

HOMOSEXUALITY IN LILLIAN HELLMAN'S *THE CHILDREN'S HOUR* AND DIANA SON'S *STOP KISS*

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ABSTRACT

Generally, homosexual-centered plays are mostly left out of when studying history of drama in our classrooms and they are seen as inferior literature for social, cultural, and religious considerations. This paper aims at cultural awareness highlighting the cultural movements that require further clarification to tolerate acceptable attitudes towards lesbians and homosexuals. Nowadays, homosexuality became an open topic for discussion in genetics, psychology, and social sciences to designate its etiology. Many dramatists and playwrights showed interest to raise this question in their literary works, but this paper deals with two plays from different decades of the twentieth century as research data. Both address the extension of social awareness that occurs during these years to accept homosexuals and recognize their rights. For the textual analysis, the study relies on both texts, Hellman's *The Children Hour* (1934) and Son's *Stop Kiss* (1998) with special emphasis on lesbianism.

This study is divided into four sections. The first section presents homosexuality: its definition and causes. The second section focuses on lesbianism as a movement and a genre of literature. The third section presents a study of lesbianism in two plays, *The Children's Hour* and *Stop kiss* to understand the dimensions of lesbian characters (their identities and experiences), their issues and society's view towards them. Section four presents a conclusion. The study ends with a list of references, as well as Kurdish Arabic and synopses.

KEY WORDS: Homosexuality, lesbianism, etiology, psychology

INTRODUCTION

The historical debate on homosexuality stems from conflated issues of gender, sex, and sexuality.

Many studies declare a strong correlation between religiosity, law, and negative attitudes towards homosexuality. Religiosity and deeply rooted values affect attitudes, making them more resistant to accept homosexuality.

SECTION ONE: HOMOSEXUALITY: ITS DEFINITION AND CAUSES

The theoretical contention around homosexuality exists in the form of queer theory that focuses on "the notions of sex and sexuality by considering all those marginalized sexual identities that could not fit into the hegemonic social discourses, legitimating them as alternative sexual orientations" (Piantato, 2016, p.5).

Homosexuality can be defined as "an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or

sexual attractions" to the same sex (American Psychological Association, 2013). It is also "the experience of exclusive or nearly exclusive erotic preference for others of the same sex in fantasy and, characteristically, through realization of sexual intimacy with others of the same sex." (Cohler & Hammack, 2004, p. 215).

Margaret McCarthy, a neuroscientist at the University of Maryland says that homosexuality "is not a disease, it's part of natural human variation. I think we've reached the point that we have enough evidence that there's a biological basis for sexual orientation," (Wong, 2017, p.3)

Etymologically, the first part of the term homosexuality is derived from the Greek word "homo", which means "the same" (Room, 1986, p.84), and the second part is derived from "sex".

Homosexuality has its root in Karl-Maria Kertbeny's pamphlet (1869), which argues against the law of a Prussian anti-sodomy (Cerquozzi, 2017).

Some Ethnographers assert that the term "homosexuality" can't be applied to ancient cultures since there is no word in Greek or

Roman cultures to cover the same semantic context of the modern term of "homosexuality".

In Greek culture, the pattern of gay does not constitute a homosexual identity in the modern sense, since these relationships are related to phases in life, not permanent orientations (Buxton, 2004).

Cultures that are influenced by the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) consider homosexuality as a sin and impurity (Janssen & Scheepers, 2019).

Science comes to be consistent with religion in that homosexuality is one of the causes of health risks for homosexuals, such as AIDS, anal herpes, anal cancer, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, intestinal syndrome, hepatitis, human papillomavirus, in addition to severe psychological disturbances (Zineman, 1988).

A study conducted in England in 2014 confirmed that the level of sexually transmitted diseases; such as syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, genital herpes, and genital warts is higher among homosexuals than others (Mohammed & etal, 2016).

Although the influence of religion on the daily lives of individuals becomes less prominent due to secular movements and it becomes possible to talk about homosexuals' rights, the prevailing attitude towards homosexuality is still negative in many cultures and countries. (Janssen & Scheepers, 2019).

Scientific studies elicit a great deal of controversy about the causes of homosexuality. Some of these studies attribute their causes to environmental factors, including psychological disorders. Others claim that it is a natural result of genetic and hormonal factors. In this section, we will try to explain some of these causes.

1-Genetic Factors

Most scientists believe that genes play an important role in determining sexual orientation.

In 1993, a study conducted by Hamer and colleagues found that men with specific genes operating at a particular region of the long arm of the X chromosome (Xq28) were more likely to be homosexual than those who did not have such genes (Nguyen, 2017). Many researchers tried to replicate Hamer's discovery of Xq28, but they failed. In a further study, Hamer himself failed to replicate the findings of Xq28, but he found evidence of linkage with specific markers on chromosomes 7, 8 and 10 (Cook, 2021).

In 2014, Northwestern University conducted a study of 409 pairs of twins and found a

significant association of male sexual orientation with Hamer's Xq28 (Wong, 2017).

Dr Hannah Brown, a reproductive geneticist at the University of Adelaide, said that "It's very rare that a behavioural phenotype or complex trait comes from a single gene. Most things don't," and added that "many of our traits are from the combination of many genes working, or linking together." (Wong, 2017). Thus, same-sex sexual behaviour is influenced not by one or a few genes, but by many genes.

In 2019, a comprehensive study of the biological basis of sexual behaviour was conducted by Andrea Ganna and his colleagues, at Broad Institute and Harvard University. The study examined DNA, data, and sexual practices of nearly half a million people from the U.S. and the U.K and concluded that there was no specific homosexuality gene and that there were thousands of genetic variants associated with homosexual behaviour most of them had very limited effects.

