

## **Power, Prospects, and Politics of Genderism in a Patriarchal Culture**

**Professor Matthew M. Umukoro**

Department of Theatre Arts  
University of Ibadan  
Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria  
mattmukoro@gmail.com  
+234 803 405 2655

### **Preamble**

*As a philosophy, genderism is a relatively new concept, but gender politics is as old as the existence of the two sexes, taking us far back to the theological myth of creation. The primordial drama in the mythical Garden of Eden had three characters: Adam (male), Eve (female), and the Devil in the guise of a snake, which was presumably male. The story is too well known to bear reiteration here: Devil tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit of Knowledge, who, in turn, tempted her husband to follow suit. This has resulted into some unanswered (and possibly unanswerable) questions. Why did the Devil avoid Adam, to pick on the woman? Did he think that Adam (a fellow man) would prove more difficult to convince? Furthermore, assuming Eve had chosen to hide the fruit from Adam, and eaten it all alone, or Adam had refused to partake of the sinful diet, would the female species not have become far more knowledgeable today, leaving the Adamic man in blissful ignorance? If the fruit was forbidden, why was the Tree conspicuously displayed in the Garden to tempt the first couple? Could it be to inculcate the virtue of obedience in humanity? The answers to these hypothetical questions are, of course, nugatory to our discourse, but the mythical drama established a basic gender pattern: the woman fell to the flattery of the Devil, while the man fell victim to female sentiment, thus defining the fundamental relationship between the sexes from the beginning of time. Modern day Adams continues to fall to the whims and caprices of latter-day Eves, and disobedience thus emerged as the first cardinal sin.*

*Right from the onset, the dice has always been heavily loaded against the female sex. First, she was created as a domestic helpmate, subordinate to the male in the running of a largely patriarchal home, and this ruled her out of the larger societal politics. Next, she was denied some of the fundamental human rights, such as the right to education and personal social aspiration, the right to equity or equal opportunities regardless of gender, the right to enjoy universal human franchise, lack of freedom from all forms of discrimination, and so forth. Over the years, and in different parts of the world, the woman has been engaged in the interminable fight to assert her right and dignity as a human being, on various socio-political platforms, and in different engaging fora. Although, much has been achieved so far in the ongoing feminist struggles, the road to total female liberty is still a long way off.*

*Today, gender politics has taken the front burner in all areas of human endeavour, while the level of sophistication in human relationship remains one of the basic indices of socio-political development. Third World countries, particularly in Africa, is yet to loosen the chains of sexual oppression because female inferiority is closely enmeshed in cultural orientation. The African culture is fundamentally hostile to female freedom, where the woman is not meant to be heard, but merely seen, plying her domestic chores. Even in the developed world, such as Britain, France, and the United States of America, patriarchy remains the dominant ideology, while tokenism is still the lot of the female gender. Thus, several glass ceilings remain unbroken even in the First World countries. For instance, the world still awaits the first female American president, close to two hundred and fifty years after the Revolution, in spite of the outstanding merits and credentials of a Hillary Clinton.*

### **What is Genderism?**

Genderism is both a principle and a philosophy which privileges gender equity and parity, over and above patriarchalism. It is a relative concept founded on the fundamental truth that men and women are created equal and similarly naturally and intellectually endowed, beyond the sheer biological fact of being male and female, which is essentially for the purpose of procreation and the perpetuation of humanity. Nothing in her physical and mental capacities restricts the woman from attaining her full potential, other than social and cultural constraints. The present speaker has elsewhere described genderism as “an apt. neologism for gender equilibrium in literary discourse and creativity” (Umukoro, M. M.:2002), which extends to all facets of human activities. As pointed out above, the gender issue is as old as creation, and genderism has emerged as the controlling principle. It is also referred to as gender binary, the recognition of the existence of the masculine and feminine beings, which are meant to be in mutual collaboration. According to an online encyclopedia, Gender and Development (GAD) “is an interdisciplinary field of research and applied study that implements a feminist approach to understanding and addressing the disparate impact that economic development and globalisation have on people, based upon their location, gender, class, background and other socio-political identities” (*Wikipedia*). In other words, it implies examining critically the gender issue through the lens or prism of femininity, to correct the existing imbalance imposed by patriarchy. In the postmodern context, real social development compels a synergy between the two sexes, like the mandatory pair of wings of a bird in flight. The failure of patriarchal leadership, which has thrown the world in turmoil, derives from failure to recognise the power and potential of the complementary female values. The thirty-five percent Affirmative Action for Women adopted at the famous 1995 Beijing Conference where a Declaration, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) was made has failed to find full implementation and domestication in many countries of the world, both developed and developing, with the worst-case scenario applying to African countries. Yet, the Affirmative Action in itself is sheer tokenism, which should have been overtaken by the true principles of equality and gender parity. Equity does not mean equality as there is no equality in nature; rather, it implies *exposure to equal opportunities* for the full development of individual potential, regardless of race or gender, and in the overall interest of the social order. Individuals will attain different levels of development, given the same opportunities, as plants nurtured in the same ecological environment grow to different heights.

