



Lesbianism and its Complexities: An Analysis of *Amanyal' Enyoka* by B Chili and M Ndlovu

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v7i8.2175>

Abstract

This paper analyses the representation of homosexuality regarding lesbianism as portrayed in the play *Amanyal' Enyoka* (2013) by Buyi Chili and Mandla Ndlovu. The main characters in *Amanyal' Enyoka*, Pat and Sindi, a married couple, are portrayed as lesbians and are used to explore female same-sex relationships in a society dominated by heterosexuality, homophobia, and heterosexism. The paper aims to challenge ways of thinking about gender and sexuality. The findings are that the general representation of lesbians in the play shows that a large part of society does not understand the dynamics of sexual diversity, particularly in semi-rural and rural areas. This misunderstanding creates unfounded claims about homosexuality and exposes homosexuals to further stigmatisation. The government and relevant stakeholders need to do more awareness to educate society about the misogyny that lesbians face and create safe environments for their well-being.

Keywords: *Queer; Sex; Gender; Lesbian*

Introduction and Literature Review

South African literary works written in indigenous languages reflects traditional norms, often side-lining or even excluding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and Others (LGBTQIA+) topics, queer¹ women in particular. The literature frequently interweaves elements like culture, religion, social class, and moral values, but the trend towards more acceptance of diverse gender representation is lacking. Overall, African language literature is less inclusive, with writers playing fewer roles in advocating for queer women's visibility and social change. As there are very few Indigenous

¹ The term queer will be used in the study to generally refer to any member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and Others (LGBTQIA+) community.

African literary works themed on queer women, the following literature review focuses on the representation of queer people in South Africa in general.

Walter's (2006) research, *"Out in the Media?"* explores the South African media landscape, emphasising its growing acknowledgement of the importance of diversity in storytelling, including better representation of races, women, and coverage of issues like HIV/AIDS and gender. It highlights progress in the media's portrayal of the LGBTI community but notes that there is still room for improvement. The study highlights challenges and opportunities for the media and LGBTI sector to collaborate for more accurate and constructive coverage. It advocates for campaigns against discriminatory media practices. It calls for a collective effort from various stakeholders to enhance the representation of LGBTI issues, contributing to the broader objective of media development.

Monamedi's (2009) Masters Dissertation titled *Rainbow Pride in The Rainbow Nation: The Fictional Representation of Lesbians on the South African Broadcasting Corporation* discusses the portrayal of lesbians in TV shows on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), specifically looking at "Hard Copy" and "Society". It emphasises the need for diverse media representation in a democracy, commenting on SABC's efforts for often presenting lesbians through stereotypes and lacking in diversity. Characters tend to be de-sexualised and not fully fleshed out, with a focus on entertainment over accurate and diverse representation. This portrayal indicates a significant area for improvement to reflect and serve all citizens, including marginalised communities.

In her Masters Study, *Lumberjacks and Hoodrats: Negotiating Subject Positions of Lesbian Representation in Two South African Television Programmes*, Donaldson (2011) explores the perceptions of lesbian women in South Africa regarding the depiction of lesbian characters on local TV amidst post-apartheid changes. Despite constitutional protections, prejudices and hate crimes like corrective rape persist. Through focus groups and critical discursive psychology, the study reveals that racial stereotypes prevail in these portrayals, with white lesbians often depicted as masculine "lumberjacks" or "tomboys," and black lesbians as "township lesbians" or "hood rats." The participants expressed feelings of otherness and employed survival strategies, but struggled to reconcile their identities against the backdrop of prevailing heteronormative and religious narratives.

Potgieter and Reygan's (2012) article, *Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Citizenship: A Case Study as Represented in a Sample of South African Life Orientation Textbooks*, examines the representation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) identities in South African Life Orientation textbooks for Grades 7-12. Despite laws supporting LGBTI rights, their analysis found inconsistencies in how these identities are portrayed: gay male identities are sometimes represented, while lesbian and bisexual identities are seldom acknowledged, and transgender and intersex identities are entirely omitted. This absence not only fails to reflect the experiences of LGBTI learners but also misses an opportunity to combat discrimination and promote social justice and citizenship concerning LGBTI issues within the educational system of South Africa.

Botha's (2013) article titled, *The Representation of Gays and Lesbians in South African Cinema 1985–2013*, investigates the representation of gays and lesbians in South African cinema from 1985 to 2013, revealing their marginal presence despite a progressive constitution and an active gay rights movement in South Africa. The study finds minimal representation in short films, documentaries, and feature films, with these identities often stereotyped during apartheid and facing challenges even in the post-apartheid era, particularly within Afrikaans-language cinema. Botha suggests that the portrayal of gay and lesbian characters often perpetuates stereotypes, highlighting broader issues of visibility and acceptance within the country's media landscape, a trend that also reflects wider patterns in African cinema.