The study also revealed that same-sex sexual behaviour was significantly linked with five different genetic loci, only partially overlapping in both sexes, and these genetic loci had very little impact on homosexual behaviour differences. Ganna's group also found other genetic variants linked to the regulation of sex hormones, which played a large role in forming the brain in ways that influenced sexual behaviour, for example, girls with congenital adrenal hyperplasia who were exposed to high levels of testosterone when they were fetuses, are more likely to be lesbian (Cook, 2021).

2-Hormones

Homosexuality is subordinate to what we call sexual orientation and it is directly linked to the brain. In the stage of the embryonic formation of the brain, 3 basic hormones work in determining the sexual formation of a person: Testosterone - Estrogen - Progesterone. Testosterone regulates male sexual behaviour, while estrogen and progesterone regulate female sexual behaviour (Ben-Hur, 1997).

The discrepancy in the levels of secretion of these hormones directly affects the formation of the brain and organs and determines the sexual orientation of the fetus. Either the fetus remains female or turns into a male and thus activates the male genes. It is worth mentioning here that (all embryos are female in the beginning until the change is made and the male genes are activated). But when the secretion of hormones does not match the sex of the fetus to produce a

normal sexual orientation, the male or female fetus comes with homosexual tendencies. Studies have shown that in eight per cent of all human pregnancies in which the proportion of hormone secretion is inconsistent with the sex of the fetus, the fetus becomes homosexual in orientation (Norton, 2012).

In 1959, the scientist Phoenix and his colleagues, at Kansas University experimented on female guinea pigs to measure the effect of testosterone injections in mammals during pregnancy. A group of female pigs were injected with doses of testosterone while they were pregnant. After birth, the researcher took female piglets to be tested. The researcher noticed that the female piglets rode each other as if they were males. This experience indicated that their sexual orientation became bisexual with the protruding genitals that were indistinguishable from that of newborn males due to excessive doses of testosterone. Phoenix repeated the same experiment but on female piglets after birth. The experiment did not give the same result. That means that testosterone affects only in the embryonic stage (Phoenix & etal, 1959).

In 1995, a study was conducted to examine homosexual orientation in humans (men and women) and reported that 16-21% of men and 17-19% of women in three countries (France, USA, and the UK) had experienced homosexuality. A study indicated that gonadal hormones, particularly testosterone were responsible since they played an important role in the development of most behavioural sex differences (Hines, 2011).

A further study was conducted on male children who, for medical reasons, underwent surgery to be female immediately after birth, and then they grew up as girls. These children were exposed to male hormonal influences before birth and then were exposed to female social environmental influences after birth. The study found out that these girls had male sexual orientation. Thus, the study concluded that it is difficult and even impossible to change sexual orientation by manipulating environmental influences after birth (Cook, 2021).

3-Social And Environmental Factors

The combination of genetic, environmental and social factors appears to have a very large impact on the ultimate sexual orientation of adults.

Socially, there is a large variation in opinions about the admissibility of homosexuality, the penalties for same-sex behaviour, and the laws

that allow same-sex unions. These prevailing views and attitudes toward homosexual people have their roots in culture, religion, and law.

Some ancient societies, such as the Israelites, had strict laws prohibiting same-sex sexual activity, considering it a crime against nature. While the Christian Church ignored homosexuality outside the Church.

By the end of the 12th century, hostility against homosexuality had spread in Europe. There were formal statements used to condemn homosexual behaviour, as in the works of Thomas Aquinas and others. Until the nineteenth century, homosexual behaviour was considered a crime against nature and homosexuals should be punished by law, case in point; the 1895 trial and imprisonment of the famous Irish writer Oscar Wilde was a historic incident of suppressing homosexual behaviour. (Katz, 1995).

As psychiatrists became more interested in knowing and discovering the causes of homosexual behaviour as a human sexual orientation, both psychiatry and medicine began to compete with religion and law for the ultimate verdict. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, homosexual behaviour was scientifically studied. Most theories, at the time, considered homosexual behaviour a mental illness or disorder. In the 1950s, homosexuality was officially included by the American Psychiatric Association in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Baughey-Gill, 2011). Subsequent research and studies failed to find any scientific or empirical basis regarding homosexuality as a mental or psychiatric disorder, forcing the American Psychiatric Association in 1973 to remove the classification of homosexuality from the Statistical and Diagnostic Manual of Mental Disorders. In 1975, representatives of the American Psychological Association called on all mental health professionals to declassify homosexuality as a mental illness. In 1990, major mental health organizations worldwide and the United Nations World Health Organization removed the classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder. In 1993, the National Association of Social Workers adopted the same position.

With scientific development, many experimental and scientific studies have found that there is a genetic and hormonal origin for homosexuality. People began to view homosexuality as a treatable disease. Sigmund Freud and Havelock Ellis were among the first

psychiatrists to adopt tolerant attitudes about homosexuality. Freud and Ellis believed that homosexuality is unnatural sexual behaviour (Kinney, 2015). Sigmund Freud believed that homosexuality was “nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness, but a variation of sexual function” (Kinney, 2015: 367). Freud concluded after he failed to change the sexual orientation of one woman that any attempt to change the sexual orientation of a homosexual person is impossible

Havelock Ellis disagreed with some of Freud's views regarding homosexuality. He believed that homosexuality was not something people were born with, but it was an acquired trait and cannot be cured. Ellis advocated changing the laws to leave homosexuals to practice homosexual behaviour at peace (Spencer, 1995).

