

## Original Paper

# Sexual Orientation Identity in Select African and African American Novels

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### **Abstract**

*This paper set out to interrogate Sexual Orientation Identity in select African and African American novels, using the Queer theory. Some heterosexual writers inadvertently dwell on queer relationships in their works. Toni Morrison in both *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* portrayed bestiality/zoophilia, phytophilia or dendrophilia, Spectorphilia, incest, rape/molestation, masturbation, polyamorous relationships, homoerotic, homosocial, and heterosexuality. Whereas, Damon Gulet's *In a Strange Room* and Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* depicted lesbianism, homosexuality and bisexuality. With the likes of Geraldine in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Mr Lebowitz in Duiker's *Thirteen Cents*, I agree with Tyson on biological essentialism, that the rest of the population is naturally heterosexual. I also agree with other critics that all human beings have the potential for sexual activity that does not fit into heterosexual framework. I share the opinion of social constructionism; that LGBTQ sexuality and heterosexuality are products of social, not biological forces; our societies are fast losing their mores, hence these evil practices. Since patriarchy is the law, no stiff penalty is effected on their wide spread jeopardizing habits. Queerness is a generational destroyer of both moral and humanity. This paper is emphatic that stiff penalties be brought on the practitioners of psychology of pedophile.*

### **Keywords**

*zoophilia, phytophilia, spectorphilia, psychology of a pedophile, non-procreative sex*

## 1. Introduction

There is no consensus on the exact cause of developing sexual orientation but genetic, hormonal, social and cultural influences have been examined. Scientists believe that sexual orientation is caused by a complex interplay of genetic, hormonal, and environmental influences. It is also discovered that female sexuality is more fluid than male sexuality because of female higher erotic plasticity, or to the social and cultural factors that socialize women to be more open to change (sexualfluiditypdfwikiwikipedia.org). The world is in an infinite continuum on gender and sexuality, and the acronym LGBTQ has gained recognition which symbolizes lesbians, gay, bisexual, transsexual and queer.

Sexuality has been an important and vital part of human existence through history. All civilizations have managed sexuality through sexual standards, representations, and behaviors. Human sexuality is the way people experience and express themselves sexually. This involves biological, erotic, physical, emotional, social, or spiritual feelings and behaviours. Human sexuality is complicated; the brain decides what gender one is affiliated to and the heart decides what it is attracted to and what spectrum of intensity. Sexual behavior or gender roles is predicated on societies' norms which put sexuality in a world of infinite continuum (sexuality, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/232363.php>). Sex as a biological word refers to masculine and feminine, male or female.

Gender expression or identity leads to different types of sexual orientations, and individuals and groups are now coming out of their closets to identify with their queer sexualities, as evil runs amok naked the world over. Queer sexualities include: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer (LGBTQ), asexual, deminsexual, androsexual, gynosexual, monosexual, aromantic, skoliosexual, polyamorpous, gynosexual, demiromantic, etc. Sexual fluidity is one or more changes in sexuality or sexual identity, sometimes known as sexual orientation identity. It is believed that sexual orientation is usually stable, whereas sexual orientation identity can change throughout individual's life and may not align with biological sex, or sexual behavior or actual sexual orientation (gender, <https://www.genderspectrum.org/quick-links/understanding-gender/>).

For the purpose of this paper we will discuss LGBTQ people as a group since they constitute some sort of homogenous collectivity. Certainly, they share in common the political, economic, social, and psychological oppression they suffer as members of a sexual minority. And for many thinkers, the enormity of this shared experience, and the potential for political power generated when LGBTQ people act as a group, is sufficient to support the claim that they should be considered in this light (Tyson, p. 307). We will discuss this topic using Queer literary theory.

## 2. Method

The word Queer has a range of meanings in literary studies today. As an inclusive term, it can refer to any piece of literary criticism that interprets a text from an LGBTQ perspective. Queer criticism reads texts to reveal the problematic quality of heterosexual and homosexual representations of sexual categories; they do not represent the dynamic range of human sexuality. For Queer theory “categories of sexualities cannot be defined by such simple oppositions as homosexual/heterosexual...It defines individual sexuality as fluid, fragmented, dynamic collectivity of possible sexualities...The word queer then, as an all-inclusive term, seeks to heal these divisions by offering a collective identity to which all LGBTQ people can belong” (Tyson, pp. 320-321).

For the queer therefore, the definition of one’s sexuality might be based on one’s preference for someone older or younger, for a human or an animal, for a single partner or a group activity, for oneself alone (as in masturbation) or for a variety of different partners. Other dimensions of sexuality do not involve object choice. For example Eva Kosofsky Sefgwick notes the intricacies of human sexuality might be based on such oppositions as “orgasmic/non-orgasmic, non-commercial/commercial, using bodies only/using manufacture objects, in private/in public, spontaneous/scripted. Or the definition of one’s sexuality might be based on one’s preference for particular acts, sensations, or physical types” (Tyson, p. 321). Queer theory then becomes an umbrella discourse for these aberrations.

