

A Comparative Study of Asexual Dialectics in the Selected Nigerian Feminist Play-texts

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Abstract

This paper explores asexuality as the intersection between lack of sexual feelings, lack of enjoyment during sexual activity, and lack of emotional connections, investigating how individuals experience and interpret the world. It challenges traditional understandings of sexuality and relationships, suggesting new ways of thinking about identity, desire, and intimacy. Specifically, the paper examines asexual dialectics in selected plays by Irene Isoken Agunloye and Stella 'Dia Oyedepo, focusing on power dynamics, oppression, personal resolution, identity, and representation. Using content analysis and Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory, the study analyses language and interpretative complexities within the plays. The findings reveal that paradoxes surrounding asexuality and sexuality stem from preconceived gender norms. While these conceptions may not be universally accepted, the study contends that they are worth depicting as they evolve. The plays, Sweet Revenge and Wife's Fury feature asexual protagonists like Sota, Aisosa, Alero, and Sebi, who reject traditional romantic and sexual norms. These narratives broaden our understanding of gender and sexuality while challenging binaries and hierarchies such as Western cultural superiority over African traditions, and male dominance over women, alongside the counter-performative roles assumed by the latter. The paper concludes that asexual orientation, whether longstanding or newly evolving, reflects human diversity beyond gender or social identity. It recommends rethinking assumptions about asexuality, gender, and sexuality to open up alternative forms of human connection beyond conventional models.

Keywords: Asexuality, Gender Identity, Deconstruction, African Drama, Sexual Norms.

Introduction

Sexuality affects everyone in the local and global spaces and their relevance to the human space cannot be over emphasized. To understand the inherent complexities in the human space can be a daunting task for gender researchers. Indeed, asexuality is predominantly understood as an orientation describing people who do not experience sexual attraction. To account for the

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complexities of gender identity may be a subject matter. Therefore, the study examines the way we imagine gender and sexuality in relation to desire in human space. Asexuality provides a critical reevaluation of even the most radical queer theorisations of sexualities with the aim of reshaping the directions of feminist ideologies and thought lines especially those that conform to the African belief on complementary functions in gender relations, marital and child abuse, divorce/family disruption and gender inequality.

Most of the aforementioned social issues have a great impact on sex and sexuality. Hence, if we are yearning for a change in the gender space, the dialectics should embrace sex as related subject matters. Sex in this case encompasses gender identity, roles and construct. Asexuality matters so much that it paves way to re-examine the under-stated characteristics among both sexes in gender space and within its binary essence of gender spacelessness. To Bogaert (2014, p. 6), a study of asexuality reveals how variation in sexuality profoundly affect one's life trajectories.

Asexuality allows for opportunity to view gender through a new lens of what is and what is not. Thus, it offers unique way to make broad comparisons to understand gender disparities and role as a whole. Kim (2014) regards asexuality in gender studies with femininity and has been gendered through the figure of the 'frigid woman' and not only that, it also constitutes radical feminist praxis.

This study examines asexuality outside the medical models and diagnostic tools that rely on genitally focused paradigms of orientation and biological frameworks of desire but as coined by Karli "beyond the notion of lack" (Karli, 2018, p.36). Asexuality in feminism study should point to the fact that most women/men face similar challenges both in the secular world and in their matrimonial homes. It is believed that individual identity is always a desire to be the other, to employ the "ideal-I" which will mark with the "rigid structure" according to Lacan (1977).

A woman in any given society is expected to be loving, caring, weak (as not being able to defend herself or retaliate) as constructed in most African socio-cultural and religio-political institutions. Asexuality in gender relations deals with lack of sexual desire of any kind. In other words, it refers to self-loving or contentment in the desire of self. In this regard, the person is neither interested in heterosexuality nor homosexuality. Not with any sexual attraction of any kind, nor bisexual in any way. If we look closely at many women who espouse the radical feminism ideology, they are often hostile towards other women and anything sexual. Many of them channel their energy to achievement within job related endeavours. Based on this, we

examine characters that espouse the features of asexuality in the selected play-texts of Irene Salami-Agunloye and Stella 'Dia Oyedepo. These plays are *More than Dancing*, *Sweet Revenge* and *Rebellion of the Bumpy-Chested and Wife's Fury*.