In 1969, the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* published a study confirming that there are “a remarkable number of conditions and circumstances that may result in homosexuality....What happens after the child is born is complicated by many factors; there are not only inner biological and emotional factors, parental and familial surroundings, social and cultural circumstances; but the various pressures and expectations shift as the child grows and hardens as he establishes his ways into his eventual adult character structure.” (Gundlach, 1969: 137).

In the same vein, the Psychiatrists Parsons and Byne stated that “it seems reasonable to suggest that the stage for future sexual orientation may be set by experiences during early development, perhaps the first 4 years of life” (Byne & Parsons, 1993:236). The researchers also focused on how parental personality traits contribute to homosexual orientation. Researchers also focused on how parents' traits contributed to form children's sexual orientation. Freud, Miles, and Terman agreed that homosexual mothers were often overly affectionate, demonstrative, and emotional while their fathers were either authoritarian, weak, or absent from home. On the other hand, Daniel J. Brown emphasized that a family pattern that included a mixture of a controlling and very intimate mother, and a weak or hostile father, was undoubtedly associated with the development of homosexuality.

Numerous psychiatrists and researchers contributed in presenting strong evidence

regarding family dynamics in the development of homosexuality, starting with the noteworthy insights of Freud, Miles, Terman, Bieber, West, and the independent findings of several clinical practitioners.

It is contemplated to educate parents and teachers regarding the critical influence of the family in determining and developing a child's psychosexual orientation (Siegelman, 1974).

Daryl Bem of Cornell University offered a new theory regarding the development of homosexuality. It is called “Exotic Becomes Erotic”. It states that “biological variables, such as genes, prenatal hormones, and brain neuroanatomy, do not code for sexual orientation per se but for childhood temperaments that influence a child's preferences for sex-typical or sex-typical activities and peers. These preferences lead children to feel different from opposite or same-sex peers—to perceive them as dissimilar, unfamiliar, and exotic. This, in turn, produces heightened nonspecific autonomic arousal that subsequently gets eroticized to that same class of dissimilar peers: Exotic becomes erotic...The theory claims to accommodate both the empirical evidence of the biological essentialists and the cultural relativism of the social constructionists.” (Bem, 1996:327).

Other factors affect a person's sexual orientation, such as troubled marital relationships, wars, exposure to sexual abuse in childhood, all of which lead to psychosexual disorders. *Sex & Marital Therapy* journal published a study that examined the past sexual experiences of 35 adult men who were abused sexually during their childhood and concluded that 46 per cent of the abused men were either homosexual or bisexual. These findings validate previous research regarding the sexual orientation of children who have been sexually abused (Bramblett, 1997).

SECTION TWO: LESBIANISM AS A MOVEMENT AND A SUBGENRE OF LITERATURE

Lesbian, as a term, refers to a woman who has a sexual, physical, and emotional attraction towards another woman. It is derived from Lesbos, the name of the Greek island where the poet Sappho was born in the 6th-century. Her remaining poetry focuses on women's daily lives, their rituals, and her love for women and their beauty. Although lesbian behaviour has its roots in Greek and Roman history, the term does

not appear until the late nineteenth century. The term "lesbianism" has gone through a series of changes, it is described as a psychiatric pathology, then a form of female sodomization, and then simply a preferred sexual orientation (Baumgarner, 1976).

The homosexual community has been closely linked with theatre. Because theatre is a place where gender ambiguity and sexual identity are accepted. On the other hand, the marginal society's attitude towards the theatre as "illegitimate art" corresponds directly to its attitude towards homosexuality. However, most plays cannot represent homosexuality directly and comprehensively, and whoever does, faces severe censorship and punishment (WANG, 2014).

The 1960s and 1970s were marked by the dramatic emergence of contemporary social movements; such as the Black Civil Rights movement, the Women's Liberation movement, the Student Youth movement, Gay and Lesbian movements, Lesbian feminists, Radicals, and other ethnic minority movements due to political activism and social and cultural changes such as; urbanization, industrialization, rising per capita income, increase in geographical mobility of the population, technological development, the Internet, rising levels of education, declining ethnic nationality and religious divisions, increase in prominence of ethnic and racial claims and conflicts, and inclusiveness and equality in the national economic and political sectors. R. Williams asserted that American society is a mass, industrialized, heterogeneous, urbanized society with a composition relatively favourable to social change (Williams, 1970).

The lesbian movement became active by its alliance with the feminist movement. The association of the lesbian movement with women's liberation allowed it to gain an amount of power and respectability. The widespread feminist magazine, *Ms*, printed a petition that directed itself favourably towards lesbianism and was signed by one hundred women. Thus, lesbianism did not seem to be the traumatic subject it once was. However, the goals of the lesbian movement to achieve full equality for females as lesbians and as women will take a longer time to be achieved (Simpson, 1976).

In literature, lesbianism became one of its literary subgenres that dealt with lesbian issues and depicted the bullying experienced by lesbians in society. Lesbian literature included

all literary works of lesbian authors as well as literary works of heterosexual authors. The fundamental works of lesbianism dated back to Sopho's poetry and her writings, and then the fantasy world of lesbianism continued to grow and change over time (Foster, 1985).

Before now, contemporary lesbian works were centred around small lesbian presses, but by the new millennium novels, poems, and plays with lesbian characters and themes became more accepted in publishing houses (Seajay, 1994).

The first novel of the lesbian theme is Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), which is banned by a British court for being obscene (Machlin, 2013).

