

The Intersection of Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*

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Abstract

In exploring the fictional representation of the experiences of Black gay men and women, it is important to examine how these Black writers or writers of color connect the concepts of race, gender, and sexuality in their narrative. Any writing that interlocks the above concepts initiates identity politics, minoritarian subjectivity, and equally important, a subaltern discourse. Literary scholars such as Ifi Amadiume, Frantz Fanon, Judith Butler and Sylvia Tamale argue that the subject of gender intersects with race, and that gender also cuts across sexuality. Interestingly, unlike Tamale (2020, pp. 5-6) and Butler (1999, p. 6) who posit that gender, sexual, and racial identities interlink, Amadiume and Fanon contend otherwise. They insist that gender intersects with race, but that race does not interweave with sexuality. For instance, Homi K. Bhabha in his Forward of Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask* (1986, p. ix) writes that Fanon "speaks most effectively from the uncertain interstices of historical change: from the area of ambivalence between race and sexuality." Similarly, Amadiume vehemently rejects Audre Lorde's idea about both the possibility and practice of gay sex in women marriages in Africa. Despite their rebuttals of Black gayness, these two literary figures, Fanon and Amadiume remain invaluable in literary discussion of race, gender, and sexuality. This paper contributes to debates regarding why Black queer Europe remains marginal/the dearth of African/Black queer studies. I therefore use Fatima El-Tayeb's theory on Black/women of colour feminism and queers of colour critique to analyse Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*.

Keywords: Bernardine Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other*, intersectionality, African/black queer studies

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Introduction

In exploring the fictional representation of the experiences of Black gay men and women, it is important to examine how Black writers or writers of colour connect the concepts of race, gender, and sexuality in their narrative. Any writing that interlocks the above concepts demonstrates identity politics, minoritarian subjectivity, and equally important, a subaltern discourse. Literary scholars such as Ifi Amadiume, Frantz Fanon, Judith Butler and Sylvia Tamale that the subject of gender intersects with race, and that gender also cuts across sexuality. Unlike Tamale (2020, pp. 5-6) and Butler (1999, p. 6) who posit that gender, sexual, and racial identities interlink, Amadiume and Fanon contend otherwise. They insist that gender intersects with race, but that race does not interweave with sexuality. For instance, Homi K. Bhabha in his Forward of Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask* (1986, p. ix) writes that Fanon "speaks most effectively from the uncertain interstices of historical change: from the area of ambivalence between race and sexuality." Similarly, Amadiume (2015, p. 7) vehemently rejects Audre Lorde's idea about both the possibility and practice of gay sex in women marriages in Africa. Amadiume maintains that Black lesbian women in the west justify their choice or involvement in same sex relations by simply "looking into African women's relationships and interpreting some as lesbian (see Carmen et al., 1984) ...what prejudices and assumptions are they imposing on African material?", Amadiume rhetorically asks. Both Fanon's and Amadiume's rebuttals of Black gayness seek to distance themselves from colonial influence while promoting post-colonial discourse.

However, these two literary figures, Fanon and Amadiume remain invaluable in African and (post)colonial study of race and gender (and even sexuality depending on one's side of the argument). For instance, I agree with Homi K. Bhabha (1986, pp. vii, iii and xxv) when they contend that although "the ritual respect accorded to the name of Fanon, the currency of his titles in the common language of liberation, are part of the ceremony of a polite, English refusal," it is crucial to understand that:

In Britain, today, as a range of culturally and racially marginalized groups readily assume the mask of the Black not to deny their diversity but to audaciously announce the important artifice of cultural identity and its difference, the need for Fanon becomes urgent. (Fanon, 1986, p. xxv)