One of the common factors of the society today is how it usually wants to tread through established paths of conventions and traditions, two common denominators that determine or influence belief systems and modes of operation. In the discourse on gender, sexuality from time immemorial, the world has continued to gravitate towards established trends, conventions and traditions. The problem with this is that it limits the world-view of people, especially the people who have not cared to think outside the box. They are given the tenets of assumptions by which their minds must resonate. Secondly, it makes people who have different orientations and belief systems to feel alienated from the common society.

The concept of asexuality as it is being adopted in this study is the state of having no sexual attractiveness of any sort: and the conventions of the society especially in Africa will normally stand against such concept due to the ideas that have been conceived about sexual orientations. The world has a conception that a man should be sexually attractive to the woman and the woman to the man. These preconceptions have been ingrained in the minds of many that they would naturally frown at the idea of asexuality. In a developing world like African, we must look beyond the lens that society has created, and begin to see newer fronts that accommodate all people and interests. This is the crux of a functional literature in the postcolonial configuration.

The aim of this study is to examine the deviation from the idea that the absence of any sexual attraction or desire is a problem irrespective of the fact that asexuality can be traced to medical reasons. There is a need to think outside the box, and begin to consider asexuality as a philosophical orientation and not which may not be very common in the world but should not be considered as a taboo or an abnormality especially in the developing countries. At a point when the society has been educated by a set of belief systems, there is always a need to reevaluate the things we believe and as a matter of necessity, ask questions. Here are some questions that comes to mind about asexuality: do lack of sexual attraction means anything to the well-being of a person? Does the presence of it suggest fitness or abnormality?

The medical perception on asexuality offered answers to the above question by suggesting that asexuality is a non-pathologized behaviour inherent in all human being. Cottais (2021, p. 3) believes that asexuality is a:

Spectrum, which means that all asexual people and their experience of asexuality are different, and that it affects people of all ages, genders and backgrounds. For example, some asexual people (the “sex-positives”) may have sex, without it necessarily giving them pleasure or constituting a need (to have a child, out of curiosity, to please the partner...), a bit like eating without being hungry. Some asexual people consider themselves to have a libido, but it is not directed towards a particular partner: they are called “sex positive”. Others reject sex, identifying themselves as “sex repulsed”.

What we call sexual orientations are the mindsets we created to identify people based on their choices of sexual partnership, gender, and if people are considered to be responsive to the desires within them which they exhibit as sexual practices, then others who do not have those desires are not less humans.

The study of asexual dialectics of gender roles through the works of Irene Salami-Agunloye and Stella ‘Dia Oyedepo provides a valuable perspective on the complexities of identity and representation in the performing arts. The dramatists thus use their arts to provoke thought and encourage dialogue on the complex issues surrounding gender and sexuality, and how they intersect with other aspect of human identities. Their plays challenge traditional gender roles and societal expectations, and highlight the importance of individual choice and autonomy in defining one’s identity.

Theoretical Framework

Among other things, this points to the fundamentality of textuality, which is constitutive of philosophy itself, for “[w]hatever else philosophy regards itself as being (scientific, hermeneutic, analytic, deconstructive), it is a text. It is written, or spoken, and it is read” (Ferrel, 1993, p.122).

Our theoretical framework for this study is Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction theory. Deconstructionism is a philosophical and literary theory that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is primarily associated with the work of French Philosopher, Jacques Derrida. Born in 1930 and influenced by the post structuralism which as its root spread in literary art, film criticism, psychoanalytic, peadagogical, and social theory (Adeoye, 2009, p. 91). According to Smith (2005, p.44), “deconstruction is founded on the position that there is nothing that does not function as a text, that is, there is nothing within man’s experience that is not subject to textuality and hence to interpretation.” Christopher (pp. x-xi) also has this to say

that, “deconstruction is the active antithesis of everything that criticism ought to be if one accepts its traditional values and concepts, that literary texts possessed meaning and that literary criticism sought knowledge of that meaning”. This is why we shall be reinterpreting the selected play-texts in alignment to the topic of discourse Asexuality Dialectics as it affects every aspect of human space.

The theory challenges the idea that language and meaning are stable and fixed, and instead posits that they are fluid, unstable, and subject to constant reinterpretation. Hence, the interrogation of asexuality meaning to suit other aspect of gender discourse and what it breeds. Jacques Derrida (1978, p.281) calls the metaphysics of presence or logocentrism, or what he holds to be Western philosophy’s paradoxical presupposition of a stable, selfsame, simple presence, or being at the heart end and beginning of thought. These presupposed entities occur as “fundamentals to principles or to the center [and] have always designated an invariable presence—eidos, arche, telos, energia, ousia (essence, existence, substance, subject), aletheia, transcendality, consciousness, God, and man.”