Queer theory may be relatively new as a literary theory, but an in-depth reading of the novelistic genres reveal enormous representations of Queer writings in even heterosexual works, as are observed in our chosen novels under review namely: Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved*, respectively, Damon Galgut’s *In a Strange Room* and K Sello Duiker’s *Thirteen Cents*. This paper will examine among others: bestiality/zoophilia, phytophilia or dendraphilliac, spectrophilli, lesbianism, homosexuality, bisexuality, polyamorous relationship, masturbation, homoerotic, sexual assault-psychology of a pedophile; rape/molestation, homosocial and heterosexuality as contained in our above named texts. We will also allude to other related texts.

### 2.1 Bestiality/Zoophilia

This is a very common practice among the slaves who are confined to plantations and are far removed from the opposite sex; therefore they take to violation of animals. In Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* the Sweet home slaves; namely, Sixo, Paul A Garner, Paul D Garner, Paul F Garner, and Halle Suggs, were all involved in either bestiality or zoophilia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoophilia>). “All the Sweet Home young men were so sick with absence of women they had taken to calves” (p. 10). “All in their twenties, minus women, fucking cows, dreaming of rape which seems the solitary gift of life, thrashing on pallets, rubbing their thighs and waiting for the new girl, the one who took Baby Suggs’ place after Halle bought her with five years of Sundays...and the Sweet Home men abused cows...” (p. 11). Therefore, when Sethe agrees to marry Halle over the other Sweet Home young men, Paul D for

instance, imagines that “The jump...from a calf to a girl wasn’t all that mighty. Not the leap Halle believed it would be” (p. 11). And for the Sweet Home youth, bestiality becomes the only avenue to relieve their sexual emotion. On bestiality, the Holy Bible says “And if a man lies with a beast, he shall surely be put to death and you shall kill the beast” (Leviticus 20:15).

Beside the slavery times humans still indulge in zoophilia. Geraldine, in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, loves the company of the cat “the cat will jump into Geraldine’s lap. She will fondle that soft hill of hair and let the fur of the animal’s body seep over and into the deeply private areas of her lap...and she opens her legs just a little and the two of them will be still together, perhaps shifting a little together sleeping a little together until four o’clock, when the intruder (Louis, her husband) comes home from work...” (pp. 85-86). The Holy Bible also says “And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, you shall kill the woman and the beast...” (Leviticus 20:15).

The situation that warrants the Sweet Home young men go into bestiality could be explicated as predicated on their long abstinence and deprivation of female humans as sex partners, which further exposes the mysterious in and the conditions of slavery and isolation. Susan Corey in “The Grotesque in Morrison’s *Beloved*” says “the grotesque not only reveals the horror of slavery, but it also sets forth a vision of regeneration and healing” (p. 25). Paul D, the only surviving member of Sweet Home, heals out of the zoophilic instincts and enjoys heterosexual relationship with Sethe and this is regenerating.

Geraldine, strangely is more emotionally and sexually attracted and affectionate to the cat than she does for her son. And to a large extent her husband becomes an “intruder” as she relaxes with the cat. Geraldine as a zoophilia, sexually attracted to a cat, is a crime against nature. Her queer nature is beyond all explanations. She is married, has a son, which means she has heterosexual relationship with her husband and more so her husband is caring, he works to provide for his family and comes home after work-hours. The cat even recognizes that she has affection for her husband. There are few things stranger and more repulsive than bestiality. Again, The Holy Bible says “Whoever lies with a beast shall surely be put to death” (Exodus, 22:19). It is crossly inhuman and unnatural and an affront to God who created man and beast but gave man authority of all beasts and nature and empowered man to subdue and rule over them. Therefore, for man the highest form of God’s creation to put down himself to the level of an animal, is not only nastiness to himself but to God the Creator. “Neither shall you lie with any beast to defile yourself therewith; neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion” (Leviticus, 18:23). To say the least, Geraldine is confused.

#### 2.1.1 Zoophilia

In addition to the slaves involvement in bestiality, they commit to have sex with trees or zoophilia or dendrophilic (tree sex, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=zoophilia>). Sixo one of the Sweet Home Slaves, is so sex starved that he is aroused and attracted to trees. He simply drills a hole in a tree and sticking his member or (penis) into it, he reaches an orgasm that to some extent

relieves him of the ugly emotion. In so doing, Sixo becomes dendraphilliac and his attraction to trees make him phytophilliac. He confesses his attraction to tress to Paul F, Paul A, Paul D and Halle in the peculiar way that makes them cry-laugh. Sixo goes among trees at night. For dancing and to keep his bloodlines open, he says “Privately, alone, he did it. None of the rest of them had seen him at it but they could imagine it, and the image they pictured made them eager to laugh at him—in daylight, that is, when it was safe” (p. 12). Sixo’s pathetic situation predicated on slavery is beyond comprehension. But when he finds his thirty-mile woman, he enjoys a heterosexual relationship with her and never goes back to the tress until he is buried alive and shut by School Teacher, the slave master.