Mutambanengwe (2014) in his Masters Dissertation titled, “*Totally Unacceptable*”: *Representations of Homosexuality in South African Public Discourse*, states that The 1996 Constitution of South Africa, celebrated for its liberal and democratic values, ensures rights such as freedom of sexual orientation and equality. Despite this, he finds that the LGBT community continues to face discrimination. His study analyses how homosexuality is portrayed in South African media from 1999 to 2013, using articles from the Independent Online media site. It reveals that homosexuality is negatively framed as “un-African,” “ungodly,” and “unnatural.” The study argues that violent acts against LGBT individuals should be viewed in the context of these prevailing negative narratives.

Carlse (2018) article, *Black Lesbian Identities in South Africa: Confronting a History of Denial*, discusses the challenges faced by black lesbians in South Africa, including hate crimes and corrective rape, rooted in the country's denial of their identity. It explores the historical and ongoing discrimination through three specific aspects: imperial and apartheid-era policing, the misconception that same-sex intimacy is un-African, and inaccurate interpretations by global feminist lesbian perspectives. The article highlights the activism of Zanele Mholi and Nkunzi Zandile Nkabinde, who work within the community to promote education and dialogue. It underscores the importance of integrating African perspectives into the discourse on sexuality, following Msibi's 2014 advocacy, to broaden and enrich the understanding of sexual identities.

Nahole's (2023) PhD study, *Sexuality in Fiction: Exploring the Literary Portrayal of LGBTQI Characters in Selected African Texts*, examines the depiction of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex characters in six African literary works. Through the lens of queer theory, the research reveals a spectrum of societal attitudes toward Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) individuals, predominantly negative, reflecting the serious repercussions of coming out in these settings. Despite various survival strategies, LGBTQI people endure considerable societal challenges. The study underscores the importance of incorporating queer-inclusive literature into university curricula to promote understanding and calls for further research to address homophobia.

The literature review discussed above collectively underline progress yet highlight substantial gaps in achieving full LGBTQIA+ inclusivity and diversity in South African. The present research will close some of the gaps identified by analysing the representation of homosexuality with reference to lesbianism as portrayed in the play, *Amanyal' Enyoka* (2013) by Buyi Chili and Mandla Ndlovu. Multiple queer theoretical approaches will be applied in the paper, but ideologies from lesbian feminism will be used as the primary basis. Lesbian feminism is a theory that stems from gay women who are born homosexual but have a problem with society's negative attitude towards queer people. The main characters in *Amanyal' Enyoka*, Pat and Sindi, who are portrayed as lesbians, will be used to explore female same-sex relationships in a society dominated by heterosexuality, homophobia, heterosexism and challenge ways of thinking about gender and sexuality. The paper will begin by summarising the play in question and then analyse it by looking at aspects such as lesbian relationships, sexual preference and gender identity, domestic abuse, lesbophobia, and the overall depiction of lesbianism in relation to Pat and Sindi.

Synopsis of the Play, *Amanyal' Enyoka*

Amanyal' Enyoka, freely translated as ‘rare wonder or something unbelievable’, is a play where we find two main female characters, Phathekile ‘Pat’ Nhlapho and Sindi Ngema, who are married and live together regardless of their community’s disapproval. Pat is rich and older than Sindi and takes the role of ‘the husband’ in the marriage, whilst Sindi is a young and submissive wife. Pat grew up showing signs of being masculine. She spent much time playing with boys and wearing boy clothes. Although Pat identified as a man, she had a boyfriend, Mthunzi, before she met Cindy. Mthunzi broke up with Pat after finding out that she was pregnant. Pat’s heartbreak made her lose trust in men, and she decided to be in a

relationship with the same sex. Pat joined a gay movement at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, where she met Sindi.

Sindi left her home in Gauteng to study in KwaZulu-Natal after her estranged boyfriend, Tebogo 'Tebza' Baloyi, betrayed her. After paying *lobola* (bride price) for Sindi and having impregnated her, Tebogo had an affair with another woman, and Sindi broke off their engagement, but they would secretly continue dating. Sindi terminated her pregnancy when she arrived in KwaZulu Natal. Pat had always insisted that she would not be in a relationship with a woman who had a child to avoid 'baby-daddy-drama'. This choice is ironic because Pat had a child with Mthunzi before meeting Sindi.

Before Pat and Cindi married, their parents did not understand what was happening to them, especially Cindi's family, but they unhappily agreed. The conflict in the play happens when Pat hires Thiza as their wedding organiser. The wedding could have gone better as the Disc Jockey (DJ) organised, Tebogo, did not show up at their wedding. This incident made Pat unhappy, and she did not pay Thiza the total amount. Thiza, with his friends Tebogo and Thula, plotted to get Thiza's money back from Pat.