At its core, deconstruction is concerned with exposing the inherent contradictions and inconsistencies in language and discourse. It seeks to uncover the ways in which language construct reinforce power structures and hierarchies, and to subvert these structures by exposing their underlying instabilities. One of the key concepts in deconstruction is the idea of difference, which Derrida coined to describe the relationship between text and meaning. That difference reduces the harmful effects of natural resources extraction and the heterogeneous features that govern the production of textual meaning. According to Derrida, language is a system of differences, where meaning is created through the relationship between signifiers and signifieds. However, because these signifiers and signifieds are always in flux, meaning is never fixed or stable (Britanica, np. 2023). In other words, the arbitrary character of the sign, the word as “(mot)...[is] already a unity of sense and sound, of concept and voice...of the signified and the signifier” (Derrida 1976, p.31).

Deconstruction also emphasises the importance of context in shaping meaning. Rather than viewing language as a self-contained system, deconstructionists such as Palmer (2001), Bennington (1993), kolak (2001) and others argue that meaning is always contingent on the specific cultural, historical, and social contexts in which it is produced and interpreted. As a result, any attempt to fix meaning or impose a single interpretation is inherently flawed (Derrida, 1976). While deconstruction was initially associated with literary criticism, it has

since been applied to a wide range of fields, including philosophy, political theory, and cultural studies. Its influence can be seen in the works of many contemporary philosophers, and its insights into the complexities of language and meaning continue to shape our understanding of the world around us. The tenets of deconstruction relevant to this study are the following. That;

- i. language/words are subject to constant interpretation and re-interpretation i.e. meaning is often dependent on context and interpretation;
- ii. language is not neutral or transparent, but rather it is shaped by the power dynamics and cultural contexts in which it is used;
- iii. the fluidity of language is real and as a result, any attempt to fix and impose a particular meaning may flawed the beauty of the “term”; and
- iv. its critique of binary oppositions which are as a result of historical and cultural processes.

It is on this note that asexuality used here for the sake of its literary meaning and beyond a movement as it is found in the gender queer/ lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and asexual (LGBTQA) space. However, asexuality refers to in this study is the idea that gender identity and sexual orientation are not necessarily related. For instance, a person may be identified as a male or female, but may not have experienced sexual attraction to anyone or may express asexual behaviour differently. Moreso, that, it is believed that asexuality has not been given much attention in relation to “sex” in Literature and or in the “natural landscape that gives it shape” (Przybylo 2011, p. 12). Also, Hollway (1984, p. 241) supports that “different discourses concerning sexuality are available to produce different knowledge or meanings through which practice are mediated” because to her, “discourses give birth to competing, potential and contradictory ways of giving meaning to the world” (p. 242), “basis which subjectivities are formed” added Gavey (2005, p. 85) and Gibson in Adeoye (2009, p. 93) also adds that, deconstructive scholars refute the possibility of objectivity or stability in language, character or story.

Asexuality and Jacques Derrida’s Deconstruction Theory

Asexuality is defined as a lack of sexual attraction to anyone or anything and it has been suggested that it may be best conceptualised as a sexual orientation (Yule et al. 2014, p.300). However, Ferguson and Raypole (2023), are of the opinion that “asexual people can experience a little sexual attraction or none at all”. They also assert that asexual person may experience

other forms of attraction. That, “asexuality is a label that can mean different things to different people” (para. 1). Asexuality is a relatively new and understudied topic in the field of sexuality in gender studies. In recent years, scholars have begun to explore the dialectics of asexuality, including how it intersects with gender and influences societal norms and expectations. Morrison (2012, p.1) notes that asexuality has been operationalised as the absence of sexual attraction and/or desire.

One of the earliest works on asexuality and gender is by Bogaert (2004), who conducted a study on the prevalence of asexuality in a sample of Canadian adults. He found that asexuality was more common among women than men, and suggested that this may be due to differences in the way men and women experience sexual attraction.

Building on Bogaert’s work, Prause and Graham (2007) carried out a study on the relationship between asexuality and sexual dysfunction. They found that asexuality is not related to sexual dysfunction, and argue that asexuality should be considered a distinct sexual orientation rather than a disorder. Also, asexuality is defined as the absence of sexual attraction, and often described as the absence of sexual desire, it could be considered threatening to a political movement that has been fighting for the right to be sexual in its own way (Canning, 2015).

