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INTRODUCTION

Gendered sexuality is the way in which gender and sexuality are often viewed as likened constructs, whereby the role of gender in an individual's life is informed by and impacts others' perceptions of their sexuality. For example, both the male and female genders are subject to assumptions of heterosexuality. If a man were to behave in feminine ways, his heterosexuality would be doubted, and individuals may assume that he is gay.

Two main theoretical perspectives dominate discussions of gendered sexuality: that of an evolutionary perspective, and that of a socio-cultural perspective. Although these two are typically separate.

Both gender and sex have been historically interchangeable, but it was not until the late 1960s and early 70s that the term gender began to be more thoroughly defined and spread throughout the literature within the field of psychology. Although the term has undergone some changes since then, today it represents how an individual feels and expresses their gender, typically through masculinity or femininity. Through this definition, gender has often been used as a variable to study how particular parts of people, (i.e. one's sexuality), can ultimately be informed by gender. Psychological research in this area has tended to follow these three modes of looking at gender:

1. Looking at gender through difference in presentation, actions, and traits
2. Looking at gender vs. individual difference in individuals who identify as male and individuals who identify as female, and
3. Looking at how gender influences how both men and women operate in society

Human sexuality, unlike gender, has kept a relatively stable definition by which it refers to all sexual attitudes and behaviors in an erotic, or lack of erotic, nature. The relationship between gender and sexuality is not static, it is fluid and changing. In light of this, gendered sexuality does not necessarily follow predictable patterns.

Typically, however, gendered sexuality has often followed a hetero-normative path, whereby heterosexuality is seen as what Vanwesenbeeck calls a "key-site" for the intersection between gender and sexuality. Historically, however, these interpretations of sexuality have been riddled with gendered stereotypes, such as men holding more permissive attitudes towards frequent sex and multiple sexual partners, whereas women are more conservative.

A study illustrates that gender, at least in the Western world, informs how we understand and conceive of the construct of sexuality. Their study was aimed to discover how men and women gender their meanings of sex and sexuality, if at all, and their results suggest that men and women do talk about sex and sexuality in gendered terms. The most frequent categories of gendering sex/sexuality conversations were:

Sex is only physical for men, and only emotional for women

Sex is more important for men than women

Women's physical appearance is important

Gendered sexuality and sexual orientation are complementary to each other. Sexual orientation refers to an individual's sexual identity in relation to the gender which they are attracted to. Gendered sexuality refers to male and female genders' assumptions of heteronormativity. In past years sexual orientation was based on heteronormativity in the sense that only a male and female were to be attracted to each other. However over the years homosexuality, bisexuals, intersex, transsexual, and transgender have been acknowledged and have shown us that what heteronormativity, which was once believed to be the driving force between gender sexuality, is not. With research done we have proven that it is gender roles, what one thing as a normal female and male, is the driving force behind gender sexuality. "Contrary to the hypothesis that females are more sexually fluid than males, we found that female youths were less likely to change identities than males. The finding that youths who transitioned to a gay/lesbian identity differed from consistently gay/lesbian youths suggests that sexual identity development continues after the adoption of a gay/lesbian sexual identity." (Braun, 46) Even when adopting different sexual orientations gendered sexuality the belief that men and women should act a certain way about their sexuality is still a prominent conflict.

The socio-cultural perspective of gendered sexuality holds emphasis on the idea that men and women are social beings informed by the social group of which they are a part, and that the social and cultural aspects of these groups influence the traits prescribed to males and females. The sociocultural perspective deems these traits as performative, in opposition to an evolutionary perspective that describes them through notions of essentialism and innateness.

When looking at gendered sexuality through a sociocultural lens, behaviour that is considered appropriate will be influenced by four areas of social interactions: [7] behaviour-related aspects, situation-related aspects, partner(s)-related aspects and subject-related aspects.

PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN OSCAR WILDE'S IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

Dramatic comedy originated in Ancient Greece in 5th century BC, centred around loose plot lines and exploiting certain situations through parody, farce and mockery. Comedy started developing in 4th Century BC where intricate plot lines were introduced, commonly based around love and romance and usually culminating in a satisfactory and happy resolution. This is much like the structure of 'The Importance of Being Earnest' as the play revolves around the growing relationships of both Jack and Gwendolen and Algernon and Cecily. Oscar Wilde has reversed the roles of gender in this play, the females are those who take the lead and are seen as the most dominant characters throughout – a very bizarre layout in a time period where men were seen as the head of the family and the most assertive figure. Lady Bracknell is the most domineering character throughout the play, and this a result of the eloquent and rather unnatural language she uses. She takes on the role of her husband in Act 1 when Jack asks for Gwendolen's hand in marriage- "I feel obliged to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men" this was often the father's role. Throughout the conversation it is quite apparent that Lady Bracknell holds all the power, and Wilde does this through all the questions she asks. Additionally, her questioning seems rather irrelevant.

In The Importance of Being Earnest, the question of each gender's role in society often centers on power. In the Victorian world men had greater influence than women. Men made the decisions for their families, while women worked around the house. Wilde raises interesting questions about gender roles in The Importance of Being Earnest, by putting women (like Lady Bracknell) in positions of power and by showing that men can be irresponsible and bad at Decision-making The traditional view of gender relations in the Victorian era was that men were active, manly, assertive and economically independent whilst women were assumed to be passive, pliant and dependent. I believe that Oscar Wilde does challenge these traditional roles deliberately to make humor out of these characteristics and to make fun of the conventional roles of society. The two main male characters, Jack and Algernon, cannot really be regarded as masculine, or at any rate both of them do not fit the criteria for what characteristics a stereotypical Victorian man would be they are both what people at that time would call 'dandy's'. Algernon and Jacks un-

gentlemanly behavior and trivial pursuits can be seen as comic and deliberate in making men seem less powerful and serious.

