitality of home and body that she had once offered Kate. (pp. 46, 47)

What a thorny problem. The demand gets difficult due to the following factors:

Kate now lived with Janine. (p.47)

She obviously just lives with Janine, though. Live-in partners do not seem to understand the sonorous hospitality of lesbianism. All Kate will have to do is live in the same house as Janine. The body is under the control of the intellect. When the mind is absent, the body becomes a shell. The hospitality that is being described here, though, is a bit mysterious. This is because it has nothing to do with the body's succulence or the sensitivity of the skin. Even someone with a body as ugly as Socrates may possess it. Perhaps the proverb "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" holds true. Dangor gives the following description of Marguerite: "Marguerite had a wiry body and the kind of hawk's face that Silas said could only be loved "as Jy daarvanhou om Kraaie te naa' - if you liked fucking crows" (p.47).

That is what people find mysterious about lesbian hospitality. It is a cultic and esoteric phenomenon that only initiates can comprehend. For the duration of the shared experience, they come together to establish a sort of cabal in which they are comfortable with one another. This is due to the fact that it is a way of life for Marguerite, a casual and well-educated acquaintance, but only a dash of remembrance for Kate, an outspoken lesbian.

### **Gays and the Truth in *Bitter Fruit***

Even though same-sex actions are generally not against the law in South Africa, the underlying cultural attitude still opposes them. Few homosexual people are allowed to openly celebrate their sexual identities as a result. Kate's request that gays stop hiding behind their

fingers is the outcome. She demands that: "It had been rumoured that Julian was gay, and Kate said she had sensed it herself. She had confronted him about it. He should face the truth, and tell it; she urged Julian, for his sake as well as Val's" (p. 46).

Val is Julian's child. Blowing the drum's top off, nevertheless, appears to be a delicate process in South African tradition. In that regard, she is not an active participant, much alone a significant one, in the effort to preserve African traditions and values. As a result, she runs the risk of calling the bluff, acting rashly and doing whatever comes her way. She also has a good education and is from an affluent household. It is to be noted that:

Silas, who had been subjected to Kate's merciless brand of truthfulness, knew how difficult it was a to live normally in the aftermath of having told an 'enormous' truth... God, a lesbian triangle, I can't stand it, Silas said. (p. 46)

In society, homosexuals and heterosexuals live side by side. It is one thing to inform heterosexuals of this sort of truth, but the repercussions—particularly the psychological suffering—might be too severe. Living normally after that, and for how long, is a major concern. But why would Kate advise speaking the truth like this? She is not, first and foremost, a South African. Second, she is a lesbian who is proud of it. The following is revealed by the text:

One night, Kate brought her 'friend' Janine along to a dinner party and announced in a monotone over coffee and dessert that she was a lesbian, that bisexuality had been an experiment that had yielded her a child, 'the only gratification of penetrative sex'.(p. 58)

With her initiative, Kate is having a great time. Her proposal for sexual orientation revelation in the open. At a different celebration, everyone present was required to share their own experiences since Mandella is released from prison. The "lesbian-queen," Kate, has once again done it:

Kate was the boldest, apart from Inga, the Swedish journalist, who stroked her husband's thinning blow hair and said she

would like to try a black man, now that it was no longer forbidden. Kate announced that she was lesbian, irrevocably. That she desired only a woman's flaming tongue and not the limp little weenies that men these days had to offer. (p. 70)

Lydia, an ordinary African woman there at the gathering, froze in place. Because of a similar experience, Kate keeps switching between being straight and gay. Even worse, she starts to act promiscuous and eventually gets Mickey (Michael), who is the same age as her daughter, to have sex with her. The boy is always sleeping with her after she defiles him to such an extent. Ferial, Kate's daughter, hates how careless her mother is. She can't hide her feelings as she severely thumps her mother on the head. "Ferial would tell her mother to keep her hormones in check. Boys like Mickey belonged to her generation, not to rapacious older women" (p. 71).