### **Genderism and Patriarchy: Points of Convergence and Divergence**

Genderism and patriarchy are two sides of the same ideological coin: inseparable, yet dissimilar. The patriarchal culture had taken firm root long before the emergence of genderism or feminism as a counter-culture. The maxim has always been that it is a man's world, in defiance of the rights, roles, and responsibilities of the woman on the planet that belongs to both species. The truth of the matter is that both concepts are interwoven and inexorably entangled. What a dull world it would have been if mankind had been created as unisexual hermaphrodites, with each person being sexually independent of the other! The concept of sexual diversity and dependency is premised on the biological distinction between male and female, which makes each gender to desire in the other what it lacks in itself, resulting in a mutual attraction of the unlike poles of the sexual magnet, while the like gender poles naturally repel each other. This is what makes homosexuality completely intolerable and unjustifiable. It is certainly a form of sexual aberration

for men and women of the same gender to get attracted to one another. Nature has made the mutual attraction of the *opposite* sexes a condition for procreation and the perpetuation of humanity. If the whole world were to go gay and lesbian, the entire human race would gradually phase out within a century from lack of reproduction. Thus, rather than promote or justify the homosexual ideology under the guise of freedom of sexual orientation, it should be recognised exactly for what it is: a mental and psychological disorder that deserves medical and psychiatric attention. Let me hasten to clarify that I have the utmost respect for the individual's choice of sexual orientation, whether heterosexual or homosexual, and I am not about to privilege one over the other. But this is purely an academic exercise of frank, truthful, and dispassionate analysis. Given the natural incompleteness of the individual being, it can neither be an exclusive man's or woman's world, because the sexes are mutually interdependent and collaborative. But that is where the point of convergence ends.

The recognition of the mutual point of divergence means that each gender should be treated discretely as a unique entity. It is not possible for one gender to know exactly how the other gender feels; thus, masculinity and femininity are exclusive states of being, which deserve individual freedom of operation. Although the advocates of gender parity and equity can be either male or female, only the female knows the exact burden of patriarchal oppression, left largely to the imagination of the male. There are male feminists in different parts of the world actively advocating for the rights of women to the actualisation of their peculiar dreams. One such male feminist in Nigeria, Ogalanya Franklin, is quoted as saying to the female folk:

I can see fairly good and bad reasons why you should or shouldn't do the things you do for a man; why you should cook or not cook for a man, why you should get married or not get married, why you should submit to a man or why you shouldn't, but "because you are a woman" is not a part of them. Never accept "because you are a woman" as a reason to do or not do anything (Internet source).

In India, in spite of the prevailing matrilineal culture, there are a substantial number of male writers who give expression to feminist ideology in their creativity. The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed a series of legislation in India, culminating in the law against child marriage in 1929. Three of the significant male feminist authors who emerged in the 1930s have been identified as R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao (Internet source), whose works promote the feminine ideology and female emancipation against all forms of gender discrimination. Mention has also been made of Rabindranath Tagore, a dominant Indian poet and playwright of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, noted for his literary stand against female marginalisation (Internet source). At the risk of sounding patronising, whenever the male voice is raised in support of the feminine ideology, it tends to carry with it a remarkable power of truth and objectivity, as against the sentimental subjectivity of the female advocate for a female cause. Is the woman not naturally expected to plead her own cause?