Most Lesbian literature of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s ended tragically with either the conversion of the lesbian character to heterosexuality or her suicide. This was required to avoid authorities' ban, for example, Mary Casal's *The Stone Wall* (1930), a lesbian autobiography with a tragic end. The first lesbian novel with a happy ending was Patricia Highsmith's *The Price of Salt* (Evans, 1955).

In the last two decades of the twentieth century, lesbian literature became a subgenre of literature, including mystery, fantasy, science fiction, romance, and graphic novels. In the twenty-first century, lesbian literature emerged as a literary genre in Arab countries, with some novels, such as Elham Mansour's *Ana Hiya Anti* (I Am You) (Guardi, 2014). This century also saw more interest in the literary works of African authors, such as the novelists Frieda Ekotto and Ama Ata. Meanwhile, lesbian novels continued to receive national awards and acclaim from major critics, such as Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* (1998), Carolyn Parkhurst's *Lost and Found* (2006). The general attitude toward lesbian themes in youth literature became more accepted (Savage, 2006).

Lesbian theatre tried to bring up and address many of the issues that lesbians suffer in society. It presented to the world something quite new and queer which caused the police to raid the performances of some of these plays such as *The Captive* (1926), *Children in Uniform* (1932), and *The Children Hour* (1934). It is noteworthy that the word "lesbian" did not mention in any of these plays. Furthermore, none of the lesbian relationships appeared to be natural or successful in these plays which often ended unhappily. To preserve the dominant social values, it was necessary to remove the lesbians at the end of

the play, either by violent death or by suicide, as in *The Children's Hour* (1934). One of the most intriguing issues among lesbian plays is the rights of a lesbian mother in custody. *Care and Control* (1977), was the first British play that dealt with the rights of lesbian mothers in child custody, depicted how a mother's custodial right was denied. Caroline Griffm's *The Memorial Gardens* (1988) depicted society's view of lesbian mothers as a risk to children and how they would "corrupt 'family values'" by socializing their children to accept lesbianism as a normal sexual orientation. Another prevalent theme in lesbian plays was the right of lesbians to appear in society, dealt with it, and resisted social oppression as in *Twice Over* (1988) (WANG, 2014).

SECTION THREE: LESBIANISM IN TWO OF 20TH. CENTURY AMERICAN WOMEN'S PLAYS: HELLMAN'S *THE CHILDREN'S HOUR* AND DIANA SON'S *STOP KISS*

3-1 Lesbianism In Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*

Hellman's *The Children's Hour* (1934) is an American controversial three-act play. It is directed and produced by Herman Shumlin and showed at the theatre of Maxine Elliott in New York City. The play is banned due to open references to lesbianism after 691 shows, although the word itself is never mentioned in the text of the play (Pace, 1979).

In her play, Hellman mirrored real events of scandal that took place in Edinburgh, Scotland in the nineteenth century and was published in Roughead's essay "*Closed Doors, or The Great Drumsheugh Case*" (Roughead, 1931).

The events of the play revolve around the tragic fallout of a schoolgirl's malicious gossip named Mary Tilford, a feisty student at a New England boarding school. Mary, feeling targeted by Karen Wright and Martha Dobie who run the school, rushes to her tolerant and wealthy grandmother, Mrs. Tilford, to explain the reasons for her running away from school. She begins successfully spreading a rumour accusing the two women of lesbianism, hoping to shift the focus from herself to them.

The setting of the play is at a girls' boarding school that Karen Wright and Martha Dobie work hard to own it. Mary Tilford is a feisty, selfish, and mischievous schoolgirl. She is spoiled by her grandmother's excessive love and

pampering. She causes problems for her teachers and other girls and knows how to manipulate adults.

In a moment of creativity, Mary tells her grandmother that Mrs. Mortar says that Miss Dobie "[is] jealous of Miss Wright marrying cousin Joe", and she "[has] always been like that, even when she was a little girl, and it [is] unnatural" (Hellman, *The Children's Hour*, 1934, p.578). Mary's persistent use of the term "unnatural" intrigues Mrs. Tilford's interest and makes her believe Mary's claim.

Tilford contacts and continues to spread the news of the two women to other teachers and girls' parents who rush quickly to take their children out of school. When the two women finally find out why their students disappear, they become both offended and appalled by the accusation. Martha tells Tilford that her granddaughter is lying and that she does that because "she hates everybody and everything" (*The Children's Hour*, 1934, p.585).

Joe Cardin, Karen's fiancé tries to expose Mary's lie, but he fails after Mary blackmails Rosalie and forces her to support her lie in accusing the two teachers. Finally, Karen tells Tilford angrily that the rumour "makes [her] feel dirty and sick to be forced to say this, but...there is not a single word of truth in anything you've said. [It's] a great awful, lie." (*The Children's Hour*, 1934, p. 584).

The power of Mary's lie, her ability to manipulate others, and her stubbornness not to tell the truth even when it destroys so many lives, are important things Hellman shrewdly raises in the scenes to show how Mary convinces her grandmother of an "unnatural" relationship between Karen and Martha (*Children's Hour*, 1934, p.578), and how Mary scares her classmate, Rosalie into lying to support her accusation against teachers, "You can't call me a fibber, Rosalie Wells. That's a kind of a dare and I won't take a dare. I guess I'll go tell Grandma, anyway. Then she can call the police and they'll come for you and you'll spend the rest of your life in one of those solitary prisons..... with a big sign on your back saying you're a thief" (*Children's Hour*, 1934, p.581). Hellman turns her audience's emotions into outrage at the power of a child's big lie to capture the imagination of society.

