

ECAS 2013

5th European Conference on African Studies (Lisbon)

June
27-29



African Dynamics in a Multipolar World

ISCTE - Lisbon University Institute

ECAS 2013

5th European Conference on African Studies

African Dynamics in a Multipolar World

©2014 Centro de Estudos Internacionais do Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL)

ISBN: 978-989-732-364-5

EROTICISM AND SEXUAL PLEASURE IN DIANE CASE'S *TOASTED PENIS AND CHEESE*

Ifeyinwa Genevieve Okolo

Department of English and Literary Studies
Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria

sweeteve222@gmail.com

Abstract

*This paper explores eroticism and pleasure in Diane Case's *Toasted Penis and Cheese* showing the wide variety of available sexual pleasures to men and women, but with emphasis on the avenues of pleasure available to the woman. Sexual pleasures in the novel are presented in binary forms with the socio-cultural and religious factors determining what are classified in these binaries as good/bad, moral/immoral, and acceptable/unacceptable. Case represents different understandings and ideologies over varied sexual behaviours and pleasure without subscribing to the inhibitions generated by these ideologies – she rather places adult consent over them. The degree of sexual satisfaction or its denial contributes significantly to the general wellbeing of the individual, and, to an extent, determines the pace of human inter-relations.*

Key words: eroticism, sexual pleasure, sexual satisfaction/denial, sexuality, morality, auto-eroticism

Sexual Pleasure/Eroticism: An Overview

Much of what exists as the body of literature on eroticism, beginning from the ancient texts on sex have their focus on how best to maximise pleasure for the man with little attention paid to the woman's pleasure. Perhaps, because these texts are written by men, they emphasize what they know and feel about themselves and project what they think and believe is happening to/in the woman. Written by Vatsayayana between 100 A.D and 400 A.D for the nobility of ancient India, *Karma Sutra* is centred on helping couples ascend the highest imaginable peaks of sexual pleasure. Kalyana Mala's *Ananga Ranga* written around 1172 A.D. is focused on preventing the separation of husbands and wives which it believes occurs when there is a lack of variation in erotic pleasures available in a marriage which sends the husband outside the marriage on exploration. Shaykh Nafzawi's old Arabic manuscript which was found in the mid-1800s in Algeria by a French officer, *The Perfumed Garden*, was written in the sixteenth century Tunis and explored sex positions, sensual foods, aphrodisiacs, types of men and women perceived as sexually desirable, and homosexual practices. The ancient Chinese Taoist pillow books (sex manuals), the most popular being the *T'ung Hsuan Tzu* written by the seventh century Li T'ung Hsuan, are explorations in understanding the mechanics of sex, acquiring uninhibited sexual expressions as part of living a long and full life, and harmonising sexual energies with nature, paying more attention to the balance created in nature as a result of the sexual act which is seen as effective when indulged in by spiritually aware/conscious partners. Without this spiritual consciousness, disorder is generated in the society. Anne Hooper's (2007a, 2007b) adaptations of some of these Eastern sex manuals identify most of the recommended practices as being termed pornographic by the twenty-first century western world and incorporate women's feelings and their maximization of pleasure from the same activities given by the ancient writers

which focused on the men. This creates a sort of balancing effect on the ancient prejudices and biases. The existence of these texts and others like them go to show that humans are not only interested in investing in the pleasures derived from sex but have taken pains to ensure that the activities and steps to attaining this pleasure are preserved.