Nevertheless, the fundamental paradox abounds that the greatest obstacle in the way of the feminine agenda is the woman herself. This fact was alluded to by Crawford and Unger who are quoted as claiming that "although the greatest risk factor for sexual victimisation is being female, this does not relate to a simple gendered oppositional schema, since in many societies, through socialisation, women become complicit with and thus uphold the patriarchal system" (cited in Julie Umukoro, 2021:151). Most women have been socially conditioned to accept male

leadership, such that they are either reluctant or afraid to challenge patriarchy. This is most eloquent in the political arena where a female-dominated electorate will often vote in favour of the male candidate at the expense of a qualified female candidate, just because of her gender. The destructive but untenable argument is always: how is she better than me? Thus, the male candidate is given the vote on the platform of acknowledged male superiority. This is female self-discrimination which is the worst form of gender negation or self-denial. Since the global acceptance of universal adult suffrage, the electorates in most parts are now female-dominated, and there should have been more female presidents than male if the women were to demonstrate gender solidarity in the democratic context. The political glass ceiling is sustained by the self-inflicted female prejudice against the female candidate who dares to run, while many women are scared of the political arena to avoid anticipated rejection and humiliation by fellow women. Hence, the first major step in feminine liberation is the self-liberation of the women folk, a mental and psychological freeing of the mind for intellectual fulfilment. The woman must first and foremost believe in herself and her fellow woman as human beings with the same mental and intellectual capacities as her male counterpart, and the right to acquire political power, without necessarily compromising her domestic, natural, and subordinate role as housekeeper. Angela Merkel, the most successful German Chancellor for sixteen years, demonstrated the possibility of cleavage between political power and domestic responsibilities, by governing Germany effectively and still successfully running her home, without engaging the services of a domestic househelp. The home is a human institution set up under divine guidance, with the man as the head of that institution, and to whom ultimate authority belongs, although working in close consultation and collaboration with the woman. The male is the sole captain of the marital ship, with the woman as the chief mate. A boat with two captains will ultimately drown from conflicting directives. Nevertheless, marriage involves shared responsibilities between the couple, with the man as the anointed head of that institution, as distinct from a political office which can be headed by either a man or a woman, through election or appointment. Much of the conflict in the modern domestic set-up derives from failure to recognise that the home is not the same as a political institution with an elected head. But the responsible man should recognise marriage as a partnership of mutual collaboration, and not succumb to the temptation to exercise naked power over the woman, often leading to domestic violence. A man who lifts his hand to strike a woman is an effeminate and unscrupulous she-man who lacks self-control and self-dignity. A real man will not take advantage of physical prowess or domestic pre-eminence to oppress the woman placed in his care to protect and caress. As Shakespeare says, "O, it is excellent to have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant" (*Measure for Measure*). From the analysis undertaken so far, it is obvious that genderism and patriarchy have their points of convergence and divergence, which need to be harmonised for greater effective human interaction.

### **The Sociology and Psychology of Genderism**

The politics of gender earlier discussed has both sociological and psychological dimensions. When we talk of the sociology of gender, we are concerned with how gender affects the society as a whole; but the psychology of gender relates to how it affects the individual man or woman. The sociology of gender begins with the basic recognition of the existence of the male and female genders as a natural phenomenon which cuts across the entire animal kingdom. According to an Internet source:



A sociological perspective transcends biological notions of sex and emphasises the social and cultural bases of gender. Sociological research points to the ubiquity of gender's influence in both private and public spheres, and it identifies differences – and similarities – in how genders are treated socially, and factors that change this treatment.

Organisations, such as the American Sociological Association (ASA), have been formed to cater for the particular needs of members, through “new avenues for professional development, mentoring, and expanded opportunities for engagement and leadership” (The Internet). Naturally, because of their peculiar needs, the female gender is expected to enjoy greater attention and support in such a social set-up. In several parts, gender disparity is still prominent, both in the workplace and the larger society, and women have to work extra hard to gain recognition and adequate acknowledgement. A female boss is faced with a dual task: to overcome the inherent gender prejudice of doubtful capability, in addition to the natural hostility of her male and female subordinates. Margret Thatcher, first female British Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990, had to play the inflexible ‘Iron Lady’ to enforce her authority. As observed earlier, this sexual discrimination against the female gender finds the loudest expression in the political arena. Furthermore, female sexuality suffers a lot of indignities through a whole range of criminal activities such as physical abuse and domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, child marriage, and female genital mutilation. Since men are the perpetrators of these atrocities, male victims of sexual molestation are few and far between. Although many societies have enacted laws to prohibit and punish sexual offences, many of these pieces of legislation have proved difficult to enforce. For instance, there is often a thin line of distinction between rape and mutual consent, while marital rape is absolutely difficult to prove, especially in the traditional African society. Also, in many African cultures, widowhood is criminalised, and the laws of inheritance are skewed against the female gender, as wife or daughter. Nevertheless, with greater enlightenment and increasing awareness, the plight of womanhood continues to improve in many societies, especially with the active collaboration of the male feminists who abhor all forms of unwholesome practices against women, as a matter of objective principle.