Through the confrontation, the argument between Mary and her grandmother on one side and Karen, Martha, and Cardin on the other, escalates to include Mary's claims which are

becoming increasingly transparent without speaking exactly about what Mary claims she has seen and heard (Maginness, 2019).

To preserve the prevailing social values, the word "lesbianism" is never uttered in the play, not even by Mary who is alluding to it, and this was required to avoid the authorities' ban on literary work.

In the confrontation, Mary claims that her teachers, Karen and Martha are "always punishing [her] for everything that happens" because she knows a lot about their "unnatural" relationship. Mary continues saying that "every time [Joe] came to the school Miss Dobie got jealous", and then she describes Karen's and Martha's "funny sounds", and their kissing, when "Miss Dobie went and visited Miss Wright late at night". Mary adds hastily that "one night there was so much noise, [she] thought somebody was sick....and she looked through the keyhole and they were kissing" (*Children's Hour*, 1934, p. 586).

Without showing the scene of the trial, Hellman hints in the next scene that Martha and Karen filed a defamation suit against Mrs. Telford, and they lost the case. The two women isolate themselves completely from society and avoid contact with the city. Cardin tries to lift their spirits by motivating them to leave the city and go to Vienna for their honeymoon. However, Karen notes reservations in Cardin's interactions and tone. Karen encourages her fiancé to ask the question that shivers in his chest whether there is really a lesbian relationship between her and Martha. Karen answers frankly "No. Martha and I have never touched each other" (*Children's Hour*, 1934, 593). Then Karen decides that she and her fiancé should separate to live their lives apart from the other. Despite her fiancé's refusal, Karen insists on her decision.

Surprises keep coming when Martha returns after Cardin's departure. Karen begins to suggest that they should leave town to start a new life elsewhere. Martha tries to assure Karen that her love for her is "like a friend, the way thousands of women feel about other women." (*Children's Hour*, 1934, 595). Moments later, Martha expresses her feeling towards Karen frankly. Moments pass quickly and finally comes the confession, "I have loved you the way they said," " There's always been something wrong.....But I never knew it until all this happened", " I resented your marriage; maybe because I wanted you.....; maybe I couldn't

call it by a name", " I never felt that way about anybody but you. I've never loved a man" (*Children's Hour*, 1934, 595). Martha finishes her confession that "There is a big difference between [them]" since Karen is "sad and clean" while she is "sad and dirty" (*Children's Hour*, 1934, p.595). Karen tries to silence her because she does not want to hear her. Martha leaves the room, after a while Karen hears a gunshot and learns that Martha has committed suicide.

To preserve the prevailing moral values in society, it was necessary for Hellman to get rid of lesbian Martha at the end of the play by suicide to reflect the tragic life of lesbians during that period. In hindsight, Tilford comes, remorseful, to admit that she discovers her granddaughter's lie. And now she comes to help them rebuild their lives as penance for her guilt towards them. She is dumbfounded when she hears that Martha has committed suicide. Tilford decides not to leave until Karen accepts her help to rebuild her life. The play ends with a scene in which Mrs. Tilford leaves the place and Karen opens the window and waves distractedly goodbye (Maginness, 2019).

In her play *Children's Hour*, Hellman focuses on several negative depictions of lesbianism:

The first negative depiction of lesbianism is when Hellman uses terms such as "unnatural, dirty, sick, and wrong" to reflect the prevailing social view of lesbianism at that time in a polite manner. This rhetoric is an indication of a time when society deals with lesbianism as an infection that has a negative impact on children. Schools are fertile ground for lesbian infection and the exclusion of Mrs. Tilford and the parents of their children from school stems from their belief that children will be influenced by lesbian behaviour and tend towards lesbian orientation. It is clear that Mrs. Tilford, other teachers, and the parents believe that lesbian orientation is an acquired orientation, not innate. The second negative depiction of lesbianism is when Martha realizes her feelings towards Karen. She describes herself as dirty and deserves death. Martha resorts to suicide to get rid of a lesbian addiction.

Again, lesbianism in this case is treated as a vice and the ruin of reputation that cannot be undone once chosen. Martha's confession of love to Karen, in her opinion, is a sentence of death. Moreover, she considers herself an antagonist and eventually suggests that the only end to her "dirty" lesbianism is death. Ultimately, the

nature of lesbianism is a contagious and life-destroying incident rather than an identity.

The third negative portrayal of lesbianism is when all the people of the town forsake the two women and stop all forms of dealing with them and this seems clear from Martha's sarcastic interruption to Karen's suggestion "to go into town and go shopping and acts as though....", saying "Shopping? There aren't three stores in Lancet that would sell us anything" (*Children's Hour*, 1934, 589). All the people in the town dealt with lesbianism as if it is a contagious disease that could be infected, so everyone prefers to stay away from the two women (Maginness, 2019).

3-2 Lesbianism In Diana Son's *Stop Kiss*

Son's *Stop Kiss* (1989) is an American play. It is directed by Jo Bonney, and produced at the Joseph Papp Theater in New York City. 80 per cent of tickets have sold out for five weeks of its show and to meet the public's demands, the show was extended. The play consists of twenty-three scenes. The play is told out of chronology: alternating scenes occur consecutively before and after the attack, which is not shown on stage (Clark, 2017).