### 2.1.2 Spectorphilli

The phenomenon of sexual encounter between ghosts and humans or spectorphilli—could be imposed of it is a choice for some humans as a form of sexual identity. In *Beloved* the author portrays the multilayered meanings of the queer theory adequately. She abandons the traditional demarcation between same sex and opposite-sex love and between the “natural” and the “unnatural”. Beloved the ghost, sexually arouses Paul D as she lets out her shine to overshadow him. “that is how Beloved looked—gilded and shining” (p. 64), Paul D says. She then hypnotizes him into a spectorphillia relationship and becomes pregnant as a result. She manipulates and forces him out of 124 into a shade behind the house, a cold storeroom. Beloved shows up and asks him to touch her and call her by name otherwise she will not depart “You have to touch me. On the inside part. And you have to call me by my name” (p. 117). On insistence and under the spell of this ghost, when she moves closer to him “what he knew was that when he reached the inside part he was saying Red heart. Red heart, over and over again” (p. 117). Ron David believes that Paul D “wasn’t seduced by her beauty, he was compelled by the intensity of what—her ravenous need to grab all the life she’d been deprived of, her two-year-old mind in the body of a twenty-year-old woman, her need to exact a price from her mother...and her greedy love of her mother” (p. 121). Paul D is incapacitated; he is an unwilling partner in this queer relationship. He has a strong feeling to knock her down but remains waned.

### 2.1.3 Polyamorous Relationship

In Morrison’s *Beloved*, when Halle and Sethe consummate their love in a corn field “And taking her in corn-field rather than her quarters, a yard away from the cabins of the others who had lost out, was a gesture of tenderness” (*Beloved*, pp. 16-17). “Who could miss a ripple in a cornfield on a quiet cloudless day?” Sixo and both of the Pauls sit under Brother (Tree) pouring water from a gourd over their heads and through eyes streaming with well water, they watched the confusion of tassels in the field below. It had been hard, hard, hard, hard sitting there erect as dogs, watching corn stalks dance at noon. The water running over their heads made it worse (*Beloved*, pp. 26-27). This polyamorous relationship is unconscious and closed, because the relational partners Halle and Sethe did not know nor permit Sixo and the Pauls to watch their sexual relationship, but they did. Again the sexual

relationship between Sethe and Paul D—one of the Sweet Home young men, who escapes and locates Sethe in 124 Blue Stone House in Cincinnati, Denver become an uninvited partaker. As Sethe and Paul relate sexually, Denver over hears their sexual noises and she is miserable, more so since Paul D rid her of the only other company she had; the baby ghost. This is closed because the relational partners were not conscious or agree to permit their romantic or sexual relationship with other people, and in this instance, certainly not with Denver, Sethe’s daughter. Whereas, Geraldine in Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, subjects her young son to a polyamorous relationship and bestiality consciously. It was not long before the child Junior, discovers the difference in his mother’s behavior to himself and the cat and this has an inverse effect on Junior. As he grows older, he learns how to direct his hatred of his mother to the cat and spends some happy moment watching it suffer (p. 86). The boy grows up with a lot of bitterness and total hatred for the cat and hunts to kill it at the least opportunity. Mrs. Geraldine is a biological essentialist in spite of having a husband and a son; she enjoys erotic feelings with her cat over the husband and her son. It is believed that all human beings have the potential for same-sex desire or sexual activity that does not fit into heterosexual framework, Mrs. Geraldine here is a typical example of such, and the ripple effect may be the child developing strong revulsion for women and animals and the instinct to kill both at the least opportunity.

#### 2.1.4 Lesbianism

In Morrison’ *Beloved*, Beloved the ghost is also into a lesbian relationship with Sethe “they stayed that way for a while because neither Denver nor Sethe knew how not to stop and not love the look or feel of the lips that kept on kissing” (p. 97). Beloved craves for Sethe and confesses her strong love for her “she does not love me like I love her. I don’t love nobody but her” (p. 116). Sethe, the unwilling partner could not separate herself from her. Beloved is a predatory lesbian lover; she consumes Sethe’s life to the extent that Sethe becomes thinner while she grows bigger. Beloved’s obsessive attachment to Sethe, equates Denver’s fanatical bond with Beloved; which puts the trio in a lesbian relationship. Also in Maya Angelou’s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (Caged Bird)*, Maya actually feels sexually aroused at the sight of her girlfriend’s breast, in spite of her mother’s reassurance that she is not a lesbian or a hermaphrodite. “She feels there is something queer about her” (p. 279). With the knowledge acquired from her reading of *The Well of Loneliness*, sixteen-year-old Maya thinks she is a lesbian or a hermaphrodite “with a heavy voice, more feminine hands and feet, breast sadly underdeveloped—almost like skin-swellings...Armpits as smooth as her face, with mysterious growth developing on her body that defied explanation” (pp. 273-274), Maya’s features that defile her placement in the masculine or the feminine gender category set her aside from others and sickens her mind into queerness.