This issue dovetails into the psychology of genderism. What does it feel like to be a woman in a male-dominated society? How many women, given the choice, would opt to remain as women? Unfortunately, the gender variable is an imposed order of nature, alongside such other variables as the choice of parents, and prenatal environments. Faced with the same options, most men would likely vote to remain men, given the many hardships confronting the female gender. As mentioned earlier, only those wearing the female shoes may know exactly where they pinch, and man remains the greatest obstacle to the fulfilment of female aspirations. The most perceptive male advocate of feminism may not know exactly how it feels like to be inside a woman's skin.

The situation is not nearly as bad as it may seem. Women are wonderfully and fearfully made, with remarkably tender features of grace, beauty and infectious dignity. Obviously, God took His time in creating the woman. In terms of the physical and psychological make-up, the woman is infinitely superior to the man, whose brawny features, which give him the edge in physical prowess, also make him coarse and relatively unattractive. A woman combines brain with beauty, and has the capacity for multi-tasking is far more than the average male. Who says women are the weaker sex? Weaker in what sense? Is it the weaker sex that endures the ordeal of pregnancy for nine full months and continues to maintain the home? The rural woman is certainly

not the weaker sex. Heavy with child, she balances another physical burden on her head, while holding firmly on to the toddler by her side. When the time comes to be delivered of the gestative burden, she endures the horrendous physical agony while the husband simply groans under sheer psychological anxiety as he paces up and down the labour ward. It is easy to tell, by this analogy, which of them is weaker or stronger. The hidden truth is that men are naturally *envious* of women because the female gender possesses fine and delectable qualities which they badly desire, and for which reason the men chase them around the whole place to gain their attention. Indeed, a woman who carries herself with pride and dignity, combined with radiating virtues and inward grace, is a sight to behold, and the desperate desire of all virtuous men. So, women should be proud of their sexuality and be grateful for all the rare features with which they are naturally endowed. From Adam to the postmodern man, history is replete with the stories of great men who fell victim to feminine charm and power. This is the genesis of the concept of the *femme fatale* (the fatalistic woman) of romantic history (exemplified in Helen of Troy and Queen Cleopatra of Egypt), who employs her irresistible charm and extraordinary beauty to bring about the downfall of men. What the woman lacks in physical prowess, she more than makes up for in psychological superiority. Women should continue to hold men accountable for their misdeeds, and exert further pressure on them to recognise the legitimate roles and responsibilities of the female in social development and transformation.

### **Gender and Social Development**

Social development is the aggregate of individual development, just as the home is the microcosm of the larger society. The greater the individual development, the fuller the development of the society as a whole. The marks of social development have been “aggregated into six composite indices: civic activism, inter-personal safety and trust, inter-group cohesion, clubs and associations, gender equality, and inclusion of minorities” (The Internet). Thus, a developed society is made up of active and enlightened citizenry, who feel a sense of personal trust and safety, and are organised into cohesive smaller units, with gender equity and social inclusiveness. Needless to add that only good, responsible, and truly democratic governance can generate these attributes, and provide the basis for social transformation.

Of the six indices listed above, the issue of gender is most paramount. The reason the world has made minimal progress, while the African societies remain backward is because gender parity has not been given a pride of place in the scheme of things. According to recent Internet statistics, women constitute a little over half of the seven billion people inhabiting the planet Earth, although the gender ratio varies significantly from place to place. In Africa, the female population continues to run ahead of the male, where the demography of birth rate returns greater figures for the girl child. This has led to the perceived shortage of potential husbands and desperate brides-to-be. Although the available statistics is not so accurate for a variety of reasons, what is not in doubt is that women constitute at least half of the total workforce in the world. Failure to take due cognisance of this substantial figure in planning and political activism implies that the world has been trying to fly with only one of its pair of wings, with obvious frustration. In the economic, political, and social spheres, women should be given substantial leverage to contribute their own quota to societal advancement. A society that marginalises womanhood short-changes its inherent capacity to excel.

### **The Gender Factor: A Cog or a Clog in the Social Wheel?**

We now come to the crucial question is; genderism a cog or a clog in the social wheel? This question goes to the heart of this conference which probes the extent to which the issue of gender is either a help or a hindrance in social change. A cog is a tooth on the rim of a wheel or gear which moves it forward in endless rotational cycle. A clog, on the other hand, is an encumbrance or impediment, some obstructions which stands in the way of free and smooth rotation. A cog helps, but a clog hinders. Which is applicable to the gender question?