Arowolaju (2009, p.8) is of the opinion that “Sexual activities are not limited to only sexual intercourse or masturbation but include hugging, touching, erotic stimulations, kissing and oral-genital sex. Sexual pleasure is derived from any type of sexual activity and may occur during foreplay and sexual fantasy...wearing of sexy clothes and telephone or cybersex”. Patterns of human sexual activity from which pleasure is derived can broadly be divided into intercourse (involving penetration) and extracourse (occurring on the outside of the body without penetration). These include, but are not limited to, oral sex, anal sex, scatophilia (sexual arousal from making obscene telephone calls), voyeurism/scophilia (sexual pleasure from watching others naked or while engaging in sexual activity), exhibitionism (pleasure from removing clothes and giving others a shock at seeing one's nudity), urophilia (pleasure derived from urine during sex), coprophilia (pleasure derived from faecal matter during sex), gerontophilia (pleasure from and between old people), necrophilia (pleasure from sexual activity with corpses), satyriasis/Don Juanism (excessive sexual desire in men), nymphomania (excessive sexual desire in women), sadomasochism (pleasure from pain), paedophilia (sexual desire for children), pederasty (sexual desire for little boys), rape (sex without consent), incest (sex with family members), group sex (sex with more than one partner at the same time), autoeroticism (pleasure from self-pleasuring, including masturbation), fetishism (pleasure from objects), transvestism/fetishistic transvestism (sexual pleasure from dressing up in the clothes of the other sex. This differs from the cross-dressing of the transgendered person because the transgendered

cross-dresses for reasons of gender identification and not for sexual pleasure as in the transvestite), bestiality/zoophilia (pleasure from sex with animals), frotteurism/frottage/toucheurism (pleasure from rubbing one's body against another's or from compulsively touching strangers), and celibacy. The list shows that not all pleasure-giving activities are perceived by individuals, the law, religious organisations and the society in the same way. While some are considered acceptable/normal and may not raise eyebrows when conducted in privacy with a consenting adult partner, some others are not, hence they are grouped under abnormality/paraphilia and have laws and punishments against their practice. Necrophilia and bestiality (at least, before 2011 when America legalised bestiality), for example, have laws in many countries prohibiting them and are seen by most as extreme cases of mental disorder or psychological maladjustment (Rosman & Resnick, 1989; Ehrlich, Rothschild, Pluisch & Schneider, 2000; Aggrawal, 2010; Bouregghda, Retz, Philipp-Wiegmann & Rosler, 2011).

Masturbation is a common sexual behaviour among adolescent males (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael & Michaels, 1994). Carroll (2005, p.221) has it that this decreases when they are having regular sexual intercourse while it increases in girls probably because "girls are less likely to reach orgasm during intercourse than boys and supplement it with masturbation". Actions like exhibitionism, scopophilia/voyeurism and scatophilia have a socially unpleasant nature and as such are seen mostly as forms of sexual harassment. While urophilia and coprophilia may sound/appear disgusting to non-initiates, they are relatively harmless when done between consenting adults, considering hazardous sex (i.e. paying attention to sexual health). Fetishism and transvestism/fetishistic transvestism do not harm a second party and provided fetishes (the object of attraction like rubber and metal) are not wrongfully used to inflict pain, they qualify for safer sex. There is nothing wrong or abnormal with the elderly having or getting

sexual pleasures, although it is generally thought that sex is something old people do not think about or get involved in. Sexuality continues into old age although some sexual responses may be altered by age like a drop in the desire for sex as when compared with what obtained at the individual's younger age. Paedophilia and pederasty because of the ages of the objects of sexual attraction who are minors are unlawful. This obtains, at least, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, since Carroll (2005) shows that pederasty was an acceptable practice in Ancient Greek and Boswell (1980) shows sexual and "moral" laxity in ancient Roman civilisation. Rape and any sexual act that the partners are not agreed on or are coerced into are also counted as unlawful.

Incest has been viewed from different angles by different societies and institutions. While promoting chastity, both the Mosaic/Hebraic and Islamic laws upheld in the Bible and Koran condemn incest. The two holy books, in most cases, do not count marriage between cousins as incest but promote wife inheritance on the death of a husband. They however forbid the male family member (who is eligible to inherit the woman on the husband's demise) to have sex with the woman while the husband is still alive. Henslin's (2009) extensive study on incest is revealing: some states in America count marriage between first cousins as incestuous and therefore illegal while some others do not; the Arunta, a tribe in Australia, think of certain clans as being "blood" relatives and marriage between people in those clans as incest; the ancient Egyptians, the Incas of Peru, and the old kingdom of Hawaii *required* brother-sister marriages for their high nobility; the Thonga, a tribe found in parts of Zimbabwe and Zambia, permit a hunter to have sexual intercourse with his daughter before he goes on a lion hunt; a tribe in Central Africa, the Azande, permit high nobles to marry their own daughters; and among the Burundi of tropical Africa, when a son is impotent the mother is supposed to have sex with him

in order to cure his impotence. Henslin's (2009) examples which he draws from various authorities go to show that situations, place and time are determiners of what make up a society's sexual universe as well as their rightness or otherwise. He states:

This, in short, is the *social* aspect of our sexuality: Although we have a built-in biological sex drive, our membership in groups shapes or gives direction to this drive. Because different groups have different expectations--and different values, beliefs, and patterns of behavior--sexual behaviors, and even desires, vary from one group to another. This principle applies not only to different groups around the world but also to different groups *within* the same society. Consequently, sexual desires and behaviors differ by gender, race-ethnicity, age, religious orientation, and social class (Henslin, 2009, Sex as Social in, para. 3).

Barlow and Durand (2002, p.311) recognise that there has been a clear change toward sexual expression and fulfilment in men and women over the ages beginning from the 1960s and 1970s and that while "sexual revolution may be largely a creation of the media, focusing as it does on extreme or sensational cases", it is also clear that "the sexes are definitely drawing together in their attitudes and behavior, although some differences in attitudes and core beliefs remain". The inhibiting/restrictive "*double standard* has disappeared , in that women, for the most part, no longer feel constrained by a stricter and more conservative social standard of sexual conduct" (Barlow & Durand, 2002, p.311). It becomes clear from this study that the society sees and weighs sexual actions differently based on the gender of the actor. The norm which is gradually becoming obsolete is that while men do not generally feel inhibited or embarrassed and are given to liberality in sexual behaviours, women are prone to conservatism, self-consciousness and a great level of embarrassment in both the sexual behaviours and discussions.

From the foregoing, Diane Case's handling of the sexual choices available to men and, especially, women, reveal how the actions taken by the characters in the text are informed by

their society's view of these actions, their religious understanding of them, the conflict of their personal perceptions and needs with their societies', religions, culture and such factors.

Eroticism and Pleasure in *Toasted Penis and Cheese*

The first paragraph in the novel captures its essence – the exploration of sexually pleasurable options from a woman's angle:

I have a phallic preoccupation. It is the most distracting obsession. Everything I see or touch makes me think of a penis – a healthy, clean, erect, shining penis staring me straight in the eye, asking me the question: “What now, my love, now that you've found me?” (Case, 1999, p.1)

Arguments in the text over the options for sexual pleasure include behaviours and activities considered good/bad, healthy/unhealthy and moral/immoral ranging from sexual intercourse (involving penetration), autoeroticism/self-pleasuring (masturbation), oral sex, voyeurism, pederasty, group sex, to celibacy. The norm in the sexual universe against which the characters in the text are portrayed sees all forms of sexual pleasures, apart from sex for the purpose of procreation and celibacy, as perverse. *Toasted Penis and Cheese* explores the avenues and rights of both men and women to sexual pleasure. Hence, the protagonist's (Jennifer's) fantasies and desires tend towards the “unacceptable” – she fantasizes about having sex with Peter, her sister's husband or giving him a blow-job (which she enjoyed with her ex-husband). This, from the angle of Peter being a family member, and considering the moral consciousness of the protagonist's society, is wrong. What keeps her and Peter in check is that she quickly remembers family ties and the society's unacceptance of her fantasy. But, that she contemplates this form of pleasure sets her outside the boundaries of society's moral restrictions. Bettina Weiss (2006, p.50) looks at this societal inversion of roles and states: “The male becomes the object of a female gaze. The

contradiction of picturing women on the one hand as having no desire, of being passive lovers, and on the other as animalistic or perverse is ironically subverted in this scene". Melanie, Jennifer's sister, on the other hand represents the moralistic opinions which see certain sexual orientations and behaviours as perverse. Melanie believes men visit sex-workers "because they do all sorts of dirty things with them...like blow-jobs!" (Case, 1999, p.12). She is horrified that some people enjoy it and sees it as wickedness which she will never permit herself to do or allow Peter to do to her because, she says, "I am fussy about what goes into my mouth because I eat with this mouth... Peter used to ask me if he could do it to me, but no, I'm sorry I am not a pervert and I told him so!" (Case, 1999, p.13) One wonders how two sisters with the same moral upbringing end up having different ideas of perversion. To preserve Melanie's false sense of morality, Jennifer does not tell her that she enjoys blow-jobs. This goes to show that individual choices go a long way in consolidating the sexual universe per time. If Jennifer shocked her sister with her stand on blow-jobs, chances are that she might have a rethink on the matter. But here, Case allows this pleasure to be determined by the individual's tastes.