Not only is racial affinity crucial for marginalized people in Britain, but it is equally relevant for Black women and women of colour to form alliance. In the same vein, Amadiume exposes in the preface of her work *Male Daughters, Female Husbands* (1987, p. 2) that "if Non-Western cultures were described as primitive, barbaric, savage, etc., one can imagine how women in these cultures were presented." She continues, "to early anthropologists, evolutionists that they were, 'primitive' women stood at the lowest end of the scale, described as no better than beasts and slaves, while the Victorian lady stood at the apex" (p. 2). Similarly, Tamale (2020, p. 6) observes, "as the handmaidens of colonization, Christian missionaries introduced Western notions of gender hierarchies that had hitherto not been known in Africa." Donna McCormack (2014, p. 185) sums it up when she observes "postcolonial studies and gender and sexuality studies" is driven by the "need for a theorization that critiques how colonialism is sustained through sexualized violence of racial and gender hierarchization and segregation." In a different but similar context, bell hooks (2001, pp. 15-16) informs readers about the fate of enslaved Black females. Hooks posits that "the black female slave was not as valued as the black male slave," adding that "unlike the offspring of the relationships between black men and white women, the offspring of any

black slave woman regardless of the race of her mate would be legally slaves.” As we may already know, the subject of race, gender, and sexuality portend different forms of interlocking oppressions.

For instance, in an interview with Rachel Hall, Bernadine Evaristo (2022) “says she fears that publishers’ interest in black authors may be only a “trend or fashion” following the “Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd in 2020.” Evaristo adds that these events “‘really did shake the industry to the core’ and had marked a turning point in previously ‘excluded’ authors getting book deals.” Interestingly, she concluded by observing, “whether that will be the case in five or 10 years, we’ll have to see.” Similarly, Jewelle Gomez (2005, pp. 289-90) contends that “black lesbians and black gay men have experienced repression and invisibility in vastly different ways.” She continues, “the invisibility of black lesbians is already an ‘epidemic’ in many academic arenas,” adding that “there is less contemporary black lesbian fiction to discuss today.” José Esteban Muñoz (1998, p. 8) in his theory of disidentifications insists that because “cultural studies of race, class, gender, and sexuality are highly segregated,” it is important to create an intersectional lens. Muñoz’s encouragement to adopt an intersectional lens in African/Black queer studies acknowledges or gives credence to the work of critical legal theorist, Kimberle William Crenshaw (1989). Crenshaw (1991, p. 1244) writes that by using the concept of intersectionality, her main objective is to “illustrate that many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood.” Crenshaw believes that in using the concept of intersectionality, scholars will be able to capture the ways in which “racism and sexism factors into Black women’s lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately” (p. 1244). Crenshaw’s concept of intersectionality is projected in *Epistemology of the Closet*. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990, p. 33) states that the purpose of intersecting issues of race, gender, and sexuality is “not for any purpose of ranking oppressions” but rather it demonstrates a “painful realization” (p. 33) that all oppressions though differently structured, “must intersect in complex embodiments that was the first great heuristic breakthrough of socialist-feminist thought and of the thought of women of color” (p. 33). Hence, this paper adopts an intersectional lens to address and understand the racial and queer experiences of Black gay women in Britain.

Black Sapphic Sistahs: A Triple Consciousness

In this subsection, I am arguing the following: that Black lesbian women’s involvement in non-monogamous relationships may be a decolonial mechanism to regain agency; that racism, sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia remains the core reason behind Black sisterhood; and that familial rejection is a mechanism consciously employed by African/Black families in the continent and in diaspora as a way of (re)asserting racial and cultural identity.

Evaristo’s novel begins with a flashback when Amma Bonsu, and her friend, Dominique, both in their fifties, started their acting career at the national theatre. Amma recalls that both she and Dominique gradually developed a public objection and a heckling attitude toward any show that offends their political leanings. For instance, while Dominique challenges and demands an answer from the course director as to why women are not allowed to play male parts in Shakespeare’s plays, Amma tells us that “she remembers pouring a pint of beer over the head of a director whose play featured semi-naked black women running around on stage behaving like idiots” (p. 9). However, she is forced to pay the price before being reabsorbed