Similarly in Alice Walker's *Color Purple*, Celie and Shug Avery are lesbian partners. Celie, a mother of two through molestation, rape and incest, cherishes her lesbian relationship with Shug than heterosexual bonding with her husband Albert. Again in Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Olivia loves Tashi sexually. As she pleads with Tashi not to go away to join the *Mbeles*—core traditionalists—who have sent a captured donkey for her ride, Olivia crying says “tell me to do anything, and I will do it”. “Tell me to go anywhere, and I will go”. Tashi “was like a lover” (p. 20), to Olivia. Alice Walker believes a woman can love another woman sexually, Olivia clings to Tashi as lesbians do, sexually and pleads with her as heterosexual lovers do. Likewise, in Damon Galgut's *In a Strange Room*, Anna lives with a lesbian lover in Cape Town for eight years. Lesbians deny patriarchy one of its most powerful tools: heterosexuality. For some feminists, “heterosexuality is not a ‘natural’ sexual orientation for ‘normal’ women but a political institution that subordinates women to patriarchy in that women's subservience to men is built into heterosexual definition of feminine sexuality” (Tyson, p. 310). Lesbianism is a cursed relationship, the Bible in 1 Corinthians 6:9, calls it effeminate or abusers of themselves with mankind, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Again The Holy Bible says “You shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind. It is an abomination” (Leviticus 18:22).

#### 2.1.5 Homosexuality/Gay

In the instance of homosexuality/Gay, not all cultures share the same definition. In Latin America for instance, a man may have affairs with other men but since he still behaves in a traditionally male manner—strong dominant and decisive—and consistently assumes male sexual role as penetrator—a macho, a “real” man. He can also be a bisexual in the culture, he is not called a homosexual. In North America only men who allow themselves to be penetrated and behaved in a traditionally feminine manner—submissive, coy, flirtatious, “soft” were considered homosexuals. In ancient Athens, the elite male ruling class could have social inferior—women and boys past age of puberty and were not looked at as homosexuals. Historically, certain sexual acts—all forms of non-procreative sex—were forbidden by Church or State, but they were not viewed as evidence of a specific sexual identity. The medical professions promoted homosexual identity as a medical and pathological disorder. Therefore, these homosexuals would rather be called gay (Tyson, pp. 313-314). In Damon Galgut's *In a Strange Room*, Jerome is sexually attracted to Damon. Though bashful, Jerome finds an audience with Damon and taking hold of his hand nervously ask Damon to go with him to Switzerland (p. 120). In response to this intimate closeness, Damon finds himself sweating in his palms, “my heart is hammering” (p. 121). Damon may not like Reiner, his roommate, as a sex partner, but his response to Jerome is more involved. Damon responds more to homosexual relationships than to heterosexual relationship. When Anna pleads with him to have sex with her, he recoils, and though he shares rooms with Anna throughout their trip to India, he is not attracted to her sexually. Damon may be said to be androgynous or asexual.

In K Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents*, Richard invites the young homeless orphan Gemors otherwise, called Azure or Blue to his flat with three other guys, and after feeding him they all have oral sex with him. He laments:

...shoves his dick into my mouth. Open properly...take it all in...I do as I'm told. He stands there and starts rocking his pelvis. My jaws get tired. I take his dick out of my month and want him...I put it back in my mouth. The door opens...Richard takes out his piel from my mouth but he doesn't put it away. He starts playing with himself while I suck the other's piel. Soon they all join in and take turns with my mouth...they are giving me their salt...I start sweating. After a while my jaws become stiff but I continue sucking their smelly dicks with white stuff like pap on them. They made me give them blowjobs till they all come (p. 63).

And whatever sperm the poor boy could not swallow, they all spilled same all over his T-shirt. This homeless youth is gang raped by adult members of society. Again Mr Lebowitz, an investment banker, negotiates and invites this thirteen-year-old Blue to his gorgeous home in an exclusive part of Cape Town for homosexual purpose and records the affair with a hidden camera. Blue confesses "he spreads me on the wide bed and starts sucking my dick...He turns over and lies on his back. I take his banana dick in my hand and start stroking it...I just suck and play with my tongue on his banana dick...and a fountain of sperm pours out of his banana dick and land on his chest..." And this taking of turns continues almost the whole night long.