Recently, scholars such as MacInnis and Hodson (2012), Jay (2014), Bogaert (2014), Scherrer (2015), Brunning and McKeever, 2021 and others have begun to explore the ways in which asexuality intersects with gender and influence societal norms and expectations. For example, Jay (2014) argues that asexuality challenges traditional gender roles and expectations, as it allows individuals to reject the idea that sexual attraction is essential to one’s identity as a man or woman. Also, MacInnis and Hodson (2012) conclude that although biases against homosexuals (and bisexuals) are well established, potential biases against a largely unrecognised sexual minority group, asexual, has remained uninvestigated.

Similarly, Scherrer (2015) suggests that asexuality can be seen as a form of resistance to the heteronormative and patriarchal expectations surrounding sexuality. They argue that asexuality can be a way for individuals to resist the pressure to conform to traditional gender roles and expectations. Other scholars have explored the experiences of asexual individuals within specific gendered contexts. For example, MacInnis and Hodson (2012) found that asexual women reported are having more pressure to conform to traditional gender roles than asexual men. They argue that this may be due to the fact that women are more likely to be defined by their relationships and sexual desirability in patriarchal societies.

The literature on gender suggests that asexuality challenges traditional gender roles and expectations, and can be seen as a form of resistance to patriarchal norms surrounding sexuality. However, more research is needed to fully understand the complexities of this relationship and the experiences of asexual individuals within different gendered contexts. In fact, deconstructionist theory suggests that we should examine the underlying assumptions and power relationships that shape our understanding of a concept like asexuality. With this approach in mind, let's deconstruct the idea of asexuality and explore the ways in which it is constructed and contested.

At its most basic level, is asexuality a fixed identity or a fluid state of being? How does it intersect with other aspects of identity, such as gender, race, politics, religion, culture, and class? Who gets to define what counts as "sexual" or "romantic" attraction? One of the key insights of deconstructionist theory is that language is not neutral or transparent, but rather is shaped by the power dynamics and cultural contexts in which it is used because, "no meaning is conceived in a structure but in a socio-cultural environment" (Araya, 2008, p.39). This is particularly relevant when it comes to discussing asexuality, which is still a relatively new and contested concept in many parts of the world.

For example, critics such as Lacan (1977), Karli (2018), Cottais (2021) and so on argue that asexuality is simply a form of repression or denial, rather than a valid identity in its own right. Others suggest that asexuality is only possible within a specific cultural and historical context, and that it may not be applicable or meaningful in other contexts. Moreover, the very idea of asexuality depends on a particular understanding of sexuality as a biologically determined drive or desire. This understanding is itself contested by many queer and feminist theorists, who argue that sexuality is shaped by social and cultural factors as much as by biology (Brunning and Mckeever, 2021, p. 497).

In light of these complexities and contradictions, it is important to approach the concept of asexuality with a critical and open-minded perspective. Rather than assuming that asexuality is a fixed and objective category, we should recognise it as a dynamic and evolving social construct that is shaped by a range of cultural, historical, and political factors. Therefore, deconstruction theory in this case will allow us to settle and interrogate for more meanings and interpretations of asexuality beyond the meaning that originate it. Adeoye, (2009, p.93) remarks that "deconstruction theory allows textual autonomy and accepts the mutability or rather the interrelationship between texts" as it authors do not have final say about the meaning

contextually, meta textually and sub-textually. Building on Raji's assertion, Adeoye also comments that "an author becomes mere guest" despite his authority on his work when it comes to interpretation of concepts and meanings (92).

Synopses of the Selected Play-texts of Irene Isoken Agunloye

Sweet Revenge (2007) is a story about Sota, married to Aisosa with four children who travelled abroad to further his education in Ph.D. and then decides to marry a British lady because he feels she will fit into his new status. Sota abandons his aged mother, four children and his wife, who he makes to resign her work as a medical practitioner. Despite all odds, Aisosa campaigns for his husband to win the senatorial seat but later loses same to his wife when her kinsmen realise, she had been cheated. The white lady, Cheryl apologises and leaves her only daughter with Aisosa to pledge her loyalty and to support her political ambition while she returns back to United Kingdom (UK) at the end. Sota is left with nothing because the dice turned against him.