“The Importance of Being Earnest” was written by the famous Irish author Oscar Wilde. The play represents Wilde’s late Victorian view of the aristocracy, marriage, wit and social life during the early 1900’s. His characters are typical Victorian snobs who are arrogant, overly proper, formal and concerned with money. The women are portrayed as sheltered, uneducated, and some as dominating figures over the men in their lives. There is no sense of identity for Cecily and Gwendolen, the only woman within the play that clearly stands out is the Governess, Lady Bracknell.

Wilde creates Lady Bracknell to represent society during the 1900’s. Her tone is always earnest: she is arrogant and she speaks in commands, judgments, and pronouncements. She is always serious and authoritative, being the adult figure in the play; she imposes the rules and authority. However much of what she says is ridiculous, hypocritical, or self-contradictory. Lady Bracknell contradicts herself when she wonders about the possibility of Algernon and Cecily getting married and she does not agree with mercenary marriages, but she herself married into the same situation. “But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind.” (604).

PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN JOHN PEPPER CLARK’S WIVES REVOLT

All through the remarkable literary career of Professor JP Clark (the First African writer to be appointed professor of English), the centrality of his plays has always been the relevance of the culture of his own people. Clark, the man of memorable electrifying verses, the man who vomits poetry naturally without conscious effort, deserves all the accolades in the world for beaming the beauty of the Ijaw culture to the world. Clark skillfully makes a break from this his universally acknowledged cultural zone when his play *The Wives’ Revolt* emerged in the literary scene after many years of hibernation in Kiagbodo where his MUSE supposedly dwells.

In *The Wives’ Revolt* which signals Clark’s first valedictory speech to culture, he awakens and addresses new realities in his environment. Perhaps bothered by the challenges thrown up by his environment he artistically feels a sense of responsibility to come up with his prescriptions and claim the garment of human rights activist in abandonment of the garment of culture activist. In a dance of commitment towards this new task, Clark in his play (*The Wives’ Revolt*) of three characters with six parts designated as PROCLAMATION, DISSENT, WALK-OUT, LULLABY, RETURN AND RECLAMATION, draws attention to the crises in Erhuwaren village bred by an oil company.

The crisis stems from an oil money given to the community by an oil company operating in their land. Erhuwaren as an oil company is made up of the descendants of Udumede and Meghwere in four wards – Ikemeghwre, Ikikimedi, Adjesaba and Urevwodo. The oil money is divided into three parts in the community vis-a-vis elders, men of particular age-group and women. But this arrangement does not go down well with the women who hold the view that the money should be divided into two equal parts between men and women.

In protest, the women abandon their responsibilities in the home leaving the homes and streets of Erhuwaren littered with dirt and roaming goats. Faced with this reality of dirt in the community, a law that bans the ownership and rearing of goats is proclaimed by the men. This proclamation gives birth to the exodus of the women through Otughieven, Eijophe, or Igherekan, Imode to Eyara. In Eyara the women are accommodated and cared for by Ighodayen, a notorious prostitute. By the time the women are back to Erhuwaren through the repentant pleas of the men leading to the sharing of the oil money into two equal parts along with other compensations as demanded by the women as grounds for resolution of the matter, they are all infected by Ighodayen and to cure this affliction, a doctor and team of nurses are brought from Warri to administer treatment on the women.

The resolution of the matter in favour of women signals Clark's espousal of equality of women with men – a feminist touch that marks a new thematic direction in the writings of Clark. Beyond the feminism the man espouses and celebrates anchored by the three characters – Okoro, Koko and Idama – Clark also in the play awakens other serious issues such as ; the issues of underdevelopment of host communities by oil companies, self-inflicted underdevelopment in host communities, the primacy of women liberation, greed and arrogance of men, marital faithfulness of women, insensitivity of oil companies to development matters, host communities knowledge of the manipulative dance of oil companies in their areas of operation, danger of female prostitution, men's disrespect and distrust of women and men's vindictiveness. Though Clark explores all these issues with only three characters, artistically he makes the reader feel and hear the echoes of other characters relevant to the development of the plot.

The message of JP Clark in *The Wives' Revolt* is clear, timely and relevant viewed against the backdrop of the challenges of the time. Clark's message outweighs the language of the play in importance because the language is a departure from Clark's characteristic hypnotising poetry – a reality that has severally provoked critical questions as to whether Clark and his poetic muse have clashed, or could it be another Clark's artistic choice employed to reinforce the thematic orbit along which the play journeys.

Interestingly in a move that bears semblance to a continuum of Clark's break from cultural preoccupation in drama, he has delivered his second valedictory speech to culture, this time with a radiant retention of his characteristic poetic genius. The

traces of poetry in this second valedictory speech throws Clark up as a poet extraordinaire who has reconciled with his MUSE hitherto on the run in *The Wives' Revolt*. It appears Clark's poetry assumes a more compelling force with age. Clark's second valedictory speech to culture is embedded in his latest play *ALL FOR OIL* – a play in which he raises and addresses new issues and situations relevant to the Ijaws, Urhobos, Isokos, Kwales and Itsekiris in particular, and Nigeria in general. Even in *All For Oil* the posture of Clark is that of a human rights activist bothered by the exploitative distortions in the lives of his people.

Clark's metamorphosis in recent plays parallels an activist poised to address the encumbrances of his people revolutionally using any available or handy instrument – perhaps all in commemoration of artistic emancipation from his erstwhile cultural enclosure or paradise.