when a female artiste assumed the position of director. Amma's reaction to her director's denigration of Black women in his play, though disrespectful demonstrates a "subtle" but firm disapproval of stereotypical notions attached to Black women. It is an outright disidentification of dominant ideas attributed to Black women, what Ifi Amadiume (1987, p. 2) refers to as a western notion of "primitive" women. On the one hand, the narrator describes Amma as an artiste who though has written about fifteen and directed more than forty plays, and "wants people to bring their curiosity to her plays, doesn't give a damn what they wear," (p. 10) and "has her own *sod-you* style" (p. 10). Readers are informed that her daughter, Yazz, describes her "style as 'a mad old woman look, Mum'" (p. 11), and "refuses to be spotted alongside her when they're supposed to be walking down the street together" (p. 11). On the other hand, the narrator says of Dominique that she is "über-cool, totally gorgeous, taller than most women, thinner than most women, with cut-glass cheekbones and smoky eyes with thick black lashes that literally cast a shadow on her face" (p. 13). Amma recalls how both she and Dominique "met in the eighties at an audition for a feature film set in a women's prison (what else?)" (p. 12). Unfortunately, they were "disillusioned at being put up for parts such as a slave, servant, prostitute, nanny or crim and still not getting the job" (p. 12). Their disappointment stems from the fact that the characters given to them depict racist and sexist roles typical of African/Black women – positions that evidence a historical and an interlocking form of oppression of both their ancestors and of themselves. bell hooks (2001, p. 15) observes that "in a retrospective examination of the black female slave experience, sexism looms as large as racism as an oppressive force in the lives of black women." Fatima El-Tayeb (2011) makes a relevant point when they contend while referring to history that:

The transatlantic slave trade, Paul Gilroy, (among others) argues, shaped not only the history and identity of Black people in the West (whether they descend from slaves or not), but also the history and identity of the modern West itself. (El-Tayeb, 2011, p. 45)

It could be irrational to have someone of a different race play those characters. However, it is possible that Amma and Dominique might not experience any disappointment if white characters took up those roles because acting as one of such characters is to cast a different trope by reinventing the wheel, in that, the historical event of slavery could have happened to any race. I find that Evaristo's mention of "slave, servant, prostitute" etc is to really foreground the continuing subjectivity of black women many centuries after slavery. The fact that Amma and Dominique were put up to act those roles and still did not get the job, reveals that we cannot quickly dismiss the experiences of Black women. For example, readers are told that one of Amma's experiences when she started her career as an artiste is connected to her physical appearance. The narrator says "Amma was shorter, with African hips and thighs perfect slave girl material one director told her when she walked into an audition for a play about Emancipation whereupon she walked right back out again" (p. 13). By walking away, Amma is not just resisting white supremacy but is demonstrating the exact thing she is being auditioned for. By choosing to walk away, Amma rejects the director's disrespect. Hence, Amma chooses how she wants to emancipate herself from (mental) "slavery." The play about emancipation might remind readers about Bob Marley's Redemption Song with the lyrics "emancipate yourselves from mental slavery/none but ourselves can free our minds." Bob Marley's lyrics are influenced by Marcus Garvey's 1937 speech titled "The Work That Has Been Done" which was delivered in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Fraser (2023) observes that, in this speech, Garvey says "we're going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery because while others might free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind." Again, the director's comment portrays the sexual exploitation of Black women during slavery. First, from that

excerpt, readers learn that the reference to Amma's hips and thighs iterates that the Black woman, "in the eyes of the white public she would never be seen as worthy of consideration or respect" (bell hooks, 2001, p. 54). Second, it reminds readers of the sad experiences of Black South African slave, Sarah Baartman (nick named Hottentot Venus) who became a European public exhibit due to her large buttocks. Parkinson (2016) writes that Baartman is "seen by many as the epitome of colonial exploitation and racism, of the ridicule and commodification of black people." In addition, Gordon-Chipembere (BBC, 2016) posits Baartman "has become the landscape upon which multiple narratives of exploitation and suffering within black womanhood have been enacted." Fundamentally, the continuing relegation of Black women evidence that Black women need to firmly resist oppression from both white and Black men. The continuing relegation of Black women underscores that racism, and sexism remains a social construct, and that Black women experience both racism, and sexism, together. Hence, one of the goals of African/Black feminism is to give agency to Black women and ensure that they fight back social structures that render them victims of sexism and racism.