The play opens with Callie. She is on her phone talking to her frequent boyfriend, George. Sara enters the stage and the couple begins to get to know each other. Son gives the spectators enough background about the two main characters of the play. Callie is a girl in her late twenties. She lives in New York and works as a reporter for an unknown news station. Callie mentions several times that she hates her job, but she makes no effort to find another job. Callie's apartment reflects her chaotic life. Despite her sense of humour, Callie does not like meeting new people or having new experiences. She avoids any interaction or activity that might lead to any type of confrontation. Even when she feels a sexual attraction to Sara, she tries to suppress her feelings by avoiding her. Callie's relationship with George makes her believe that she is heterosexual and there are no indications that lead the spectators to believe otherwise "George and I ... are friends. Who sleep together. But date other people. Sometimes for long period of time. We've been doing this since we were....20.... and I admit I can get jealous when he's- but at least I try to hide it" (*Stop Kiss*, scene 3, p:17). Callie thinks she will marry her boyfriend George despite the lack of a romantic relationship between them "Anyway, we'll probably get married ... Or not." (*Stop*

Kiss, scene 3, p:17). Callie's life is featured by chaos, swerving, and contradiction to avoid change, conflict, and making decisions. Especially when she swerves in her feelings from being heterosexual to homosexuality. Despite her feelings of sexual attraction towards Sarah, Callie tries to suppress these feelings to avoid confrontation.

Sara is adventurous and ambitious girl who wants to make the world a better place. Sara is a girl in her mid-twenties. She comes from Saint Louis to New York for a fellowship to find a new way of life. Sara works as a teacher and is proud of her work. Sara's attitude towards life is contagious that Callie couldn't resist it. Her enthusiastic character makes her look for new and exciting adventures. It is her adventurous spirit that drives her to a dangerous confrontation with a man who hits her fiercely. Sarah, like Callie, is identified invariably as heterosexual: "Callie, I know that neither you nor I have ever- well at least I know that I haven't," (*Stop Kiss*, scene 3, p:47), but she is more apt to indulge her curiosity; rather than evading. Although St. Louis has LGBT bars, Sara has never been to any of them "We have a couple places like that but I've never been. My friend Janet says that only college girls go to the clubs and bars; older lesbians just stay home and read." (*Stop Kiss*, scene 3, p:50) (Clark, 2017).

Son uses symbols and metaphors to show the difference between Callie and Sarah, that the former swerves to avoid disaster, while the latter encounters disaster. Sara knows very well that her friend has a defeatist personality.

Callie: So if you were driving down the highway and saw a pothole in the road ahead, what would you do, straddle or swerve?

Sara: Mm, straddle. You?

Callie: Straddle.

Sara: (About Callie) Swerve.

Callie: Nah- ah.

Sara: Yes you would.

.....

Callie: Ok, a rabbit. Straddle, swerve, or brake.

Sara: (Like this is an option.) Straddle a rabbit.

Callie: Sport Utility Vehicle—four-wheel drive, you could.

Sara: Screech to a brake, check the rabbit, then—smoke. You?

Callie: Brake.

Sara: *Swerve*.

Callie: Why do you keep saying that? (*Stop Kiss*, scene 7, p:29)

The play is punctuated by many scenes of swerving between Callie and Sarah. In scene five, when George asks Callie about Sara, she says that she is a "friend of a friend of aa new in town, I'm taking care of her cat-" (*Stop Kiss*, scene 5, p:23). When Sara arrives with a small bouquet of flowers, Callie tries to kiss her cheek, but she retreats. Another example of Callie's swerving appears in Scene eleven, when she invites Sara to accompany her to a ceremony. Sara arrives late dressing inappropriately for this celebration, Callie says angrily: "I have to go to this thing and I want you to go with me but I don't want you to wear what you're wearing and I don't want you to wear my clothes. What will people think if we walk in together and you're wearing my clothes?" (*Stop Kiss*, scene 11, p:39).

In Scene thirteen, Callie decides to call Sarah to apologize, but instead she swerves and calls George to ask for "a sushi fix" to be followed by sex (*Stop Kiss*, scene 13, p:44). In Scene fifteen, Callie confesses "I do, I know – I sometimes...swerve." (*Stop Kiss*, scene 15, p:46) (Campagna, 2015).

It appears in the play that Sara also has swerving. In scene twenty-one, Sara invites Callie to a lesbian bar in the West Village, and Callie accepts to go with her. In scene 23 Sara and Callie are walking down the street at 4:15 a.m. talking and sacrificing. The scene ends with a hot kiss between Callie and Sarah.

Diana Son ends her play with the kiss scene between Callie and Sarah, revealing its repercussions in the second scene, showing how Sara becomes unable to speak and move as a result of the brutal beating of a passerby. Throughout this scene, Son sends out a few mixed messages stating that homosexual behaviour is socially unacceptable and if it comes out in public it will be punished. It's okay to approve of homosexuals as long as they are victims (Campagna, 2015).

Son's *Stop Kiss* raises poignant questions related to lesbian safety, their rights, and legal protections. *Curve* (the lesbian magazine) published an article in which the writer describes Son's *Stops Kiss* as "fresh, funny, moving, and touch[ing] upon the serious theme of anti-LGBT violence." (Barker, 2014).

Sara is attacked by a passerby violently and enters the hospital. Upon investigation, Callie evades describing the events of that evening. Callie blatantly denies her relationship with Sara. But Detective Cole speculates that there is

a lot between the two women. Callie tries to deny her homosexuality, and restrain her feelings towards Sara, but she can't, therefore, she decides to stay in the hospital to take care of Sara.

Diana Son's *Stop Kiss* is a political play that examines the real conditions faced by real people, for example, violence against homosexuals. It shows how the main characters are victimized because of their sexual orientation. Son's *Stop Kiss* examines the equality and civil rights of homosexuals.