With Peter, Case explores the denial of sexual pleasure to men and the classification of certain sexual activities as unacceptable as a result of morality. Peter's sexual orientation is perceived as perversion by the wife, hence he lives in denial. The right to pleasure does not imply that Peter should compel Melanie to accept his sexual orientation, but, her refusal to even consider or create a platform for a consensus to be reached makes her stand oppressive. Melanie believes "that God gave us sex to make babies to populate the earth" (Case, 1999, p.13). The influence of religious doctrines in the shaping of Melanie's views is obvious. On the other hand, Raymond and Jennifer do not harbour such inhibitions in their sexual relationship as husband and wife. They are so free that they contemplate a threesome once but could not agree on who

the third party should be – Raymond wanted a woman while Jennifer wanted a man (Case, 1999, p.14). Coming this far in their sexual freedom but disagreeing on the sex of the third party gives an idea that couples in open marriages have a lot to deal with and that maintaining that kind of marital relationship is not as easy as it sounds in O'Neil and O'Neil (1972), Bergstrand and Williams' (2000) and Rubin (2001). These studies shed light on what is called open marriages or swinging, whereby some married couples encourage their partners to have extramarital affairs or to bring other partners into their marital beds in order to have sexual variety, adventure or enhanced sexual life. Sex in this kind of marriage is treated as a separate entity outside of the marriage serving the purpose of strengthening the marital bond if enhanced with sexual delight from other quarters (Rubin, 2001). Bergstrand and Williams (2000) also report happier marriages and higher life satisfaction amongst swingers (couples in open marriages) than non-swingers (couples not in open marriages).

In Jennifer's relationship with her husband, a lot of abnormalities are observed. She and Raymond get married because she is pregnant; Raymond would have preferred an abortion (although he comes to love Melissa very much when she is born). Their marriage is that of people with conflicting interests: the one for pleasure only, the other for pleasure with responsibilities. Raymond wants a relationship that affords him all kinds of imaginable pleasures but at his women's expense and not taking their psychological well-being into consideration. When Jennifer has post-coital bleeding after the birth of Melissa, to ensure the continuance of his pleasurable moments without responsibilities, Raymond takes it upon himself to make an appointment with a gynaecologist who ties up the wife's fallopian tubes, on Raymond's instruction, in the process of taking care of her bleeding. She is neither consulted nor permitted to seek another medical opinion before she is taken into the operating theatre. The rights to

pleasure, while giving room for the pursuance of sexually pleasurable experiences, insist on consent between/among partners. To promote the value of agreement between/amongst partners, Case explores the psychological trauma that Jennifer passes through when she is denied her rights to controlling what happens to her body. She suffers from depression over the babies she will never have but who she imagines dying with the unfertilised sperm each time she has sex, she gains weight and has dramatic hair loss (Case, 1999, p. 54-55). It is within this period while she is having post-coital bleeding, Jennifer supposes, that Raymond moves on to Carol – he could not stand the bleeding interfering with his sexual pleasures and found a non-bleeding partner. Jennifer initiates a divorce because she feels betrayed and afterwards, though she still longs for him (they even have sex on one occasion after the divorce), she starts looking for distractions to absorb her need for a sex partner.