Not only are readers aware of Amma's early career experiences, but it is also revealed of Dominique that a casting director had once "told Dominique she was wasting his time when she turned up for a Victorian drama when there weren't any black people in Britain" (p. 13). But Dominique "said there were, called him ignorant before also leaving the room and in her case, slamming the door" (p. 13). This extract is suggestive of the following: first, the director's statement echoes the historical status Black women occupied during the Victorian period. In the introduction of this paper, I observed that Amadiume posits that while Black women were believed to be at the "lowest end of the scale," (p. 2) the "Victorian lady stood at the apex" (p. 2). Therefore, the director feels Dominique is not the right cast. Second, this excerpt implies that Black British people have remained under-represented in British films/literatures. The director's remark suggests that he is either ignorant (as Dominique expresses), uninterested in learning about Black British history, and even racist because it is possible that he knows but refuses to acknowledge the visibility they have had. Rachel Carroll (2019, p. 208) maintains that Black British actors such as David Oyelowo, and David Harewood have expressed their concerns regarding the dearth of Black British performers in British films. Carroll observes that these actors' interrogation does not only "address questions of diversity" but also illustrates that the "under-representation of Black British people in British historical film has important implications for contemporary debates about British history, identity, and cultural representation" (p. 208). Hence, by referring to this historical antecedent – the Victorian period – Evaristo proves that Black British people, though hidden in British history, have long been part of the British society. Her narrative invites readers to understand that the past is in the future. In essence, the "mistake" of under-representing Black British people in films and literature, should not continue in the present. Therefore, Evaristo is advocating that there is need to right the wrong of the past.

As the story unfolds, readers become aware of Amma's and Dominique's sexuality. Dominique discovers her sexuality during puberty but instead of informing her family or friends, she decides to keep it to herself because she is unsure how her Afro-Guyanese mother and Indo-Guyanese father would react. In the case of Amma, she confides in her Scottish Nigerian mother who warns her not to tell her father that she is a dyke. Amma says "he doesn't know I'm a dyke, are you kidding? Mum told me not to tell him, it was hard enough telling her" (p. 17), adding that her mother suspected her sexuality "when pencil skirts and curly perms were all the rage and I started wearing men's Levis" (p. 17). Amma informs readers that though her mother is aware of her sexuality, her mother thinks "it's a phase,

which I'll throw back at her when I'm forty" (p. 17). Amma's inability to disclose her sexuality to her father, and Dominique's total silence, revolves around the political or historical precedent surrounding their parent's, and grandparents' coming of age when "homosexuality" is considered as both a white man's disease and a form of exploitation for Black people. An example will suffice. Dominique's mother, Cecilia, comes from a lineage of slavery, and her father's "ancestors were indentured labourers from Calcutta" (p. 13). Amma's father, Kwabena, was born in Ghana in the 1920s, about thirty-years before colonial era ended in Ghana. Based on these family's historical experiences as descendants of slaves, indentured labourers, and even colonial subjects, both families will perhaps be devastated on learning that their daughter is queer. One of Fanon's aim in *Black Skin, White Mask*, is to dissociate the possibility of queerness in Black people as a way of reacting to racism and colonialism. José Esteban Muñoz (1998, p. 9) writes that "Fanon dismisses the possibility of a homosexual component in such an identic formation. This move is not uncommon; it is basically understood as an 'it's a white thing' dismissal of queerness." Readers are informed that, Amma's father, Kwabena, finds queer jokes interesting. Amma observes "dad has no time for 'the fairies'" (p. 17) but he "laughs at all the homophobic jokes comedians make on telly every Saturday night when they're not insulting their mother-in-law or black people" (p. 17). Amma's father's excitement towards queer jokes indicates his homophobia, in that, Black people will not find racist jokes interesting.