Synopses of the Selected Play-texts of Stella 'Dia Oyedepo

The Rebellion of the Bumpy-Chested (2002) is one of the rare attempts by Nigerian female dramatist to address the problem of reconstructing the male-focused, phallocentric culture in contemporary Nigerian society. The play invites a sympathetic view of the status, state and condition of women in a patriarchal social order. Captain Sharp, a female character directed all the female, married, single, old and young to turn the tide and form an asexual relationship with their male counterparts both at home and in the secular world which is furiously executed but her violent directives never yielded any harmony in gender relationship. As men reverse to women's roles, some of the women becomes uncomfortable and reneged their oath to deprive their husbands of some romantic relationship, while others did what is planned and even extends the asexual behaviour to their own biological toddler and in-laws. The men are seen hawking, cooking and wearing women attire in protest of the subverted gender role and identity like breast feeding which turns out to be so ridiculous at the end of the play.

Comparative Study of Asexual Dialectics in the Selected Play-texts of Irene Salami-Agunloye and Stella 'Dia Oyedepo

Earlier, Aisosa, thinking her husband will change mobilises her kindred and form alliance with the women in the constituency to make his husband win the Senate seat rather, it created an opportunity to detach himself from her the more. In fact, the higher he climbs the ladder of

success with the help of Aisosa, the more asexual he feels towards her and anything connected to her. For instance, Sota further displays how asexual politicians can be after winning a contest. They turn totally against their people and do not remember the promises made during their campaign. Madam Power and other women narrate their experience:

Madam Power: “we visited Dr. Sota my sister... it is best you see for yourself what happened (Salami-Agunloye, 2016, p.42).

Executive: ... we’ve been here for over 2 hours and you have refused to grant us access to your mighty kingdom (Salami-Agunloye, 2016, pp.43-44).

Sota: I don’t care who you are.

Madam Power: It is me madam power the leader of the women who voted you.

Sota: So what? You cannot badge in on my privacy...please leave my premises right away (Salami-Agunloye, 2016, pp.45-46).

Sota asexual behaviour as shown above represent politicians who usually refrain from the electorates after electoral gain. In addition, Sota transfers Aisosa’s hatred to the rest of the electorates from his constituency by denying them dividends of democracy because they are connected to his ex-wife. This lifestyle is common among men in the patriarchal society. When they have little achievement and “have been to,” everything becomes “second hand” and they tend to lose their first love to follow a new/high breed and sophisticated lady that may turn to be another nightmare in the nearest future. Asexuality plays a role here as a detachment from home and possession.

Asexual dialectics of gender space in Salami-Agunloye’s *Sweet Revenge* is reflected in Sota’s sudden loss of affection for his wife Aisosa who has sacrificed her pride, career, beauty, and all for more than eight years just to be the obedient wife the society expects her to be. Another character that displays such characteristic is Cheryl who feels she has been cheated and also have displaced another fellow woman the joy of her matrimonial home and then leaves her daughter and only child with Aisosa. A behaviour that can never happen in any Africa country because of the importance attached with motherhood. No one would have imagined she could leave behind her only child in protest and just to prove her loyalty to Aisosa and asexuality to Sota. Well, it may be easier for someone from British or any Western world to do, but, definitely not for any one from Africa. But this is for her just to prove her innocence to Aisosa and not wanting to have any connection in anyway or attraction with Sota and she leaves behind

what could be the only link between her and her husband to go back to her country and never to look back. The theme of personal resolution is in display here.

Asexual Language and Behaviour

Asexuality here represents anything not in compliance with one's ideology. Przybylo (2011, p. 11) is of the opinion that, "asexuality is a form of resistance against patriarchy." Oyedepo uses *The Rebellion of the Bumpy-Chested* to showcase dialectics of asexuality and the theme of identity, personal resolution, oppression and representation. Conflict between binary oppositions and hierarchies are also showcased in the plights of some feminist's ideologists. Some women in Africa seems to forget that existing culture of any society matters and have a long way in sharpening any struggle and proffering solution. Thus, Alice Walker's womanist feminism that beliefs in the complimentary roles in our society should be embraced. Not leaving everything for the male as most of women are doing in our contemporary society today. In a bid to deconstruct the supposed sacredness of male reproductive organs in the play, Captain Sharp canvasses the new orientation of asexuality to other women with the instruction to abandon their husbands and home at large. Her asexual stance is revealed in her speech where she addresses the male organ as mere "tangling muscle between the thighs" (Oyedepo, 2002, p.4) and Tara also describes it as an "ordinary erectile tissue!" (Oyedepo, 2002, p.5).