Tebogo opened a case against Pat after she let her dogs chase him after being caught with Sindi in Pat's home. The police officers, Captain Njilo (Thula) and Sergeant Zinhle Njapha (Thiza's girlfriend), pretended to arrest Pat, and before they apprehended her, she was mocked about her sexuality. On the way to prison, Pat was made to pay a bribe to Njilo and Zinhle so that she could return home. That bribe was used to settle Thiza's outstanding cost for organising the wedding. Amid all this, Tebogo visited Sindi, and they rekindled their relationship behind Pat's back.

Analysis of *Amanyal' Enyoka*

The following analysis will focus on the lesbian couple, Pat and Sindi. The focus will be on their relationship, sexual attraction, the gender they identify with, intimate domestic violence, homophobia towards lesbians, and how lesbians have been generally represented in *Amanyal' Enyoka*.

Pat and Sindi's Butch-Femme Relationship

This section explores the relationship Pat and Sindi have as a homosexual couple in terms of the roles played by each partner. Marcus (2005: 106) explains that amongst homosexual couples, one takes the passive role – traditional wife (femme), and the other takes the aggressive role – traditional husband (butch). He further explicates that these roles are expressed in the "manner of dress, demeanour, sexual behaviour, and choice of partner: butch sought femmes, and femmes hoped to attract butches" (Marcus, 2005: 106). Similar gender expressions are shared between Pat and Sindi, as depicted in the play, *Amanyal' Enyoka*. Pat is represented as the butch, whereas Sindi is shown as the femme. It is important to mention that these gender roles do not necessarily apply to all female same-sex couples but are specific to the main characters in the play.

Even though Pat and Sindi's same-sex relationship is regarded as unconventional, according to their society, they assume gender roles found in traditional heterosexual relationships. Pat assumes the role of a 'man' as she expresses more masculinity in the relationship, which is described as a butch lesbian. On the other hand, Sindi assumes a woman's role, which means she is more feminine in the relationship and is described as a femme lesbian.

The first sign that depicts Pat as a butch lesbian in *Amanyal' Enyoka* is when she and her wife, Sindi, are expecting a visit from Thiza, their wedding's organiser. It was an unwanted visit as Pat was unwilling to pay off the outstanding fee Thiza was coming to collect because he disappointed them as his clients. When Thiza was about to arrive, Pat, as the 'man of the house', had to welcome him, and Sindi

decided to go to the kitchen and boil some water so that it could be used to chase away Thiza by throwing it at him.

In the conversation between Sindi and Pat, Sindi complains to Pat about Thiza not deserving to be paid a total amount for organising their wedding. Pat leads the discussion as it involves finances, which is her responsibility as a 'female-husband' in the marriage. As the conversation continues, Pat expresses her disappointment, which reflects her ego as the 'groom' at the wedding. Wedding attendees ridiculed Pat and Sindi for having a wedding that did not meet expected standards. Even though the quality of the wedding was not Pat's fault, it made her feel like she was not 'man' enough to organise a proper wedding, and this tarnished the image she was trying to portray of 'a man in control'. When Pat was preparing to talk to Thiza about the debt, Sindi headed to the kitchen, where she was expected to be as a traditional wife. Pat, as a provider 'husband', made it her responsibility to pay for organising the wedding because she is the only working partner in the relationship (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 2). Kheswa and Wieringa (2005: 216) add, "There are clear expectations about financial responsibilities and the division of labour within the household between the butch and the femme partners in a relationship".

These expectations mentioned above are further portrayed in *Amanyal' Enyoka*. When Sindi was considering being in a relationship with Pat, she wanted someone financially stable (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 10). Sindi saw Pat as someone who could provide her with a bright future because Pat had just been promoted at work. Pat's promotion meant that she was going to earn more money and be able to take care of her. Another indication of Pat being butch is that the narrator describes her as 'Sindi's husband' throughout the play. Pat also demands to be addressed as a husband or the man of the house. This demand is shown in the play when the visitor they were expecting turns out to be Tebogo, Sindi's former boyfriend, instead of Thiza. In the following dialogue, Pat converses with Tebogo regarding the reason for his visit:

"Ngicela ukubona ubaba walapha ekhaya," esho ngelikhulu iqholo uTebogo.

"Lona ophambi kwakho nguyena ubaba walapha ekhaya. Khuluma-ke ufuna ukuthini," emhlahlela amehlo amancane afifiyelayo.

("May I please see the man of the house," said Tebogo with pride.

"The one standing in front of you is the man of the house. So tell me, what do you want to say," she said, staring at him with her small, screwed-up eyes.)

(Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 2)

Pat's response to Tebogo in the dialogue above expresses her aggression and toughness that marks her as a butch lesbian and uses her tone of voice and physique to be seen as 'the head of the family' – she speaks with ruthlessness and anger written in her eyes. Kheswa and Wieringa (2005: 212) mention that most butches are characterised by being visible to look tough like a man, as is the case with Pat. Pat also shows that she is the leader and is the one in charge of her home as she stands up to get the door when Tebogo is knocking, which is typical of a husband in a traditional heterosexual marriage.