Mr. Lebowitz, an Investment Banker, cannot even be called a macho or a "real" man in this homosexual game with a thirteen-year-old boy. They take turns in the filth, though he does not behave in a traditionally feminine manner—submissive, coy, flirtatious, and "soft". He pays Blue even more than they bargained for. But to submit to this degradation with a youth is pitiable. Queers can really be said to be sick products of a sick society. Homosexuality like lesbianism is an outrage. The Holy Bible in 1 Corinthians 6:9, calls it effeminate or abusers of themselves with mankind, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Again The Holy Bible says "You shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind. It is an abomination" (Leviticus 18:22). It is really an atrocity. Yet young Blues does it for a living. He says "I know how to please a man...I have done this a thousand times. They all like it if you play with the part between their balls and asshole" (p. 98). He gives the proceeds from this abomination to Joyce who is old enough to be Blue's grandmother, for safe keeping, but she misappropriates the money he gets from homosexuality and when this homeless and deformed youth demands for his money, she slaps him across the face "My nose starts bleeding and I let the blood drip" (P. 88), thereafter, Joyce pushes him out of her house without his clutches. She too becomes part of this infamy.



### 2.1.6 Bisexual/Masturbator

Mr. Lebowitz is also a bisexual, he tells Blue that his family is on holiday. As he prepares for his illicit affair with this youth, he walks over to piano where there are pictures of his family. He turns them all over as if they will see and hear everything. Reiner in Galgut's *In a Strange Room* is likewise bisexual. He involves in heterosexual relationship though with whores, but he still seeks homosexual affair with other men.

Initially, medical professions considered masturbators to be people with medical and pathological sexual identity. In Morrison's *Beloved*, the other Sweet Home young men sit back to masturbate as Halle and fourteen-year-old Sethe make love in the cornfield; though Halle wants privacy for themselves but he has uninvited watchers. Again, in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, some "slow-footed teen-aged boys huddled about the corner. These young boys met there to feel their groins...and exposed themselves, to those who were interested as novices to the habits" (35, these youth indulge themselves in masturbation.). Also in Galgut's *In a Strange Room*, "Damon wakes in the middle of the night...to the sound of Roderigo furtively masturbating under the sheets" (p. 121). Masturbation can occur in the case of a homoerotic sight as in the case of the young Sweet Home slaves watching Halle and Sethe make love in the cornfield, or can be induced as those teenagers fondle with their groins to force masturbation. It can also occur unconsciously as in the case of sleeping Roderigo. This is a queer way of relieving oneself of sexual emotions. The Holy Bible in Leviticus 22:4 says "... a man whose seed goes from him", which is masturbation, shall remain unclean and shall not eat of the holy things, especially the Priest of God.

### 2.1.7 Homoerotic

Another episode of queerness includes homoerotic which is exemplified in Angelou's *Caged Bird*. Maya has a homoerotic feeling at the sight of her girlfriend's nakedness. In Galgut's *In a Strange Room*, Reiner comes out unto the room, drying his long hair with a towel. He is wearing the same black pants as yesterday, but no shirt, his body is brown and hard, perfectly proportioned. He knows that he is beautiful (p. 21). Reiner consciously directs this homoerotic feeling to Damon his roommate, thereby inviting him to a homosexual relationship to which Damon did not respond. Reiner often allows his cloth fall off his body, and this careless abandonment feels like an announcement of some kind. Thus exposing the long brown place where the "buttocks divide, where paler skin makes fur and shadow stand out in relief, now Reiner turns, there is the briefest flash of an erection" (p. 43), invariably, Reiner puts a longing and a moral confusion in Damon. Again Reiner takes to bathing himself either in a river, if there is one or in water from the water-bottles. Then he dries himself and sits on a rock rubbing creams (p. 57). "Reiner is full of smug satisfaction, brown locks bouncing on his shoulders". His nakedness before another male Damon gives Reiner some pleasure that is carnal. Since Reiner is the financier of the tripe with Damon, Reiner knows, money is never just money alone, it is a symbol for

other deeper things, on this trip how much you love is a sign of how loved you are, Reiner hoards the love he dispenses it as a favour. "I am endlessly gnawed by the absence of love, to be loveless is to be without power" (p. 57), Damon laments. Damon, as much as possible tries to overcome this homosexual nature in his partner by always looking the other way. Damon is demiromantic; he has no romantic attraction to both male and female, though he may be more prone to homosexuality. Still in Galgut's *In a Strange Room*, Anna's naked body in the hospital (p. 177) gives everyone who sees her stark nakedness a homoerotic feeling.