Clive comes along and with him, Case explores a relationship that offers both partners (Jennifer and Clive) grounds to analyse each other's feelings while providing support and respect. They first meet at a party where Melanie (Jennifer's younger and more sophisticated sister) had taken her to with the hope that she will get her emotional distress under control and start a new relationship with another man after the divorce. Clive "does nothing for my hormones, but I do enjoy the attention and respect" (Case, 1999, p.87), Jennifer says. The bad angel suggests that she should help things along by getting Clive to develop the relationship along the sex axis and to dump him if he has no wish to go in that direction. Veronica, Jennifer's very sexually active friend agrees with this point. But, Melanie and their mother support the good angel's opinion – to allow the relationship develop gradually since Clive appears very rich, is "the romantic sort, chivalrous" (Case, 1999, p.89) and "there is nothing wrong with waiting for the right moment when we will both be overcome with desire and succumb to our basic carnal

selves” (Case, 1999, p.88). Whether Clive and Jennifer wait or not is not the issue here but the fact that they both have an understanding and agreement with neither crossing the other's boundaries. When it turns out Clive has been giving Jennifer space because he is HIV positive, Jennifer is fulfilled giving him all the moral support he needs. Theirs becomes “a deep and spiritual” love (Case, 1999, p.146). Clive is used in the novel to make a statement on the possibility of living a celibate life. Clive knows his HIV status, is on anti-retroviral drugs and is therefore managing his health well. It is to his credit that he makes it a point to inform Jennifer of his status so as to prevent their relationship from getting sexual, so they remain platonic friends. He does not take advantage of Jennifer, even when the occasion presents itself for them to have sex and knowing that it is what she would have wanted.

Case examines self-pleasuring (masturbation) as a healthy means of providing sexual pleasure. Jennifer daydreams about having sex with Peter, her sister's sexually deprived husband, and dedicates the pleasures she gets from self-pleasuring to him. She is happy with her new discovery of combating loneliness and sees nothing wrong with it. This is not the same as the voices of the angels that speak with her.

Most mornings after he [Peter] leaves I lie in the bath and fiddle with my bits. When the ripples of pleasure dance all over me I throw my head back and say loudly, “This is for you, Peter!”

My good angel thinks it is disgusting while my bad angel reasons that since no one is getting hurt and it relieves the sexual tension, it is quite a good exercise. I must add that calling his name makes these sessions less lonely, not that it bothered me before (Case, 1999, p.97).

The self-pleasuring theory propounded by Veronica and Jennifer and the reason for their stand are noteworthy. The theory is that “most adults – men and women – fiddle with their bits quite regularly” and “more women than men do it or at least the women do it more often” with

their reason being that “most men reach a climax with every sexual encounter. But not us women” (Case, 1999, p. 97-98). Carroll (2005) echoes the same opinion in her section of study on masturbation. The frustration this puts on the women qualify them as experts in self-pleasuring. Veronica's and Jennifer's claim appear to be true when one considers that a higher number of the sex toys available in sex shops (breast clamps, nipple clips, vibrators, SmartBalls, glass and magic wands, Tango, etc.) are targeted at the women, an indication that their sexual needs are not met as much as those of men. The traditional outlook on sexual relationships which generally discourages the woman from enjoying sex and/or restricts her from making sexual advances or asking for specific sexual attentions may be responsible for the general lack of sexual satisfaction of women. Veronica's and Jennifer's reason clearly shows the marginalization of the sexually deprived. Masturbation becomes an avenue for addressing deprivation. It is noticed that Jennifer does not take the relationship with Peter further than the daydreams as societal moral codes place a restriction on her having sexual intimacy with the sister's husband. Hence, on the one occasion the two of them allow their raging hormones to exceed their limits, Jennifer is quick to recollect herself and ask Peter to stop before they actually have sex (Case, 1999, p.99).

Jennifer discovers the freedom that self-pleasuring offers the sexually deprived when she goes out with Clive who refuses to make sexual moves towards her despite her suggestive cues. She ends up giving herself some sexual stimulation in the open mountainside where they both went for a walk. The experience rejuvenates her: “I feel like I am a whole new woman and I am pleased that I did not share my experience with him. Something happened to me on the mountain, something magical that set me free” (Case, 1999, p.131). Later on, she equips herself with lots of cucumbers dressed in glow-in-the-dark condoms (in place of a vibrator) during her