Captain Sharp further re-orientates Shade on the general myth surrounding the cries of a baby and breast wetting by saying "Nonsense, what connection does a crying babe have with dripping breasts?" (Oyedepo, 2002, p.7) as a response her concern about her babe. Falilat provides asexual alternative that her husband to tie two feeding bottles with strings and adhesive gum to his chest "as it makes his chest as bumpy as a woman," as the women were sensitise to disassociate selves from labels called "womanhood and motherhood"; as it is seen as a "perpetual thralldom." Asake develops asexual relationship towards her husband and in-laws as she exhibits contrary mannerism as against the expected tradition as a wife. While Clem and James also feel asexual to their sister in-law and refer to her as a mere wife who should slave for them.

Moreso, Falilat displays uttermost disdain for the culture and status quo that make the male higher than the female as a marital societal norm by referring to her husband's warning as "Nonsense!" (Oyedepo, 2002, p.31). The asexual indoctrination gains more ground when the husband complains about their wives' attitude at home to Captain Sharp. Rather than being emotional, Captain Sharp challenges men to swap roles at home as "domestic live is a live of

servitude and slavery” (Oyedepo, 2002, p.75) which is not reserved for a particular gender order and identity.

In protest against male domination, they display their asexual character towards their husbands refusing them their conjugal rights and privileges (Oyedepo, 2002, p.40); while they refuse to breast feed their children (Oyedepo, 2002, pp. 12-13). They also extend this towards their in-law (Oyedepo, 2002, p.26). This is exactly what Sofola (1998) calls “dewomanisation” of women. Emenyi (2009, p.1), reveals further that “Sofola’s works functions within cultural boundaries because she abhors the tendency in Western civilization to “de-womanise” African women.” Thus, most feminist ideologies in Africa misguide their follower because the experiences of the Western feminists can never be compared with that of the Africans.

One of the key concepts in Derrida’s deconstruction theory is the idea of “binary oppositions.”. These oppositions are often used to establish hierarchies and power relations, with one term being privileged over the other. In the case of asexual dialectics, the binary opposition between sexual/asexual, masculinism/feminism, Westernisation/Africanisation, male/female and superiority/inferiority, can be deconstructed to reveal the ways in which the both sexes within the same culture displays levels of biases not favouring one gender above the other.

Reading through Salami-Agunloye’s, *Sweet Revenge* and Oyedepo’s and *The Rebellion of the Bumpy-Chested*, one can conclude that what the characters did are wrong because it is not an acceptable way of life. For example, Captain Sharp instigations, Falilat non-challant attitude towards her husband, baby and in-laws, It is also easy to say that Aisosa, should have forgiven Sota’s betrayals and take him back as her husband and other women and men in the same political umbrella working against Nona’s political ambition. This can be seen in the ways in which asexual individuals are often pathologised or dismissed as abnormal, as well as in the assumption that sexual attraction is the norm and that those who do not experience it are somehow deficient.

In deconstructive analysis of these play-texts and characters like Alero, Cheryl, Falilat, Asake, Captain-Sharp and Sota, focuses on how they challenge traditional assumptions of gender and sexuality, and how they open up new possibilities for understanding and experiencing these aspects of human identity. Through their representation of asexuality, these play-texts challenge the assumption that sexual attraction or unattraction is relative and not specific on a particular gender and invite us to rethink the hierarchies and binaries that structure our construct of gender and sexuality in the society.

By deconstructing these assumptions and binaries, Derrida's theory can help to challenge the dominant cultural narratives around sexuality and create space for the experiences of asexual individuals. This will also include examining the reasons behind the individual asexual nature rather than being judgmental. This can also involve questioning the ways in which sexual desire is often assumed to be a necessary part of human experience, as well as examining the ways in which cultural norms around sexuality are constructed and reinforced. Asexuality can also be used to highlight the ways in which cultural narratives around sexuality shape our understanding of human experience, and the ways in which these narratives can exclude or marginalize certain identities and experiences.