Stop Kiss serves as a rhetorical political strategy that raises questions to provide sexual minorities more access to civil rights, safety and better legal protections (Campagna, 2015).

Unfortunately, the police reaction to the attack is more tragic than the attack itself. And this appears clearly throughout the conversation between Mrs. Wilson (the only witness of the attack) and Detective Cole in scene 4:

Mrs. Winsley: I didn't see anything till I heard the other one screaming. I went to the window, then I called 911.

Det. Cole: What'd you see then?

Mrs. Winsley: He was beating on the both of them. I yelled down that I called the cops and I threw a couple flowers at him. My spider plants-
Det. Cole: So the screams woke you up?

Mrs. Winsley: I was in bed but up. Reading.

Det. Cole: 4:30 in the morning?

Mrs. Winsley: I'm a fitful sleeper, Detective. Have been since before I married him and those two girls are lucky that I am and that I was up and that I did something.

Det. Cole: You called 911.r

Mrs. Winsley: And my flowerpots.

Det. Cole: Did you hit him?

Mrs. Winsley: They fell near him. He stopped and took off.

Det. Cole: You stopped him.

Mrs. Winsley: Well it wasn't the cops, took 30 minutes for them to show up. You'd think it was Harlem, not the West Village. (*Stop Kiss*, scene 4, pp:20-1).

Mrs. Wilson positions West Village as a location of privilege, in comparison to Harlem, which represents a crime and poverty area according to a 2013 article in the New York. Son raises an important question in a spectator's mind which is "What took the police so long?" (Campagna, 2015, p: 201).

In *Stop Kiss*, Son also highlights the historical bias and fragile relationship between the police and ethnic and sexual minorities. Bias within the police force is portrayed through Detective Cole who attempts to collect information about the attacker. In *Stop Kiss*, Son highlights the historical bias and fragile relationship between the police and ethnic and sexual minorities. Bias within the police force is portrayed through Detective Cole who attempts to collect information about the attacker. Detective Cole engages in racial profiling as he does: "Was he black?"

Callie: No.

Det. Cole: Hispanic? (*Stop Kiss*, scene 4, p:14).

Detective Cole asks Callie provocative questions because he is not convinced that she tells him the truth about that night. Cole tries to extract the confessions from Callie because he thinks she may be insecure or afraid to admit that she and Sara are in a lesbian bar and that they have lesbian orientation. Cole's conversation evokes dominant attitudes regarding race and gender.

Cole tries to extract information about Callie and Sarah and their sexual orientation from Mrs. Wilson.

Cole uses this information against Callie and Sarah, rather than pursuing the information to apprehend the attacker. Callie and Sara do not have an attorney in the legal system. Detective Cole assures that the FBI will not take any action against the perpetrator and there is not even a future trial.

Mrs. Winsley, the witness who intervened in the attack from her balcony, shows sympathy for Callie and Sarah. The nurse's acceptance of the relationship between the two women, and her willingness to prepare Callie for Sara's home health care, enfranchise the two characters (Callie for Sara).

The scenes of the play show that Callie and Sara are unequivocally sympathetic, lovable, and in need of equal treatment to hetero women. The play *Stop Kiss* defends sexual minorities, and it is illustrated by the fact that the kiss which is earned hardly is the last scene of the play. Son, in her play motivates lesbians to face the hegemonic rules and not to swerve in the future. She also encourages them to rise up and fight for themselves. And through their acts of resistance, they will set precedence over what they should live fully (Campagna, 2015).

The other two important characters in the play are George and Peter. George is Callie's close friend of his late twenties. He is a social person with a sense of humour and offers a light comedic relief to spectators. George works as a waiter in the restaurant business.

George and Callie enjoy an unstable romantic relationship. Despite their messy relationship, George cares deeply about Callie's happiness. He is disappointed that he is not with Callie in her time of need. George supports Callie as a friend when he finally learns about Sara and Callie's affair, though he never says it publicly.

Peter is a young man in his early twenties and has an affair with Sara before she comes to New York. Peter works in a restaurant business and wants to marry Sara. When Sara is comatose in the hospital, Peter comes to aid her. Peter hopes that after her recovery she will resign to live in St. Louis with him. He is patient and genuinely cares about her, and ultimately wants her to be happy (Campagna, 2015).

CONCLUSION

We conclude that both Hellman, in her play *Children's Hour* (1934) and Son, in her play *Stop Kiss* (1989) try to defend the issues of the lesbians and declare that non-stereotypical sexual relations, whether we like or not, exist in the societies and they are part of the fabric of these societies. Thus, their exposure to abuse, injustice, racism, and repression is completely unacceptable and must be stopped by all means. Through our analytical study of two plays from different decades, we also conclude that society, despite the persistence of religious, social and political rejection, has become more aware of the acceptance of lesbians and sympathy for their issues, as in Mrs. Winsley's and the nurse's sympathy for the issue of the physical abuse of Callie and Sarah and how Mrs. Winsley throws plants pot at the assailant to rescue Callie and Sarah. The play *Stop Kiss* ends with love when Callie decides to take care of Sarah, unlike the play *Children's Hour* which ends with Martha's suicide and destruction of Karen's reputation, life, and future. Obviously, the story of this play is not happy for lesbians. It represents an old tradition of realistic plays where lesbians have no choice but to kill themselves in the end. Here, Hellman talks about the suffering of lesbians at school and at work in a way that drives some of them to suicide.