masturbation sessions and she says: "I found the experience liberating to say the least...Now I know why they say, 'as cool as a cucumber'." (Case, 1999, p.159). It is a Jennifer who has built up her self-esteem, after discovering she is lovable because she can love herself and the way she makes her body feel without any man's assistance, that thinks of picking up a new life in which she will do only the things that she enjoys. She has heeded her bad angel's advice: "If you do not enjoy your body, how can you allow someone else to?" with the response: "I do enjoy my body and I do love myself" (Case, 1999, p.171). She is not looking for a man anymore but for healthy sex on its own – "a penis to do with as I please" (Case, 1999, p.15) as she puts it. She reinvents herself as Genevieve, a book writer and "Genevieve feels that she has hundreds of penises at her disposal...Genevieve wakes with a song in her heart...she says to herself, looking back into the mirror, "you are one amazing woman. Go out and be amazing!" And she is an amazing woman, for she nurtures no embryonic anger" (Case, 1999, p.182). The dowdy, unsure woman who quit her job because she could not stand the questions of sympathizers on losing her husband to her friend, Carol, gives way to a self-confident writer. She discovers too that Raymond's ability to hurt her feelings after the divorce is partly because she is still financially dependent on him. This strongly links economic empowerment with sexual freedom and rights. The choices and behaviours of the marginalized, to a large extent, are controlled by their financial status and ties with the centre.

Veronica is emancipated and liberated all through the novel because she was never inhibited by societal restrictions and norms. Sexually, she does what she wants, how and when she wants it. Veronica is for self-pleasuring with her vibrator. She does not get maximum sexual satisfaction from the foreigner she is dating because "He is a bit boring in bed...gets out of breath and cramps in his legs" (Case, 1999, p.132). She summarises his inadequacies in three

sentences: "He has the thinnest penis I have ever encountered. It feels like he's tickling me with a chicken bone. Giving him a blow-job is like doing battle with a chewy, half-cooked chipolata sausage." (Case, 1999, p.133) Jennifer's offer that the size of a penis does not determine the pleasure it gives is discarded by Veronica as "a myth to protect the male ego" (Case, 1999, p.133). Veronica's preference for the vibrator is tied to the gender roles fixed by the patriarchal society for women: "I don't need to get up early to make my vibrator breakfast or fetch him an ashtray" (Case, 1999, p.133). Looking at her choice from the angle of this statement, it can be inferred that self-pleasuring is also a way of revolting against fixed gender roles that are unacceptable to a particular gender.

Watching of pornographic movies which parallels voyeurism is another source of sexual pleasure explored by Case but she draws a limit, using Jennifer, to what society considers acceptable and unacceptable (Case, 1999, p.135-136). Jennifer's major disagreement with the pornographic movies is that the animals or women in them appear to be drugged to give their various performances, especially, the ones that lead to bodily injuries on the performers (animals and humans). This strikes a chord with people fighting for animal rights and the rights of the sexually abused, an indication that bestiality though a form of sexual pleasure is seen as abnormal and unacceptable in some societies.

While Case recommends self-pleasuring, she maintains a neutral stand on homosexuality. While Jennifer waits for Clive, her bad angel suggests Clive that has not shown up or shown any sexual interest in Jennifer because he might be gay. The choice of words and the tone of expression employed enable Case to briefly explore the way the society looks at homosexuality. She finally takes the neutral stand of not taking sides for or against it:

"...He has an attitude of out of sight, out of mind. For all you know he has a sleazy double life somewhere. Forget him! It's time to test the market again. And quite frankly, little sister, I'm surprised no one thought he could be gay."

"No, I don't think so my love," my good angel says. "There's nothing feminine about him."

"What planet do you come from?" my bad angel fumes. "Who says gay has to be feminine?"

I don't know what to think. Maybe he is asexual like the snails. Still, I feel a little sad thinking of what could have been (Case, 1999, p.109).

Society is explored here as seeing gayness as abnormal and unacceptable. Clive is suspected by the bad angel as being uninterested in sex because he might be gay, a veiled reference to the idea that patriarchal societies expect male aggression and proactivity in sexual relationships. There is also a misconception on the general behaviour of gay men – femininity. Femininity is considered improper in a man and a pointer to his sexual orientation. Case avoids delving into gay rights discussion by quickly assigning the term "asexual" to Clive, and by so doing extricates herself from being seen as nursing an aversion for gayness.