The historical time in which Amma's and Dominique's parents were born is not only responsible for their difficulty in accepting their daughter's sexuality. This period accounts for their perception of who an African/Black woman is which gives credence to the extent of colonial influence on them. This is exemplified in the story when Amma says:

My three older brothers became lawyers and a doctor, their obedience to the expectations of our father meant I wasn't pressurized to follow suit his only concern for me is marriage and children he thinks my acting career is a hobby until I have both... literally I tell Mum she married a patriarch. (p. 16)

This passage suggests that culturally, Black women's life is compartmentalized – to be a wife and mother, with their career taking the least place. Gloria Anzaldúa (1987, p. 17) maintains that "educated or not, the onus is still on woman to be a wife/ mother-only the nun can escape motherhood." It is indicative that African/Black women are culturally indoctrinated into identifying as heterosexual because they are compelled to find love and hardly resist marriage nor motherhood. In this instance, Amma, whose sexuality remains a secret to her father, is compelled by him to marry, whereupon marriage becomes a means to be recognized as "responsible." In addition, from the passage, readers may notice that the African/Black woman does not have equal opportunities with the males in her family. By referring to her father as a patriarch, Amma is implying that her father is sexist, and that his colonial understanding of what a woman is, despite leaving Ghana, to settle and live in England up until the 1960s, when women in England were beginning to attain social status or gender emancipation, shows that he is a product of his time.

Unsurprisingly, Amma's mother supports her husband's "archaic" ways and understanding of what a woman is. This is exemplified in the novel when her "half-caste" mother, Helen, "born in 1935 in Scotland" (p. 15) says "your father was born male in Ghana in the 1920s whereas you were born female in London in the 1960s" (p. 16). Amma asks her, "and your point is? you really can't expect him to 'get you', as you put it" (p. 16). However, Amma lets "her know she's an apologist for the patriarchy and complicit in a system that oppresses all women

she says human beings are complex I tell her not to patronize me” (p. 16). Not only does Helen, verbally defend Kwabena, she also demonstrates it through her actions. The narrator reveals that Amma’s, “mum worked eight hours a day in paid employment, raised four children, maintained the home, made sure the patriarch’s dinner was on the table every night and his shirts were ironed every morning” (p. 16). Meanwhile, her father’s “one domestic duty was to bring home the meat for Sunday lunch from the butcher’s – a suburban kind of hunter-gatherer thing” (p. 16). As a patriarchal victim that Helen is, “she’s never complained about her lot, or argued with him, a sure sign she’s oppressed” (p. 16). Silvia Federici (2021, p. 11) contends that housework goes beyond the concept of housecleaning. It includes giving service to “wage workers physically, emotionally, and sexually and getting them ready to work, day after day for the wage.” Thus, like Amma, Black women must (continue to) decolonize themselves by understanding and unlearning the different ways they are being subjugated. They must also advocate side by side with white women for their equal value in society by continuously and pragmatically working towards “the defiant speech delivered by Sojourner Truth at the 1851 Women’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio,” (Sylvia Tamale, 2020, p. 64) where Truth repeatedly but rhetorically asked “ain’t I a woman?” (p. 64). Just like Amma, Black women must also (continue to) argue for better and fairer treatment in relation to Black and white men and women. They must approach “black and feminist critical issues with a paradigm that factors in both of these components and replace” (Muñoz, 1998, p. 8) what Kimberlé William Crenshaw “has referred to as monocausal paradigms that can only consider blackness at the expense of feminism or vice versa” (Muñoz, 1998, p. 8). Hence, it is suggestive that Evaristo’s intension in her narrative, is to illustrate that Black women must become like Amma and Dominique. Fundamentally, Black women from their corner must (begin to) interrogate and, publicly object words or actions that have homophobic, racist and sexist tendencies.