Similarly, in Duiker's *Thirteen Cents*, Gerald "takes off his clothes and sits naked on the chair" before Blue. Further, he makes them have a bath together "we both were. I dry myself with the rag. He uses a towel" (p. 86). Gerald puts himself in the position of a guardian to the young boy after having killed Azure's parents and changes his name to Blue, but he introduces him to homosexuality. Still in *Thirteen Cents* as the *Moffies* (male prostitutes) walk by, one of them, Mr. Lebowitz sits beside Blue "and opens his legs. A big banana is between his legs" (p. 93), he exposes his penis to this youth and eventually they negotiate the terms and the man takes Blue to his exquisite home. There, they had a bath naked before each other and they bounce their penis every, and Blue hold his dick and say "Pleased to meet you...and he laughs..." (p. 99). The bathroom is all mirrors such that you can see your whole naked body. They both "walk round the house naked" (p. 100) while Mr Lebowitz prepares food. Generally, LGBTQ people seen not closeted on pornography.

#### 2.1.8 Psychology of a Peadophile

This is the molestation of children with the threats to harm. Generally, is a violent crime and includes, rape, child sexual abuse, incest etc. Of the most heinous mind-set of the LGBTQ people is the psychology of a peadophile which has become a common place phenomenon all over the world cultures and most writers depict same in their works. In Angelou's *Caged Bird*, Mr Freeman, a live-in friend of Vivian Baxter Maya's mother, rapes eight-year-old Maya. This is "a heart-rending situation of betrayal, abuse, oppression and exploitation of an eight-year-old body" (p. 78). Mr Freeman threatens to kill her only brother Bailey, if she lets the cat out of the bag. The abuse is a matter of opportunity; the child is a sexual surrogate for him since Vivian is always not available. Through this sexual assault he seeks to dominate and control Maya but wants her to believe his affection to her. Opal Moore, commenting on issue of rape in *Caged Bird*, says "it raises issues of trust, truth and lie, love, the naturalness of a child's craving for human contact, language and understanding, and the confusion engendered by the power disparities that necessarily exist between children and adults" (p. 77). We agree with Moore that young Maya hungers for human contact since Vivian is never there for her. Likewise, in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* Cholly Breedlove, in his drunken stupor commits inbreeding or incest by raping his eleven-year-old daughter Pecola. "He wanted to fuck her—tenderly. But the tenderness would not hold. The tightness of her vagina was more than he could bear. His soul seemed

to slip down to his guts and fly out to his guts and fly out into her, and the gigantic thrust he made into her then provoked the only sound she made—a hollow surge of air in the back of her throat. Like the rapid loss of air from a circus balloon” (pp. 162-163). This hallowing experience pushes the child into unconsciousness. “Removing himself from her was so painful to him he cut it short and snatched his genitals out of the dry harbor of her vagina. She appeared to have fainted” (p. 163). Cholly’s inhuman, forceful penetration of an eleven-year-old child and the brutal extrication of his penis from “dry harbor of her vagina” are barbarous and felonious. “So when the child regained consciousness, she was lying on the kitchen floor...trying to connect the pain between her legs with the face of her mother looming over her” (p. 163).

The fact of a father traumatizing his child through raping his young virgin daughter to unconsciousness is nothing but queer. Thus Pecola carries her father’s pregnancy which is a concern to the whole community “But so deeply concerned were we with the health and safe delivery of Pecola’s baby we could think of nothing...” (p. 7).

“Did you hear about that little girl”

“What? Pregnant?”

“Yes but guess who?”...

“That’s just it. Ain’t no little old boy. They say it’s Cholly”

“Cholly her daddy? (pp. 188-189).

The community is embarrassed, sorrowful, disgusted, amused, shocked, outraged, or even excited by the story. Yet they did not rise up against Cholly, but everyone wants the baby dead. Cholly himself is raped by three women in his tender years “three women were leaning out of two windows. They see the long clan neck of a new young boy and call to him. He goes to where they are. Inside is dark and warm. They give him lemonade in a Mason jar. As he drinks, their eyes floated up to him through the bottom of the jar, through the slick sweet water. They give him back his manhood, which he takes aimlessly” (pp. 158-159). That these women gang raped a youth without the milk of human kindness goes to confirm what Tyson calls “biological essentialism” (p. 306), most of which are “closeted”.

The acts of fathers raping and impregnating their daughters seem common place. In Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, Jim Trueblood, rapes and impregnates his daughter Mattie Lou, and in Alice Walker’s *Color Purple*, Celie’s step-father Fonso also molests, rapes and impregnates her twice and physically abuses her. Akin to Freeman in Angelou’s *Caged Bird*, and Cholly in Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, Fonso uses Celie as proxy since her mother is ill. And after the death of her mother Fonso, seeks to extend his evil emotion to her younger sister Nattie, but Celie always surrenders herself in place of her sister. This racial stereotype is patronized and perpetuated by patriarchy.