Jennifer considers having sex with one of her daughter's friends – Luke, but is quick to note the dangers, which says that she is aware of and respects the sexual rights of the child:

How I crave that boy and his youthful penis right now. All I want is to pull him into me, to look into his green eyes as I teach him the ways of a mature woman – over and over again, and I will see him grow up before my eyes. And then, when the morning comes, will he be a boy again? (Case, 1999, p.126)

Case, using Jennifer, makes provision for adults to recognize and respect the need to preserve the sanctity of the sexual rights of the child, even when this child (Luke) wants what the bill of sexual rights sees as unacceptable for it. Luke admires Jennifer, sees her as oozing sex appeal and says that much to Melissa. Melissa is not comfortable that her friend who is probably her age

(17years) finds her mother sexually attractive. And Jennifer saves Luke a lot of trouble by being responsible and not pursuing the leading of her raging hormones or the promptings from the under-aged Luke:

..Luke, who comes from a mismanaged childhood, looking for approval from an older woman and lustfully eager to test his testosterone overload. I put him straight when he grabbed me from behind when I was washing the dishes one day. I only just managed, cursing myself I must add, because the hardness of his erection against my bum was terribly enticing. What was the boy thinking? He was so apologetic and terribly embarrassed. Can you believe that young boy? But that is it exactly – he is but a young boy and bound to make mistakes (Case, 1999, p.170).

With Peter, Case recognizes that it is not always the woman that is sexually deprived in a marriage or sexual relationship and that in promoting sexual pleasure, self-pleasuring may not always be the perfect answer to everybody's needs. Peter's sexual problems with his wife are sorted out through dialogue between the couple. They discover the strain each one of them is going through as a result of neglect and sit down to talk and iron out their differences. Melanie who is the conservatively perfect wife soft-pedals with Peter and makes amendments to some aspects of her life like her dressing in order to accommodate her husband's needs. Peter too makes some changes like paying her more attention. Their marriage survives the storms without recourse to any extreme measures. This is the key factor behind the rights to pleasure, that each partner's feelings, needs and general wellbeing be taken into consideration in decisions that concern their sexual needs.

An examination of the voices of the angels in the text reveals Case's invention of these characters to take care of the differing opinions and voices on issues bordering on sexual rights, especially eroticism/pleasure. The good angel speaks with the voice of the morals of the society (ideology/the centre) while the bad one brings to light the individual's/self's desires that are in

conflict with ideology. For example, the good angel does not “watch blue movies or talk about such disgusting things” while the bad one believes a man “needs the movies to kick-start his dick” (Case, 1999, p.136). The good angel finds numerous cucumber penises and their services disgusting while the bad one responds with “If you don’t like it, you can always leave” (Case, 1999, p.182). The bad angel suggests that Jennifer gets some sex toys to play with to the chagrin of her good angel:

“You should get yourself some toys to play with little sister,” my bad angel continues. “There’s no harm in having a bit of fun on your own. You even get blow up men these days and toy penises with thumbs attached for extra stimulation.”

“That’s a sick idea!” my good angel bristles. (Case, 1999, p.15-16)

The good and bad angels in the text are pointers to the warring sides to sexual pleasure which one individual can be burdened with as a result of societal and, sometimes, religious influence. Angels are primarily religious beings and as such, inform the reader that Case is using them to scrutinise religious and moral opinions on sexuality and sexual pleasure. Through this device – externalising the protagonist’s internal conflict through her conversation with the imaginary angels – Case effectively represents different understandings and ideologies over varied sexual behaviours and pleasure. She however does not subscribe to the inhibitions generated by these ideologies but places the pleasures of the consenting adult(s) over them.

Conclusion

Case’s *Toasted Penis and Cheese* places the responsibility of sexual pleasures on the individual, ignoring, to a large extent, the “acceptable” societal sexual norms. Seeing that the sex drive is one of the strongest human drives, the degree of sexual satisfaction or its denial contributes significantly to the general wellbeing of the individual, and to an extent determines the pace of

human inter-relations. Therefore, the level of emancipation attained by individuals, as seen in the characters in the novel, is a pointer to the key role of sexual pleasure in qualitative human living.