Pat tried to chase Tebogo away, but he retaliated and took out a knife. This incident tested Pat as the 'man' who had to protect his wife from danger, but instead, she was so scared as Sindi that they both ran back into the house for their safety. Pat's reaction surprised Sindi, being the femme in the relationship, and she asked her, "*Nawe ngempela usubaleka njengami ngiyileti?*" (How can you also run away like me when I am the lady here?) (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 6). Sindi's question to Pat is about the safety and protection she was supposed to get as a wife from her 'husband' during moments of danger.

Instead, her 'husband' also decided to run for her life. Sindi, the femme in the relationship, expected Pat to assume her role as the butch of the relationship and make sure her wife did not get hurt.

Exploring Pat's and Sindi's Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities

This section examines Pat and Sindi individually regarding their sexual orientation and explores their gender identity. Firstly, the researcher will discuss the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity. Sexual orientation is sexual attraction to the same-sex (homosexual), opposite sex (heterosexual) or both sexes (bisexual). It is based on an individual's sexual desires, fantasies and sexual behaviours they are inclined to engage (Dembroff, 2016: 1). Gender identity refers to an individual's internal and personal experience of gender, which may (cisgender) or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth (transgender) and a person's gender identity can change over time, and it can be expressed in different forms (Statistics New Zealand, 2014: 9). In other words, sexual orientation is about whom you find attracted to, and gender identity is how you choose to express who you are.

As seen in the previous section, Pat is portrayed as a masculine woman. Pat's masculine gender identity is shown in *Amanyal' Enyoka* to have emanated from a very young age and the narrator describes Pat as a girl who grew up unusually according to her society. The society expected to see Pat as a feminine girl, but instead, she was masculine, making society question her gender identity. The narrator describes Pat's gender identity through her actions of enjoying physical activities that are stereotypically associated with boys, such as playing soccer. Pat is also described by her dress code, which is characteristic of boys' clothes, and it was used to express her masculine gender (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 9). Fussell (2002) says that you are what you wear, and your clothing may reveal one's class, sex, and desire to belong.

Any girl who enjoys doing what people think should be typically done by boys, like wearing boy clothes, is described as a tomboy, which could be a possible sign of that girl being a lesbian at a later stage of their life, as it was with Pat. In addition, tomboyism is a phrase that is usually more common during a girl's childhood. Tomboyism permits girls the opportunity to experiment with masculinity and femininity without negative social stigma. At the onset of puberty, heteronormativity causes most girls to mature out of this stage and learn conventional feminine gender roles as set out by the society.

Savin-Williams (2016) elaborates that lesbians who identified as tomboys growing up reported that as girls, they rarely participated in typical girl-girl activities and often recalled preferring boy-like behaviour, like wearing boy's clothes and pretending to be boys. On the other hand, (Veenstra, n.d.) explains that sociological studies and fictional depictions of tomboys portray these girls as going through a typical and brief phase of gender disidentification. It is presumed that puberty will bring an awareness of adult responsibility and conformance to typical feminine traits and attitudes. This presumption means that if a girl dresses like a boy, it does not necessarily mean that she will grow up to be a lesbian but it could be a mere exploration of her gender identity and finding ways to express it.

The views above show that a tomboy girl child has the chance of growing up into adulthood as a heterosexual woman or a homosexual woman. In the case of Pat, the latter applied. Pat repressed her sexual orientation of being attracted to the same sex by exploring a relationship with Mthunzi, an opposite sex, which is considered the norm in the society she wanted to fit in. Pat pursued a false relationship to avoid being rejected by other people and pretended to be a heterosexual woman. Mthunzi was the only male Pat had ever been in a relationship with, which indicates that it was sporadic for her to be in a relationship with the opposite sex. She romantically did not become involved with another man after breaking up with Mthunzi, which shows that she was never genuinely attracted to the opposite sex (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 9). The narrator in *Amanyal' Enyoka* also insinuates that the reason Pat decided to be in a relationship with the same sex is due to not having trust in men because of the heartbreak she got

from Mthunzi. This narrative perpetuates the misconception that one chooses to be a homosexual due to their failed relationships with heterosexuals.

According to a study done by Giunti and Fioravanti (2017: 528), reasons for entering into a heterosexual relationship as a homosexual include love, social expectancy, religious beliefs, denial or avoidance of homosexuality, and desire for children and family. Some of these reasons apply to Pat because she wanted to be perceived as a 'normal' woman by being in a relationship with a man, being a mother and living a 'socially acceptable' life. Giunti and Fioravanti (2017: 532) also note that reasons for homosexuals being in heterosexual relationships are due to an internalised homonegativity (negative attitudes toward homosexuality) and heteronormative biases in society, which leads to an internalisation of the social stigma and a rejection of one's sexual orientation. Giunti and Fioravanti's (2017) study coincides with the present study and proves that Pat engaged in a heterosexual relationship to protect her true gender identity and sexual orientation from social backlash.