Kate wondered how her sixteen-year-old daughter picked up that vocabulary. She admits that she is "an older predatory lady." However, she finds solace in two things: a woman's patient, all-consuming devotion and the chance to explore the ruthless, encroaching selfishness that men provide on an equal level. Kate wears her crucifix alone, without guilt or hesitation as none of the other characters in the story is courageous enough to openly beat their homosexuality. Because of the mental rejection she experiences in a culture that is not ready for her kind of unfiltered honesty, she is always on the lookout. This is the reality of calling a spade a spade when a character is discovered to be a lesbian in the marketplace or in the public arena.

Character is connected with a good name in Africa. Above money and gold, Africans value a good reputation. Good morality and 'being straight' are seen as indicators of character strength. That is why, in *Bitter Fruit*, Lydia would pray for Kate, the icon of lesbianism (lesbian-queen):

Lydia's dislike for Kate turned to detestation. Here was a woman born into privilege, white, rich, educated. Lydia knew

they were used to this kind of talk, confessing with great bravado the secret lusts of their rather timid souls – who (other than their current partners) they wanted to sleep with, what part of the overtly desired person’s anatomy turned them on, and so forth. (p. 58)

Mickey is throwing a party to mark his sixteenth birthday. In front of the impressionable teenager, Kate makes the disclosure mentioned above. Lydia feels aggravated. The following describes what occurs in her head: “That night Lydia found Kate’s ‘directness’ particularly offensive. Mickey was present as the dinner table – he had just turned sixteen and this was supposed to be a sort of birthday celebration for him...” (p. 58).

Lydia is aware that Kate's impulsive comment was maybe sparked by Mickey's presence. Mickey is a young, innocent-appearing child who has previously been taken care of by responsible parents, particularly his mother.

It was as if Kate was trying to protect herself from his cool and unsmiling countenance. Earlier on, Lydia had seen something stir in her son’s mind, a shadow passing across his clam features, a twitch in his cheek and he had looked directly at Kate for a moment. Kate, too, had noticed, looked up, smiled at him, then looked away flustered, like a young woman taking pleasure in being scrutinized by a sexually interested man. (p. 59)

Because Kate and Silas work together, she has practically unlimited access to Silas' house. In order to talk to her husband about Kate's unfettered access to their home, Lydia chooses to be frank. This is important since Mickey is their only child and the heir apparent. Africans revere the heir apparent as a sort of deity. The dialogue was summarized as follows:

Lydia: Another thing, you make sure that Kate keeps away from Mickey.

Silas: She declared herself a lesbian; she prefers girls.

Lydia: Don't be naïve, Silas. Did you see how she came on to Mickey, sixteen- year-old Mickey? (p. 63)

All Silas can do is to groan aloud. This weakness or absolute collapse of character an African woman cannot easily understand, let alone condone. So, Lydia ruminates and prays: "God help us, Lydia thought. "Give Kate the strength of character she does not have" (p. 65).

But no amount of charm can tame the beast she carries. The hawk, Kate, seizes the chance when Lydia is taken to the hospital following a catastrophic home accident and Silas is compelled to stay by her bedside. She has been referred to be a lesbian "dyke" (51, 52). Despite Mickey's mother's dire premonition, Kate pretends to care after him when he is left alone at home. The slow journey to the lioness' den and mouth is described as follows:

Kate climbed the narrow staircase, glass in hand...Mickey she called out softly. There was no answer. The house was quiet...Michael, Michael, Kate whispered, as if testing the sound of his name... He stirred, raised himself on his elbows. Kate pulled away from the window, hoping that he had not seen her, though she imagined his eyes searching for the intruder, for *her*, his slow 'ingwe' eyes turning to their barbarous purpose of hunting down prey (pp. 76, 78, 80)

With the persistence of an obstinate wayward son, Kate persists. She has lost the ability to distinguish between good and wrong. She has been keeping watch and is eager to slay her prey. It is important to note that the issue of managing her hormones is raised once more in this passage. On the other side, the "rapacious older lady" is uncontrollable and cannot be charmed:

It was three in the morning - precisely, Kate would later reflect - when she saw Mickey standing in the doorway of the guest room, his nakedness having lost its lustrous blue glow. A pale and sinewy youth, gaunt almost, and even more beautiful now that he had rid himself of the exotic animal he had so deliberately cultivated (for her sake she thought). (p. 90)

Reminiscing about her initial encounter with the youngster has Kate enthralled.