During these decades, the rapid development of political goals and social interests has led to the emergence of liberating and assimilationist societies and agendas. This has led to openly demanding same-sex orientation practices and engaging in homosexual relationships and friendships without consequences.

Lesbians achieve maximum mainstream attention by presenting their issues and suffering to the public through the literary rhetoric of their plays, demanding society for civil rights and legal protection.

The rapid development of political goals and social interests has led to the emergence of liberating and assimilationist societies and agendas. This has led homosexuals to demand to practice homosexuality openly and to engage in homosexual relationships and friendships without consequences.

Furthermore, the main issue in the same-sex relations file is the search for common ground that ensures that homosexuals in society should not be subjected to verbal and physical abuse and discrimination and at the same time, they should respect the culture and laws of society that impose restrictions on sexual relations. This is undoubtedly a difficult task in light of the complexities of this file and its connection to a wide range of social, political and religious concepts.

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پوخته

بشپوهه کی گشتی، هه رگاف شانوگه ریڼ هاتنه گیران لسه رهه هه ف ره گه زئی و دهاتنه دویر ئیخستن ژ وه رزیڼ خواندنئ و هاتنه دیتن وهک ئه ده به کئ کیم لهر کاودانین جفاکی وره وشه نییری و ناینی.

مه به ست ژئی فه کولینئ هشیاریا ره وشه نییری و تیژک به ردانه لسه رجم و جولا ره وشه نییری ورونکره کئ تیدا دیار دکته بو فه بولکرن به رامبه ر هه ف ره گه زئی نیروموکین دئی ده میدا هه ف ره گه زئی بویه بابته کئ فه کری بو گه نگه شی دزانستا بوماوهیی زانستین ده رونی و زانستین جفاکی بو ده ست نیشانکرنا سه به بین وئ.

گه لهک شانوقانا و نقیسه ریڼ شانویئ پیته دایه ئازاندنا ئی پسیاری دنا ف ئه ده بئ خودا. به لئ ئه ف فه کولینه دوو شانوگه ریا بخو فه دگریت ژ دوو ده مین ژیک جودا د قهرنئ بیستی دا وهک داتایین فه کولینئ هه ردوو جاره سه ریا به رفه بونا هشیاریا جفاکی ئه وین چیبوین دقان سالادا بو فه بولکرنا هه ف ره گه زئی و دانپیدان ب مافین وان بو شرو فه کرنا ده قئ ئه ف فه کولینا باوه ریئ ده ته هه ردوو ده قین (Sons Stop Kiss Hellmens The Childrens Hour (1934) و (1998) رشدی بشپوهه کئ تاییه ت لسه ره هه ف ره گه زئی.

ئه ف فه کولینه ژ چوار به شا بیك دهیت. به شی ئیکئ به حسی هه ف ره گه زین دکته و بیناسا وئ و ئه گه ریڼ وئ. به شی دوویئ به حسی هه ف ره گه زین دکته که جوله و توخمئ ئه ده بئ. به شی سیئ به حسی هه ف ره گه زین دکته دنا ف دوو شانویاندا (The Childrens Hour و Stop Kiss) بو تیگه هشتنا که سایه تیا هه ف ره گه زین (ناسناما وان وشیانین وان) و ناریشین وان و به ریئ خودانا جفاکی بو وان. به شی چواری بیك دهیت ب دوماهیكا بابته تی. و لیسته کا ژیده ران وهه ردوو کورتین کوردی وعه ره بی.

پیتین کلیک: هه ف ره گه زئی، نیروموکی، سه به بین وان، زانستی ده رون

الخلاصة

بشكل عام، يتم استبعاد المسرحيات التي تتمحور حول المثليين عند دراسة تاريخ الدراما في فصولنا الدراسية ويُنظر إليها على أنها أدب أدنى لاعتبارات اجتماعية وثقافية ودينية.. يهدف هذا البحث إلى الوعي الثقافي الذي يسלט الضوء على الحركات الثقافية التي تتطلب مزيدًا من التوضيح لتحمل المواقف المقبولة تجاه السحاقيات والمثلية الجنسية.

في الوقت الحاضر، أصبحت المثلية الجنسية موضوعًا مفتوحًا للنقاش في علم الوراثة وعلم النفس والعلوم الاجتماعية لتحديد مسباتها. أظهر العديد من المسرحيين والكتاب المسرحيين اهتمامًا بإثارة هذا السؤال في أدبهم، لكن هذا البحث يتناول مسرحيتين من عقود مختلفة من القرن العشرين كبيانات بحثية. كلاهما يعالج توسيع الوعي الاجتماعي الذي يحدث خلال هذه السنوات لقبول المثليين والاعتراف بحقوقهم. بالنسبة للتحليل النصي، تعتمد الدراسة على كلا النصين، *Hellman's The Children Hour* (1934) و *Son's Stop Kiss* (1998) مع التركيز بشكل خاص على السحاق.

تنقسم هذه الدراسة إلى أربعة أقسام. يعرض القسم الأول المثلية الجنسية: تعريفها وأسبابها. يركز القسم الثاني على السحاق كحركة ونوع أدبي. يعرض القسم الثالث دراسة عن السحاق في مسرحيتين، "ساعة الأطفال وتوقف القبله"، لفهم أبعاد الشخصيات السحاقية (هوياتهم وخبراتهم)، وقضاياهم ووجهة نظر المجتمع تجاههم. يقدم القسم الرابع الخاتمة. تنتهي الدراسة بقائمة من المراجع والملخصات بالفتين الكردية والعربية.

الكلمات الدالة: الشذوذ الجنسي، السحاق، المسبات، علم النفس