During her relationship with Mthunzi, Pat may have repressed her same-sex feelings to please society. However, she later claimed her sexuality and returned to her identity as a lesbian. The narrator mentions that Pat went back to her old self – *ingulube yabuyela odakeni*, a saying taken from the Bible (2 Peter 2: 22). As shown in the play, Pat was in her forties when she fell in love with Sindi. She decided to be in the relationship after being in a failed one with the father of her child. Pat's involvement in a same-sex relationship in the later stage of her life makes her a late-blooming lesbian, which Cochrane (2010: n.p.) describes as well-off women who declare same-sex feelings in their 30s and above after coming out of heterosexual relationships.

Sindi's gender identity and sexual orientation are tricky to describe because she is not consistent with her gender identity, which she does not have to, and those she finds sexually attractive. In this section, different characteristics of Sindi's sexual orientation, as represented in the play, will be used to determine the gender that she identifies with. In *Amanyal' Enyoka*, Sindi is described as a woman in a same-sex marriage with Pat but continues to see her former fiancé, Tebogo. The narrator, when describing Sindi's romantic relationship background, mentions that Sindi chose to be in a same-sex relationship, which implies that she became a lesbian. However, according to the queer community, Sindi cannot be identified as a lesbian, as being lesbian, like any other gender identity, it is not a choice but an identity that is felt from within and comes out naturally. The narrator further explains that Sindi's choice to be in a homosexual relationship was due to being disappointed by Tebza, her former fiancé, who had affairs (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 10).

If one is genuinely a queer person, they have no other gender alternative as it is inborn. Schwartz (n.d), a licensed clinical social worker in the United States of America, has found that in the 30 years of his psychotherapeutic experience, homosexuality is not a matter of choice. However, a combination of genetic and biological factors causes people to become gay. He further argues that will and whim have nothing to do with one becoming gay. Schwartz reiterates that homosexuals have no more choice about their sexual preferences than heterosexuals.

The narrator also disapproves of Sindi's dating choice by using the word '*dudana*' (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 10), an isiZulu word that means 'encouraging each other to do something wrong and not reprimanding each other'. Through these words, the storyteller suggests that same-sex people cannot be intimate with each other because it is considered morally unacceptable and should be corrected. This viewpoint can be regarded as heterosexist as the narrator "ignores, rejects, and stigmatises non-heterosexual identities, behaviours, and relationships" (McClelland and Dutcher, 2016: 1).

Sindi cannot be regarded as genuinely attracted to other women because, in the play, it is clear that her attraction to Pat is based on financial reasons. Sindi posed herself to Pat as a lesbian because she saw her as someone who could take care of her financial needs and not because she had sincere, romantic

feelings for her. Sindi even went to the extent of aborting Tebogo's baby to secure her future with Pat. This resolution spells out Sindi's desperation to be with someone she could use as a source of income.

Sindi's fake lesbianism is further depicted in the play when she explains to Tebogo the reason for being in a relationship with Pat, "*Nami ngangifuna imali, uyazi nawe ukuthi laba bantu banemali. Nesimo sasekhaya wazi kahle ukuthi sinjani.*" (I wanted money too, and you know that these people have money. You know exactly how the situation is at home.) (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 9). These words clearly show that Sindi intentionally decided to practice hypergamy with Pat without her realising that. Van Den Berghe (1960: 83) defines hypergamy as a form of marriage in which a person marries someone of a higher financial status or social status, which applies to Sindi.

Amanyal' Enyoka, as a play, also highlights the stereotype that some heterosexual people think that every homosexual person is moneyed, as shown with Sindi. Raab (2013: n.p.) finds that popular culture in media has painted a false image of gays and lesbians as affluent people when in reality, they experience economic struggles and are more likely to be poor than heterosexuals because of unequal opportunities.

At the same time, there is a possibility that Sindi agreed to marry Pat because she was flexible in her sexuality and wanted to explore a same-sex relationship whilst being primarily attracted to the opposite sex. This kind of sexuality is termed heteroflexibility. Parkman (2021:42) further explains heteroflexibility, "A person who has or intends to have a primarily heterosexual lifestyle, with a primary sexual and emotional attachment to someone of the opposite sex. But that person remains open to sexual encounters and even relationships with persons of the same sex." Sindi's behaviour qualifies her as a heteroflexible person because even though she was married to Pat, she was more emotionally attached to her ex-fiancé, and they had an affair.

Sindi may have been on self-discovery regarding her sexuality and curious about being in a same-sex relationship. This curiosity is known as bi-curiosity. A bi-curious person is motivated to have sexual relations with someone whose sex differs from their usual sexual partners (Merriam-Webster, n.d). This experiment helps a bi-curious person to ascertain if they are bi-sexual or not. In the case of Sindi, if she was with Pat because she genuinely loved women too, Sindi would be described as a bi-sexual woman as she is also sexually attracted to men. Bi-curious gender identity does not apply to Sindi as she only used Pat for her gains.