The gender issue can be either a cog or a clog, depending on perception and orientation. Where genderism is perceived as a promotional philosophy aimed at the recognition of sexual parity and ideals, then the gender factor is a positive inducement for social transformation. But when the gender discourse becomes embroiled in negative and diversionary argumentation, its inherent values are lost to polemical disquisitions. On balance, however, the gender factor is a positive element; an ideological cog that promotes the social wheel. We have argued above that the beauty of genderism is the complementarity of its binary nature, where each of the two incomplete parts gravitates towards the other for holistic apprehension and fulfilment. Maleness and femaleness are unlike bipolar attributes in mutual attraction for positive inclusiveness. Thus, beyond the fact of procreation and perpetuation of humanity, the essence of gender binarity is the interplay of unity in fundamental duality. It is also aimed at breaking the boredom of repetitive homogeneity devoid of sexual variety and mutual attractiveness. Humanity would have been socially much poorer if sexual duality had been exchanged for the homogeneous lot of the hermaphrodite in infinite self-propagation. Thus, mankind should remain infinitely grateful for being endowed with gender binarity by sheer serendipity, as part of Nature's primordial design for human procreation.

Gender collaboration is mankind's greatest asset in confronting the infinite challenges of existence and survival in a fundamentally hostile universe of natural and man-made disasters. The sexes exist in mutual complementarity to ease the burden of life and living, and confer purposefulness on human existence. To that extent, the power of gender becomes the gender of power, generating positive human values in suppressing conflict and promoting global peace, progress and stability.

### **Gender Oppression and Racism as Forms of Human Discrimination**

By playing the same politics of exclusion, gender oppression and racism are different forms of human discrimination which have debilitating impact on social cohesion. To be a woman and to be black is double jeopardy. The black woman is exposed to double discrimination – of colour and gender. The election of Kamala Harris as the first female and first black American Vice-President sworn in on January 20, 2021, was nothing short of the miraculous. The feat was unwittingly initiated by the celebrated extra-judicial murder of 46-year-old George Floyd on 25 May 2020. When the demented police officer Derek Michael Chauvin pressed his diabolical left knee on the neck of Floyd for eight-and-a-half minutes to snuff life out of this victim of racial hate, little did he realise that he was merely opening the door for the emergence of the first ever black Vice-President of the United States, who also turned out to be the first woman to occupy the number two spot of the world's most powerful nation. The provocative crime, committed under global spotlight, raised a groundswell of national and international protests christened 'Black Lives Matter', which simultaneously aroused violent resentment across colour lines, and diminished the chances of the then American President, white supremacist Donald Trump, from being re-elected. Cashing in on the racial tension and crisis of the moment, presidential candidate Joe Biden 'had

the audacity' (quoting Kamala Harris in her victory speech) to propose a black running mate for an American electorate that was in full racial sympathy with George Floyd, and this enhanced the Biden-Harris ticket. It should be made clear that Kamala Harris was elected more for her blackness than her femininity, as the same electorate had only just rejected a white female presidential candidate in person of Hillary Clinton in the immediate past election. The fact of being feminine was merely an icing on the political cake for Harris. Nevertheless, the fortuitous election of Kamala Harris as American Vice-President has enhanced the fortune of the female gender, and brought the ultimate glass ceiling close enough for subsequent shattering in the foreseeable future.

The American society, like many countries across the globe, is thus faced with the double crisis of racial and gender discrimination which has made social cohesiveness and peaceful coexistence an uphill task. Racial or gender prejudice is an act of gross inhumanity; man's inhumanity to the black race and to womanhood. It amounts to suggesting that the black person or the female gender is less than human. Yet, the society that demonstrates the capacity to transcend both vices is the truly sophisticated society, which many developed countries are still struggling to become. True civilisation does not consist in scientific and technological innovations; rather, it is embodied in profound humanism and demonstrable inclusiveness in all forms of social interaction, be it racial, ethnic, or gender-based. Even in Africa, the notable black world of racial or colour uniformity, vices such as ethnicity, nepotism, kakistocracy or mediocrity are prevalent, coupled with an insouciant disdain for womanhood. In virtually every human society, discrimination is a hydra-headed monster which rears its ugly head in the different facets of human interaction. Gender prejudice is a social evil that has a manifold propensity, with negative multifarious effects, in both the developed and developing worlds, although the degree or intensity varies from place to place. The fundamental distinction between colour prejudice and gender discrimination is that while the former is an oppression of the minorities in white-dominated communities, the latter is a repression of the voiceless female majority, the world over. March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, while November 25 every year has been set aside by the United Nations General Assembly for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The youth, defined as young people between the ages of 15 and 35, constitute the third dimension of global marginalisation. To that extent, the black female young woman suffers triple jeopardy: as a youth, as a woman, and as a black person. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP) focuses on five thematic areas: employment and entrepreneurship, political inclusion, civic engagement and protection of rights, education including comprehensive sexuality education, and health (The Internet). Thus, the current global social movement is a tripartite struggle: against colour prejudice, youth marginalisation and female disempowerment.