References

- Aggrawal, A. (2010). *Necrophilia: forensic and medico-legal aspects*. London: CRC Press, Taylor & Francis Publishing Group.
- Arbuthnot, F. F. & Burton, Sir R. 1963. *The kama sutra of Vatsyayana* (K. M. Panikkar, Intro., W. G. Archer, Ed.). London: George Allen & Unwin (Original work published 1883).
- Arbuthnot, F. F. & Burton, Sir R. 1963. *The kama sutra of Vatsyayana* (Dom Moraes, Intro., John Muirhead Gould, Ed.). St. Albans, UK.: Panther Books (Original work published 1883).
- Arowojolu, A. O. (February 23, 2009). *Sexuality in reproductive health: emergence of a new disease*. Faculty Lecture, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Barlow, D. H. & Durand, V. M. (2002). *Abnormal psychology: an integrative approach* (3rd ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Bergstrand, C. & Williams, J.B. (2000). Today's alternative marriage styles: the case of swingers. *The Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality* 3. Accessed August 27, 2009, in <http://ejhs.org/volume3/swing/body.htm>.
- Boswell, J. (1980). *Christianity, social tolerance, and homosexuality: gay people in western Europe from the beginning of Christian era to the fourteenth century*. Chicago: The University Press.
- Bouregghda, S.S.T., Retz, W., Philipp-Wiegmann, F. & Rösler, M. 2011. A case report of necrophilia: a psychopathological view. *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine* 18(6), pp. 280-284.
- Burton, Sir R. (Trans.) (1963). *Hindu art of love (Ananga Ranga)* with *The symposium of Plato* (B. Jowett, Trans.). London: Neville Spearman (Original work written around 1172).
- Burton, Sir R. (Trans.) (1963). *The perfumed garden of the Shaykh Nefzawi* (A.H. Walton, Intro.)

- London: Neville Spearman (Original work found in the mid-1800s).
- Carroll, J. L. (2005). *Sexuality now: embracing diversity*. Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Case, D. (1999). *Toasted penis and cheese*. Cape Town: Kwagga Publishers.
- Ehrlich, E., Rothschild, M.A., Pluisch, F., & Schneider, V. (2000). An extreme case of necrophilia. *Legal Medicine*, 2 (4), pp.224-226.
- Henslin, J. M. (2009). *The sociology of human sexuality*. Accessed December 28, 2009, in <http://www.ablongman.com/html/henslintour/henslinchapter/opening.html>.
- Hooper, A. (2007a). *Kama sutra for 21st-century lovers: sensual, erotic pleasures to arouse and inspire*. New York: Dorling Kindersley.
- Hooper, A. (2007b). *Kama sutra: classic lovemaking techniques reinterpreted for today's lovers*. New York: Dorling Kindersley.
- Laumann, E.O., Gagnon, J., Michael, R. & Michaels, S. (1994). *The social organisation of sexuality: sexual practices in the United States*. Chicago: University Press.
- O'Neil, N. & O'Neil, G. (1972). *Open marriage: a new lifestyle for couples*. New York: Evans and Co.
- Rosman, J. P. & Resnick, P. J. (1989). Necrophilia: An analysis of 122 cases involving necrophilic acts and fantasies. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 17(2), pp. 153-163.
- Rubin, R. (2001). Alternative lifestyles revisited, or whatever happened to swingers, group marriages, and communes. *Journal of Family Issues*, 22 (6), pp. 711-728.
- The Holy Bible* (Amplified Version) (2000-2009). e-Sword® Version 9.0.1. Rick Meyers. www.e-sword.net.
- The Holy Qur'an* (M.H. Shakir, Trans.) (1997). Charlottesville: University of Virginia Library.
- Accessed November 1, 2010, in <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/koran.html>.
- Weiss, B. (2006). Deconstructing and re-mapping the phallic in toasted penis and cheese. *Stichproben*, 6, pp. 47-61.