Sindi's sexual orientation and gender identity, as portrayed in the play, determine Sindi as a heterosexual woman that pretended to be lesbian and decided to be in a same-sex relationship because of her past unsuccessful relationship with men. Sindi's choice to marry a homosexual woman does not make her a homosexual because her reason to be Pat's wife was not based on being attracted to the same sex but on using Pat to attain economic freedom.

Same-sex Relationship Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse amongst same-sex couples is another issue raised in *Amanyal' Enyoka*, where Pat is found instigating abuse against Sindi, and nothing is done to stop the violence. A report done by Lynch and Sanger (2016: 9) regarding same-sex intimate partner violence, another term for domestic abuse, in the South African context finds the following:

Intimate partner violence, while previously predominantly associated with heterosexual relationships, is increasingly recognised as also occurring in same-sex relationships. There remains, however, a lack of research regarding power inequalities and abuse, particularly in women's same-sex relationships. This silence is partly related to a gendered discourse that positions women as inherently non-violent, and that idealises female same-sex relationships as necessarily egalitarian. A desire to avoid

societal stigma and prejudice towards same-sex sexualities further silences women in speaking about their experiences of intimate partner violence. It contributes to a lack of available support.

The violence discussed above is shown through Pat's violent behaviour towards Sindi. It will be used to address some issues concerning women's same-sex abuse, which is not often spoken about in society. As the sole breadwinner in the relationship, Pat presumes that as she takes care of Sindi, she is her possession and can control her. Pat misuses her power to prove that she is the 'man' in her marriage by constantly mistreating Sindi. It can also be mentioned that this is Pat's abuse of power over Sindi, as she is her dependent.

There is an incident in *Amanyal' Enyoka* where Pat returns home drunk and hungry and attacks Sindi. Pat's behaviour results in a fight between her and Sindi, and the following is their altercation. Pat harshly responds to Sindi when she confronts her for coming back home drunk and expresses her unhappiness as Pat throws a bottle of alcohol at their bedroom wall, and it breaks. Instead of acknowledging her mistake and apologising, Pat verbally attacks Sindi by reminding her of her role as a homemaker. Pat further instructs Sindi to get her food as she lies on the bed waiting to be served (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 13-15). This action emphasises their different roles in their relationship, similar to a traditional African heterosexual relationship – if a husband buys groceries, he expects the wife to cook and serve him the meal.

Similarly, Pat uses heterosexual masculinity and expresses power, control, assertiveness and aggression. In contrast, Sindi expresses heterosexual femininity. She provides care, responds to others' needs and is gentle. Lynch and Sanger (2016: 12) note that heterosexual roles are not only restricted to heterosexual relationships but are also adapted to homosexual relationships. Relationship roles are negotiated where one takes the role of a male "butch", and the other takes a role of a female "femme", as previously shown in the paper.

The above normative understanding of gender shows that Pat expected Sindi to be a quiet, obedient wife who does not question her actions. According to traditional isiZulu culture, there is a saying that says a husband should never be questioned by his wife. The saying in isiZulu is written as *'Indoda ayibuzwa'*. As the 'husband', Pat imposes that Sindi knows her place as the wife. Duma (2016: 22) further explains the saying in question as follows:

Indoda ngokwemvelo izazi kuyiyo enamandla, ayifuni kube khona okuthile okuzoyenza ibe sengathi ayinamandla. Kuze kube khona isisho esithi indoda ayibuzwa, oyicefezela ngemibuzo uhlangabezana nezimbila zithutha. Uma indoda izizwa kungathi amandla ayo okubusa ayaphela ilwa nalokho ngokuthi ibe nodlame.

(Men see themselves as naturally strong; they do not want anything that will make them feel weak. There is even a saying that says a man is not questioned; the one who interrogates him encounters backlash. When a man feels like he is losing power, he fights against that by being violent.)

The quotation above relates to Pat's actions towards Sindi because, as she realised that her voice was not heard, she expressed her frustration verbally by mentioning that she would hit Sindi with a stick. This aggression is Pat's attempt to express her masculinity as the 'husband' in the relationship. Pat's expression of her masculinity in the relationship does not mean that it has to be shown through violence but rather through protecting her romantic partner. However, Pat's abusive behaviour towards Sindi escalates to physical abuse, also known as battering. Hammond (1989: 90) defines battering as a form of physical abuse in which the batterer uses violence to control the victim; examples include slapping, punching, and restraining the victim.

In an example of Pat battering Sindi, Pat exerts a physical force on Sindi by using her hands as objects to assault her. This behaviour harms Sindi's physical health and safety – she had to pretend she was dead to save her life because Pat intentionally wanted to kill her. Pat used battering to increase her sense of power in the marriage whilst leaving Sindi not only physically injured but also emotionally and mentally distressed. This victimisation of abuse that Sindi went through made her have post-traumatic stress disorder and thoughts of revenge. Sindi started to be scared of Pat whenever she approached her; she became distant and thought of ways of hurting Pat in her sleep (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 14). Sindi could not avenge Pat because she was afraid of being imprisoned and did not even open a case against Pat for the abuse. Instead, she kept silent and stayed in the relationship.