### **The 7th International Raga Conference**

The current International Conference on Raising Girls' Ambition (RAGA) is the 7<sup>th</sup> in the series, following six previous successful conferences. Seven is a perfect number, which implies that the Conference has finally come of age. Overtime, it is hoped, these Conference series would achieve their main objective of raising the girl-child's ambition, aspiration, and achievement. Dr Adepeju Aderogba-Oti, of Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria, the principal convener, deserves to be congratulated for this bold initiative, and her undying zeal, as well as the sustained commitment of her collaborators, to have kept it going since 2015, when the maiden edition was held at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth editions followed in tandem



in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, respectively. According to a write-up on the Internet, Raising Girls' Ambition (RAGA) Conference

is a project that has taken a central role in the struggle for women, and indeed, the Girl-child's right to a meaningful physical, mental, emotional, and socially developed life, in a society that is patriarchal. The maiden edition...was held with the theme - "Girl-Child Education: Pathway to Sustainable Development" while the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> editions (had) the themes: "Combating Violence Against Women and the Girl-Child in Africa and Beyond: Emerging Issues", "Advancing Women's Leadership for Sustainable Development in Africa and Beyond", "Equipping Girls for Involvement in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) for Sustainable Development", "Debunking Stereotypes: Empowering Women and Girls for the Digital World for Sustainable Development" and "Advancing Women's Career for Sustainable Development", respectively (The Internet).

The current edition of the Conference, themed "Gender and Power: Driving Force for Progress and Social Change or a Hindrance", expects to engage the participants from different countries, through both virtual and physical presentations, in discussing the context of the interception of gender and power on work ethics, industry, politics and social relations, employing the multi-disciplinary approach. Sub-themes include Language, Literature, and Performing Arts; Culture, Race, Ethnicity; Religion, and Social Justice; Managerial and Political Leadership, and other exciting topics. A recurrent motif in these overlapping themes is the issue of sustainable social development through the promotion of gender and the empowerment of women. It is hoped that the sensitive issues of the girl-child and womanhood, viewed from different perspectives, will receive adequate attention in the course of these deliberations.

### **Conclusion: Towards a Gender-Free Society**

We conclude on the interplay of power and politics in a gendered society. Male and female are in perpetual contestation for social power and political authority, leaving us with a world that fails to run at full steam. The internecine gender struggle and racial conflict hold poor prospect for a polarised society where individuals are measured not by their mental and intellectual capacities, but by the colour of their skin and the biological make-up of their sexuality. There appears to be an excessive attention paid to gender and racial differences to the detriment of the oneness and uniqueness of humanity. Although a lot of positive measures have been taken by the United Nations Organisation to curb the menace of separatism and the politics of exclusion, so much more requires to be done to guarantee a peaceful and harmonious universe. In the final analysis, what ultimately matters is not the diversity of race, ethnicity, colour, and gender, but the fundamental unity of humanity. The goal should be towards a genderless or gender-free society, with less talk on gender, and greater focus on the essentially *human* factor. On this note, I wish all the participants at this conference a most fruitful and memorable contribution towards making the world a more peaceful, equitable, and safer place for all. Thank you all for your quality attention.

### **References**

Crawford, M., and Unger, R (2004), *Women and Gender: A Feminist Psychology*. Boston: MA, McGraw-Hill.

### **Internet Sources**

Umukoro, J. N. E. (2021) "SHE-menism: Girl-trafficking and the Gendered Experiences of Forced Migration in Soji Cole's *Embers*", in *Figures of the Migrant: The Roles of Literature and the Arts in Representing Migration*, edited by Siobhan Brownlie and Rédouane Abouddahab, Routledge, pp.149-166.

Umukoro, M. M. (2002), "Foreword" to *Female Empowerment and Dramatic Creativity in Nigeria* by Mabel Ewvierhoma, Caltop Publishers, Nigeria.

*Wikipedia*, Online Encyclopedia.