Cholly like Trueblood suffers from homophobia. Cholly is sensitive to patriarchy’s stance on his queer relationship with his eleven-year-old daughter and therefore, he absconds. Trueblood also flees for a

while but comes back home realizing that both his wife and daughter are pregnant for him at the same time. Unlike Cholly's wife who never reacted as she sees her almost lifeless daughter on the kitchen floor, Kate, Trueblood's wife yells at him, she attempts to shot him with a gun, but she strikes him in the face with an ax, which is a more natural reaction to such a sordid deed than in Cholly's case who simply walks away unchallenged. Also unlike the black community in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* who remained mute or just reduced such repugnant act to a gossip, in Ellison's *Invisible Man* the black community scorns Trueblood, though the white community applauds him. In Maya Angelou's *Caged Bird*, Vivian Baxter and her sixteen-year-old son Bailey were tangled in the "Oedipal skein. Neither could do without or do with the other...Bailey was hopelessly in love with Mother Dear..." (p. 257). It is on the constrictions of conscience and society, morality and ethos (heteropatriarchy), that dictate a separation otherwise mother/son would be involved in incest. The Holy Bible says all forms of incest are abomination and are forbidden "None shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him to uncover their nakedness" (Leviticus 18:6).

Furthermore, in *The Bluest Eye* Elihue Micah Witcomb alias Soaphead Church, is a wide spread evil influence on the tender and innocent members of society. In his queerness, he prefers sexual intercourse with little children than with adults. The author says:

His sexuality is anything but lewd; his patronage of little girls smacked of innocence and was associated in his mind with cleanliness. He was what one might call a very "clean" old man....And besides, the one thing that disgusted him more than entering and caressing a woman was caressing and being caressed by a man. In any case, his cravings although intense, never relished physical contact. He abhorred flesh on flesh. Body odor, breath odor, overwhelmed him. The sight of dried matter in the corner of the eye, decayed or missing teeth, ear wax, blackheads, moles, blisters, skin crusts, all the natural excretions and protractions the body was capable of—disquieted him. His attention therefore, gradually settled on those humans whose bodies were least offensive—children (p. 166).

Soaphead's permissive queerness is pathological and he should be castrated. His reprobate mind turns him to be sexually attracted to children for their state of purity. He exploits the innocence of these defenseless ones and to a large extent may maim them perpetually. LGBTQ people are said to be sick and evil products from a sick and evil society or environment. Though Lois Tyson believes that "LGBTQ orientation is a normal response to particular environmental factors and therefore, LGBTQ people should be accepted as normal" (Tyson, p. 306), Soaphead's sexual character, his possession of the structural functional traits of sexual molestation and child sexual abuse are damaging to the future generation if he goes unchallenged. In particular, he prefers little girls to little boys because the boys

were insulting, scary, and stubborn. The girls were usually manageable and frequently seductive. These are future mothers who will replenish the world! Still, in *The Bluest Eye*, Mr Henry molests young girls, even within their homes. He pinches young Frieda on the breast while the parents were in the garden: “He touched me...here and there. Frieda points to the tiny breasts that like two fallen acorns” (p. 99). The corrupting influences of this old man on the youth not only put sensual thought on the minds of these innocent ones but also corrupt even the language; Claudia asks Frieda “He showed his privates at you”? “He touched me”...“How did it feel”? The early awakening of carnal emotions in the heart and minds of the youth create negative effect on hands that will rub the cradle and by inference on society as a whole.

Child sexual abuse is a crime against humanity. It is a type of maltreatment, violation and exploitation that refers to the involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification, false affection or protection, or financial benefit. Abuse of this vulnerable member of our society is pathetic. Over three million children are sexually abused and some result in death, some are traumatized for life, some develop negative self-image, some are maimed; only a few go through therapy and prayers to live normal lives. Every society have laid out laws against offenders, but the queer people still find a haven in this doleful sin and most often go pass the law, because the whole society has decided to call evil, good thus reversing societal values. The Holy Bible also places a curse on anyone who commits incest and death penalty is put on such a one.

#### 2.1.9 Homosocial

One of the attributes of the LGBTQ people common to the straight people alike is homosocial—bonding or Woman-identified woman or what Adrienne Rich calls “A lesbian continuum” (Tyson, p. 310). This type of coming together connotes nothing sexual between or among women; just one’s primary source of emotional sustenance and psychological support as in the occurrence of the three prostitutes in Morrison’s *The Bluest Eyes*. The bonding among these prostitutes: China, Poland, and Miss Maria, help Pecola in her social and emotional experiences and trials as she carries her father’s pregnancy. In Alice Walker’s *Color Purple*, Celie frees herself from her husband’s brutality as she reaches out to other women like her younger sister Nettie and Sofia. Homosocial bonding is vital to the emotional growth of children and the emotional health of adults, regardless of their sexual orientations, however many individuals are apprehensive about some forms of same-sex bonding due to their own homophobia or for the fear of nymphomaniac response from others. Though some feminists believe strongly that women-only-groups are necessary for the development of non-patriarchal ways of thinking and speaking, yet the fear of queer relationships among such associations persists.