The power dynamics of the relationship silenced Sindi and made her stay in her marriage because she depended on Pat to sustain and maintain her life. The other reason Sindi stayed in the matrimonial is that she was twice as young as Pat, and the age difference meant that she did not have the upper hand when making important decisions in the relationship. Other reasons that silence victims of same-sex abuse are the fear of leaving the relationship, which will threaten the perpetrator to escalate the violence (Hammond, 1989: 90: 90). Should they report the abuse to the police, they will experience additional victimisation and homophobia (Rollé et al., 2018: 3), which is the case with Sindi. Lynch and Sanger (2016: 13) find that victims of same-sex abuse are silenced because they do not know their rights as queer people, cannot identify potentially abusive behaviours and do not have information regarding counselling services.

After the violence Sindi faced, she lacked support and understanding from society about her relationship with Sindi. In the following account, Sindi's former boyfriend reacts after finding out about the assault and says, "*Iyacika nje indaba yokuthi ubhonywe yintombazane enjengawe, iyacika ngempela.*" ("It is irritating that another girl beat you up, it is irritating.") (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 16). Tebogo's words here show that he lacks empathy for Sindi as a victim and does not understand same-sex domestic abuse. Tebogo does not understand how another woman can physically harm a woman and do nothing about it. Hammond (1989: 91) expands on that, "When this fallacy is applied to the case of battered lesbians, a profound misunderstanding and minimisation of the impact of the battering and other abuse occurs. We have no reason to believe that the range of violence experienced by battered lesbians is any less severe than that of women battered by men."

The above citation concerning Tebogo indicates that those outside the queer community downplay the domestic violence found in same-sex relationships and do not see it as actual violence. Domestic abuse happens in same-sex relationships as much as in heterosexual relationships. In most cases, the violence in same-sex couples could be worse as most incidents remain unreported due to the fear of social stigma, as seen with Sindi.

Lesbophobia towards Pat's and Sindi's Relationship

This section focuses on the phobia that Pat and Sindi face from their society as same-sex women in a relationship. The fear Pat and Sindi experience from other people is called lesbophobia, also known as lesbiphobia, a term formed by joining the words lesbian and phobia. Lesbophobia refers to a socially constructed negative attitude towards lesbians. These attitudes include discrimination against one's sex or gender (Dopler, 1996: 6 and Braga et al., 2022: 5). Pat will be discussed more in this segment as she went through much prejudice and was almost sexually abused because of her sexual orientation and gender expression. In the play, there is a dialogue that depicts Tebogo's lesbophobic attitude towards Pat. Tebogo made fun of Pat for addressing herself as a man because he did not see Pat as a man according to the socially constructed idea of what a man should look like that he has been accustomed to (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 14).

A man is typically defined from a heteronormative society's perspective as a grown male who is expected to be masculine and have qualities of being strong and brave. Tebogo does not believe that Pat is a man because he uses the heteronormative assumption that since Pat's gender is a woman, it means that her biological sex is female. Therefore, she cannot be a man or a male. Tebogo is not conscious that gender does not always mirror one's biological sex that they were born with. A person can be born female but be more comfortable identifying as male gender, which is the case with Pat.

On another account, one would expect lesbians or queer people, in general, would feel the safest when in the presence of police officials, but that is not the case in *Amanyal' Enyoka*. When the police arrested Pat for allegedly assaulting Tebogo, she was not treated with the respect she deserved because of her sexual orientation. The police officers harassed and discriminated against Pat for her relationship choice. Captain Njilo and Sergeant Njapha mocked Pat and Sindi for their sexuality, which they regarded as abnormal and taboo. Njilo and Njapha disregarded Pat and Sindi's same-sex relationship as women. Njilo harassed Pat by grabbing her hand to look for a wedding ring to confirm that she was married (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 14). This action by Njilo violated Pat's personal space as she was touched without her consent. The police officer's attitude towards Pat and Sindi as a same-sex couple was harmful, disrespectful, and unappetising. It gave the impression that law enforcement cannot be entrusted around queer people.

Pat and Sindi would not be comfortable and confident reporting homophobia to the police if the very same police are homophobic towards them. Lynch and Sanger (2016: 59) advise that the South African Police Services should be trained with a service code of conduct that does not discriminate and reinforces toxic ideas around gender norms. This training already exists in law enforcement but lacks implementation in some police stations. Police officers must be more sensitive and conscious and use a more welcoming approach when working with people from diverse backgrounds.