His mouth upon hers was warm, and the hour so opportune, his coming to her designed for the moment when her restlessness, that drifting in and out of the sleep, legs crossed and uncrossed was becoming unbearable. It was as if he knew exactly when she would be ready to receive him. (p. 90)

A lesbian or whore who has been abandoned by her character for a long time has dragged Mickey, like a lamb, to the slaughtering slab, bringing her shame inch by inch. Mickey has consumed the acidic fruit. It starts to happen again and again:

This is the fifth or sixth time they have met to make love – to ‘fuck’ she insists. Mickey has already detached himself and Kate lies next to her... repulsed by his own sweat (the silkiness’ that Kate says she loves, that she kisses and seems to drink in... But he quickly turns to faint disgust, a regret that is born deep inside him and forces him to thrust himself away from her. (p. 131)

Kate appears nonchalant, in contrast to Mickey, who feels bad about his actions—a youngster having a sexual relationship with a woman in her forties. Kate wants the siege to go on, but she recognizes the boy's viewpoint. The following is Kate's justification:

..She attributed this to an innate shame in him after all; she is as old as his mother. It is understandable for him to be disgusted with her ageing body, yes, her breasts are sagging and her thighs are heavy (what do you expect when you get close to forty?). (p. 132)

Although Kate is aware that Mickey is struggling with his moral self, she is indifferent. Her animal instincts must be suppressed at all costs, no matter whose ox gets gored. This is the worst possible character fault. If she is deemed worthy in learning, she has not been considered worthy in character. To Africans, however, admission into a hall of fame is contingent upon being judged to be honourable in both study and conduct. The narrator mentions what is the following:

She turns to look at him, ready to tell him that if he finds 'all this' so repulsive they should stop it. No problem. I like the sex, your humour, your laughter when you're not being such a little damn martyr, but I can do without this demonstration of self-righteousness every time we're finished fucking. (p. 132)

The novel presents a picture of a lesbian who lacks moral courage. She is permanently weak. She still indulges in sexual orgies despite this, frolicking around like a pig in the mud. The child is the sacrifice, and Kate is the conqueror. This explains why every time they sleep together, Kate has to help him with a condom. "When his trembling ineptitude makes it difficult for him to slop it on at the height of his passion...and feels the same sense of helplessness that overcomes for each time she wants to confront his displays of distaste" (p. 133).

The main LGBT character in this tale is Kate, who is referred to as the "lesbian queen." How she became a lesbian is not explained in detail. No evidence exists to suggest that she was born with such personality. The truth is that she must have acquired her sexual orientation accidentally. There are several factors that might support this choice. She is an African woman who lives in South Africa, where the majority of the population is white. Homosexuality is unquestionably a tool used by apartheid to manipulate Africans. Second, Kate is an intelligent woman who is grateful to have been born into affluence. She is psychedelic, intelligent, and determined to get her way. A child openly rebelling against the parent, in accordance with deconstruction theory, destroys his or her own identity. Kate develops a whole personality along the process.

She does not feel ashamed about it and exhorts other people to do the same. Despite the liberal laws legalizing homosexuality, no one would pay attention to her in a society where the majority of people are straight. Kate's hormones are out of control as a result of the psychological suffering caused by estrangement, which is a form of

homophobia. Ferial, her daughter, even reprimands her for this serious error. She acknowledges that she is weak. She cannot do anything, though. God, help Kate, Lydia begs in prayer. There is no sign that she is receiving the necessary help. She fails to comprehend the motivation behind the heterosexual characters' desire to avoid her and keep her away from the most dreadful aspects of hell, such as Jezebel manifest. When discussing their sexual identities, the story's homosexual characters are more educated, constrained, and informal. They are also secret allies or roommates.

### Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned findings, the research comes to the following conclusion: Homosexuality has become a part of African society, despite the fact that the largely heterosexual African population still holds same-sex partnerships in low regard. Homophobia is caused by how open homosexuality is, which does not change even though it is there in Africa.

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