

THE PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

The issue of Gender and Sexuality have always been a problem over the years. The understanding that maybe attached to gender and sexuality may vary from one setting to another, such variation maybe due to belief systems, culture or ethnic background.

Gender is socially definition of masculine and feminine (woman and man) ,it is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in a society and in public or private life .On the other hand, Sexuality can mean divers thing. It could be your sexual identity or attributes, that is; whether you are a male or female, it could mean your sexual orientation or your sexual experience in fact sexuality is an integral part of who we are, what we believe, what we feel and how we respond to others. The major thing is, Gender is cultural bound while Sexuality is biological.

Tracing back to the origin of Drama, which started with the Greeks, Women were originally exempted from Theatre, Men at first played the roles of women ,they feel women don't necessarily need to be allowed to act because it will corrupt them. But when Charles the second assumed the throne, he introduced a different kind of Theatre from the old. The new theatre became all encompassing as women started featuring in drama and sometimes they play the major roles and are even the protagonist. But despite this, their gender and sexuality are always questioned. One would wonder why is it that at the end of every comic work female is always given out as the prize in marriage or why among the fifty satyrs the best performer goes home with a goat as a prize. One would wonder if it's because a goat is a symbol of sexuality or if there is a link between women and the goat.

This narrows down to the idea that women have always been regarded from the onset as weaker sex and an emotional being. If we look at Soyinka's *Lion and the Jewel*, we see that women are being portrayed as inferior to men. Soyinka created the male as being strong, powerful and metaphorically as Lions. They are seen as initiator, doer of something and commander in chiefs. While their female counterparts are represented as goals or beneficiaries of men's actions and they are associated with possessing of sensing and emotion. The female allows their emotion to rule them that is why they are triggered with what they hear. Baroka is an example of the male authority, he commands respect from all and sundry. His wives obey his last order and they don't question his authority. This can be seen when he asked his eldest wife to go fetch Sidi for him. She went and told her "The Lion sent me, he wishes you well", she even helped him to woo her. Baroka also uses trick to get Sidi to fall for him by telling her things that will trigger off her emotion, how her picture will be on the stamp of every letter ; "...Tens of thousands of these dainty prints

And each one with this legend of Sidi, The village goddess ... "

The women play a subservient role. They are seen as weaker vessel, their major role is to make babies ,take care of their home , obey their husband and perform their wifely task. This we see in the conversation between Lakunle and Sidi.

Lakunle; “Women have a smaller brain than men, that is why they are called the Weaker sex”

Sidi; The weaker sex, is it!

Is it a weaker breed who pounds yam or bends all day to plant the millet with a child strapped to her back?

They are being controlled by their husband and they are not also educated as the men. In fact the only education they need is based on domestic areas. Baroka was able to seduce Sidi because of how educated he is. Lakunle as well is portrayed as being educated,while he is classroom teaching,we see Sidi coming out with a pail to fetch water(domestic education).

Also when we look at the *Marriage of Anansewa* by Efua Sutherland, Women are portrayed as commodity for sale. They are objectified. This is vividly seen in the character of Ananse who made his beautiful daughter as a stock for exchange. He devised a trick to amass wealth for himself by making his daughter the sacrificial lamb. He tricked her to type a letter to the four chiefs of their community, telling them all the same thing; to come and pay the bride price of Anansewa.

Anansewa on her part didn't know her father's plan but when she found out she exclaimed;“My father want to sell me”, this meant her father never gave her the chance to make her choice rather he decided to make her marry whom he desired. Unfortunately for Ananse the four chiefs decided to come the same day to pay Anansewa bride price. Being a smart man, he devised another trick pretending that his daughter is dead wanting to know the reaction of the four chiefs. At the end of the play he was able to discover the man who he thinks is the best for his daughter (chief who is chief). Here the men are also portrayed as being the highest authority, their decision cannot be questioned that is why Anansewa had to play along and dance to her father's tone.

In conclusion, from this two play the gender of being a male is seen with an unquestionable authority superiority and powerful demeanor while that of being a female is seen as inferior, fragile weak and submissive in nature.

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