Acts of lesbophobia in the extreme often lead to sexual harassment and, at its worst, rape. Lesbophobes, particularly men, find it disgusting that a woman can find another woman sexually attractive instead of being attracted to men. Such men will purposefully try correcting that behaviour by targeting lesbians in their communities and sexually assaulting them. In the current play, there are instances where Pat faces attempts of corrective or curative rape from Captain Njilo on their way to prison. In the play, Njilo is described as a perpetrator who is about to rape Pat in a locked police vehicle. He loosens his clothes, finds a comfortable sitting position and starts being sexually suggestive to Pat. Pat becomes nervous, intimidated and overwhelmed by Njilo's action as she can see that the police captain is about to sleep with her without her consent. In the second part of the narration, Pat tries to defend herself by explaining that she is only attracted to women. However, Njilo disregards her sexual orientation and says that her marriage is religiously unaccepted (Chili and Ndlovu, 2013: 33-34). Pat finds herself threatened, vulnerable and overpowered by Njilo, who has taken advantage of his position as a police officer.

Njilo thinks that sexually engaging with Pat will correct or cure her sexual attraction to women as he has preconceived gender norms that say a woman can only be attracted to a man and vice-versa. This notion is incorrect and is one reason that perpetuates sexual assault against women who are sexually attracted to other women. Njilo's heteronormative ideology, "the belief that there are two separate and opposing genders with associated natural roles that match their assigned sex and that heterosexuality is a given" (Van Der Toorn, Pliskin and Morgenroth, 2020: 160), is a myth debunked by Orzek (1989: 107). Orzek (1989: 107) finds that lesbians are not raped because they have chosen lesbianism due to unsatisfactory heterosexual relationships or because their undesirable behaviour has invited exploitation; lesbians become victims of rape due to the perpetrator taking advantage of their vulnerability, and this is seen with Pat.

According to Koraan and Geduld (2015: 1937), black lesbians in South Africa are vulnerable to corrective rape because of their cultural environment that believes that lesbianism is taboo and that same-sex desire is not native to the African culture. This relates to Pat because she is an African lesbian residing in a black township that follows traditional African cultures. She is challenged because of her gender identity and affectional preference. Pat's environment finds it forbidden for a woman to marry another woman, as such relationships are considered un-African.

Lesbophobia drives the misconception that women involved in same-sex relationships are thought to be having a psychological problem that needs to be altered or corrected by men through rape. The American Psychological Association (2008), since 1975, has declared that lesbian orientation, amongst others, is not a disorder because no research has found an inherent association between sexual orientation and psychopathology. The association further mentions that all kinds of sexual behaviour are everyday aspects of human sexuality that have been documented in many different cultures and histories. Luckily for Pat, she managed to escape the ordeal of being raped. However, the trauma she went through will forever stay with her, and her experience questions the integrity of law enforcement agencies in cases that involve queer people or that are gender-based.

Representation of Lesbianism in *Amanyal' enyoka*

Queer people are represented less favourably and not accurately in *Amanyal' Enyoka*. The play propagates the stereotype that women choose to be in same-sex relationships because of unsuccessful relationships with men, as seen with Pat and Sindi. Pat's former boyfriend, Mthunzi, left his relationship with Pat after finding out that she was pregnant with his child and that made Pat lose trust in men. In the same way, Sindi decided to end her relationship with her fiancé, Tebogo, after he was found cheating again and Sindi was pregnant with his child. It is rather absurd that the play uses the characters of Pat and Sindi to insinuate that female homosexual relationships are formed because of disappointment and the lack of trust in males as intimate partners.

The stereotype above is also an erroneous assumption since it suggests that a heterosexual woman's gender identity changes to a lesbian after a futile sexual relationship with a man. A lesbian is a woman who is physically and sexually attracted to other women, and homosexuality has been theorised by some scholars to be determined by biology, hormones, genes, society, culture and the environment rather than from past relationship experiences (Ngun & Vilain, 2014; Maciel, 2017; and Günter, 1995). It remains an ongoing and inconclusive research as to what influences homosexuality, but what remains common amongst homosexuals is the innate feeling they have towards same-sex attraction. Had Pat and Sindi in *Amanyal' Enyoka* been portrayed as women who were naturally lesbian rather than opting to be lesbian at a later stage in their lives, the depiction of their homosexuality in the play would have been convincing, believable and relatable.

Conclusion

This paper analysed homosexuality and the representation of lesbians in the play *Amanyal' Enyoka* regarding the main characters, Pat and Sindi. It showed that traditional heterosexual relationships influence homosexual relationships where one partner assumes the role of a man and the other takes the role of a woman. It further showed that society needs to be open and accepting of one's sexual preference and gender identity as this is their given right, especially in a country like South Africa. Essential issues often overlooked, such as domestic abuse amongst same-sex couples and lesbophobia, were discussed. The government and relevant stakeholders need to do more awareness to educate society about the misogyny that lesbians face and create safe environments for their well-being. The general representation of lesbians in the play has shown that a large part of society does not understand the dynamics of sexual

diversity, particularly in semi-rural and rural areas. This lack of understanding creates unfounded claims about homosexuality and exposes homosexuals to further stigmatisation.

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