Conclusion

Every sign or word in a text is defined in relation to other signs and words, and there is never a definitive or final meaning according to Derrida's assertion on deconstructionist theory. Also, it is also true that no one is a "monopoly of madness or changes" as asexual behaviour affects both sexes and segments of human endeavours. We can see this idea at work in the way the characters' motivations and actions are constantly shifting and evolving. For example, the characters of Captain Sharp with other women versus Jolomi and other men alternating gender roles and identity in *The Rebellion of the Bumpy-Chested* and the characters of Aisosa versus Sota in *Sweet Revenge*. But, as we study the selected play-texts, we see what they are both capable of. In this case, all characters are responsible for their own actions and decisions as no one was influenced by any socio-cultural construct rather by their personal decisions. As Fah (2011, p.458), also adds that, "asexuality [is] a viable and politically significant choice." Similarly, Derrida's deconstruction theory provides a useful framework for analysing the complex and multifaceted relationships between the characters in the selected play-texts. By recognizing the inherent instability and ambiguity of language and meaning, we can better appreciate the nuance and complexity of the play's themes and characters.

The portrayal of asexuality in Irene Salami-Agunloye and Stella 'Dia Oyedepo's play-texts have been analyzed through the lens of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theories emphasizing on the instability and the ambiguity of language and meaning. We cannot judge the absence of sexual attraction in an individual as being a medical case, because one can decide to stay neutral in matters of sexuality. In *Sweet Revenge* and *More than Dancing*, the asexuality of the character is depicted as a deviation from the norm, they are presented as something that is difficult for others to understand; asexual dialectics that can be seen as a manifestation of

societal norms and expectations regarding sexuality, politics and socio-cultural attitudes which construct is a necessary part of human experience. However, Derrida's theory would suggest that these norms are not fixed or objective, but rather they are constructed through language and discourse. Stella 'Dia Oyedepo shows in her plays, the fundamental truth about asexuality, as being not necessarily a problem of the mind, but a functional possibility of the human spirit and also as a resistance against the patriarchal structure. In the play, *The Wife's Fury*, we see typical evidence in the character of Alero, who in the course of events, loses sexual attraction for her husband. It is not because she is having a challenge psychologically, it is a function of her human spirit and a way to also retaliate. This shows the autonomy that the man has over himself. The woman is shown to possess the ability to control the affairs of her life without any regulatory sexual theory.

In the play, *Rebellion of the Bumpy-chested*, the playwright seems to tell that asexuality can be a deliberate choice, in that people can decide to feel no attraction for the opposite sex, even in the right frame of mind. Captain Sharp tries to influence the women to rebel against their husbands through sexual deprivation. This act shows the asexuality of the gender. This is the essence of the application of Derrida's Deconstructionism. It is to deconstruct the idea that asexuality is a total strange phenomenon.

Recommendations

It is therefore in our finding that, the fact that anyone who feels asexual towards another gender or same gender do not mean they cannot be married or abstain totally from sexual activities. In fact, some asexual characters that exercise the behaviour both as orientation and as an identity engage in sexual activities with their partners, some even have children. As we see in the characters of Sota against his wife, he constantly wanted to have sexual activities with Aisosa but who vehemently refused because she sensed the asexual attitudes exhibited towards her. Sota and Aisosa have four children together to proof that asexual characters can have children. It is in our findings that people especially those that have experienced hostile relationship with spouse or any other gender may feel asexual to others. This may be by way of total abstinence or retaliation. Aisosa, also displays asexual attribute as against the Afro-African culture of keeping a home no matter the circumstances and humiliation hauls by any member of the family by refusing to reconcile with Sota after their separation even after he apologises for his misdeeds and inhumane attributes that Sota exhibited. Which shows that anybody who has tasted a form of freedom after being humbled by the societal norms dares not to go back again.

Also, some persons may become asexual as a form of retaliation from the past. Alero is a good example here. As asexuality may arise as out of protest to defend themselves from the hostile society. This study thereby recommends that social interaction and general acceptance of both sexes can reduce to minimum level the issues of asexual behaviour in our society, even as Jolomi and other men demanded in *The Rebellion of the Bumpy-Chested*. We, therefore, urge researchers and especially playwrights to indulge in the writing on the theme of asexuality and especially as it affects men and woman for it is a serious issue that needs urgent attention. However, anyone who feel asexual towards another should endeavor to speak up so as not to fall into depression and finally into murder/suicide. Researchers should as a matter of fact embrace the topic of asexuality with open minds and diversify the meanings and contents. And above all, there should be an open debate on a way out of this social menace among both sexes as a way to foster unity and equity.

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