Ironically some LGBTQ people commit themselves to heterosexuality, though attitudes on heterosexuality greatly differ from culture to culture. In Morrison’s *Beloved* Halle and Sethe involve in heterosexuality in the cornfield and in their cabin and become parents of four children. Paul D enjoys

heterosexual relationship with Sethe until the coming of the coming of Beloved the ghost. “He was accustomed to having sex with Sethe just about every day, and to avoid the confusion Beloved’s shining caused him he still made it his business to take her back upstairs in the morning, or lie down with her after supper” (p. 115). Since Sethe cannot pay the engraver for Beloved’s name to be engraved on the grave stone she trades ten minutes of heterosexual relationship with the engraver for cash payment. Sixo travels sixty miles to and fro every Sunday to meet his Thirty-Mile Woman. In Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, Geraldine also engages in heterosexual relationship with her husband. Geraldine’s involvement in heterosexuality and zoophilia/bestiality is complicated and inexplicable psychological trauma. Even the cat recognizes her love for her husband, and the cat also knows she does not love her son. Shug in Walker’s *The Color Purple*, engages and loves in heterosexual relationship, and she is also Celie’s lesbian partner. Reiner in Galgut’s *In a Strange Room* also likes involves with prostitutes. He confesses “when I was in Canada I started sleeping with whores” (p. 43). He is an unscrupulous seducer of women—Casanova or man-whore, promiscuous, philanderer—he engages in many love affairs, especially with the frivolous or women with casual attitude. Reiner participates in heterosexual relationship though with whores. When Anna in Galgut’s *In a Strange Room* has the opportunity to go on a holiday in India she shows her dissatisfaction with lesbian relationship. She takes to sleeping with any male who accepts her. Eventually, she hooks up with the Jean, a fellow tourist and becomes totally repulsive of her lesbian partner (p. 179). She prefers suicide rather than continue in that relationship. Damon reporting Anna’s unfaithfulness to her lesbian partner laments “Anna had an affair over here...with a man. Yes. She was determined to do it...and any man would do” (p. 183). Anna prefers heterosexuality to lesbianism. Anna’s family, who have never liked the idea of her being with a woman seized on this alternative future with a man and are pushing it delightedly.

### 3. Conclusion

From the above interrogation of these novels by both African and African American writers, we can conclude that heterosexual writers engage in queer writings. There is a universalizing view that there are some homosexual potential in all humans, since all writers write from their personal and social experiences. The idea of queerness is very fluid. And to some extent women senselessly involve themselves in queer relationships. For instance, In Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, the case of Geraldine’s involvement in bestiality, and Cholly being gang raped in his youth by older women. Anna’s lesbian partner in Galgut’s *In a Strange Room*, is ready to spend whatever amount of resources it takes to keep Anna, whereas Anna now prefers heterosexual relationship. The attitude of the women may go to confirm the discovery that female sexuality is more fluid than male sexuality.

It is also very pitiable that older men who should be the custodians of the people's culture sadly revere in psychology of a pedophile: rape, incest, molestation, and homosexuality. Society should checkmate some of these atrocious levels of queerness in the likes of Cholly in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* who violently rapes and impregnates his eleven-year-old daughter Pocola, and Soaphead Church, still in the same novel that shamelessly molests both fond boys and girls with strong preference for the girls for their tenderness. In so doing Cholly and Church are destroying innocent generations before they take root in their environments. Blue, in Duiker's *Thirteen Cents*, like Cholly is gang raped, not by women but by men. He sells out himself to men to make a living being an orphan and homeless; and he is patronized by wealthy and influential men like Mr Lebowitz an Investment Banker. On the part of the slaves, at Sweet Home, their queerness is circumstantial-predicated on the slavery situation; they regenerate as soon as they come in contact with human females. For example, Halle, as soon as he marries Sethe gives up on bestiality, Sixo, as quickly as he finds the thirty-mile woman prefers the long trek to meet with the woman than bestiality and fucking trees, and Paul D gives up bestiality; enjoys and loves heterosexual relationship with Sethe after he breaks free from the chain gang and meets up with Sethe. Queerness is a generational destroyer of both moral and humanity. Both men and women are given to reprobate minds but men are seen to be more prone to wide spread endangering habits of this queerness; being patriarchy, they go free of sanctions from law and society.

All queer relationships can be said to be abnormal and unnatural and those involved most often are bisexuals or practice their different forms of queerness alongside heterosexuality. We agree with Tyson on what he calls biological essentialism that is that a fix segment of the population is naturally LGBTQ, just as the rest of the population is naturally heterosexual. We also agree with some theorists who believe that "all human beings have the potential for same-sex desire or the sexual activity that does not fit into heterosexual framework. Accordingly, we acknowledge the view of social constructionism; that LGBTQ sexuality and heterosexuality are products of social, not biological forces. From the foregoing queerness has become a subculture because our societies seem to be losing their mores.

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