The day Amma decides to attend “her first black women’s group in Brixton” (p. 17) after coming across a flyer, the narrator reveals that Amma is immediately attracted to Elaine, who opens the door for her whereupon she “sporting a perfect halo of an afro” (p. 17). Amma follows her “into the main room where women sat on sofas, chairs, cushions, cross-legged on the floor” (p. 17) while making sure to sit “on the floor leaning against a cat-mauled tweedy armchair, feeling Elaine’s warm leg against her arm” (p. 17). On joining them, she becomes aware that the group is discussing “what it meant to be a black woman what it meant to be a feminist when white feminist organizations made them feel unwelcome” (p. 17). Amma finds this relatable, in that, she keeps echoing with the other women “we hear you, sister, we’ve all been there, sister” (p. 17). Amma’s decision to join black women’s group in Brixton, underscores Audre Lorde’s argument concerning the need for Black women to build and be part of Black sisterhood communities to overcome sexism, racism, heterosexism, homophobia, and for Black women’s mutual survival. Amadiume insists that, “racism is a crucial factor in the whole notion of sisterhood, whether for the purpose of female solidarity or for co-operative political action” (2015, p. 5). At the end of their meeting when the other women had gone, “Amma offered to stay behind to wash up the cups and ashtrays with Elaine they made out on one of the bumpy sofas in the glow of the streetlight” (p. 18). Unfortunately, the following week when Amma attends the women’s group again, “Elaine was canoodling with another woman and blanked her completely she never went again” (p. 18). Amma’s casual sex with Elaine and her subsequent jealousy evidence that it is possible Elaine practices lesbian non monogamy. Marcia Munson and Judith P. Stelboum (1999, p. 1) maintain “not all lesbians practice or idealize lesbian coupling ...and not all sexual partnerships are limited to two people, and not all satisfying love affairs lead to primary relationships.” Meg-John Barker and Jules Scheele (2016, p. 122) posit that

“heteronormativity inherently includes mono-normativity: privileging of monogamous, couple-based relationship forms.” By extension, Barker and Scheele are implying that queer relationships are “inherently” non-monogamous. I agree with Antonio Cerdeira Pilão (2021, p. 8) when he insists that “while some of the rhetoric points to a greater propensity for gays to have multiple sexual partners, ...there is some suggestion that the number of sexual partners has nothing to do with sexual orientation.” Pilão (p. 9) emphasizes that the “link between homosexuality and promiscuity feeds the fear that it be construed as an impure and undignified sexual orientation.” Furthermore, I maintain that Evaristo’s uses Black lesbians as archetype and this illustrates Pilão’s, (Munson’s and Stelboum’s) arguments that “lesbian lives are different from those of men or heterosexual women, and that lesbians can be models of alternative ways of living” (p. 6). Basically, non-monogamy is not exclusive to queerness. Therefore, through this novel, Evaristo intends to educate and familiarize readers with different communities particularly existing within the lesbian sexuality. By giving visibility to lesbian non-monogamous relationship, Evaristo implores readers to rethink and re-evaluate non-monogamy as not exclusively belonging to or associated with men who are either heterosexual or gay. Suffice to observe that Evaristo’s objective is to give Black women agency to live life on their own terms.

Furthermore, as the novel progresses, we learn intricate things about Amma’s and Dominique’s sexuality. When they both decide that it is urgent to start their own theatre company, seeing that neither of them “was prepared to betray their politics to find jobs or shut their mouths to keep them” (p. 18), they decided to own a theatre which they named “Bush Women Theatre Company” (p. 18). A theatre that will project “Black and Asian women’s stories” (p. 18). They soon employed actresses, stage crew members, directors, and even designers. We are introduced into their personal life when the narrator begins to unpack their preferences. For instance, “Dominique was more selective and monogamous, serially so, she went for actresses, usually blonde, whose microscopic talent was overshadowed by their macroscopic beauty” (p. 23), whereas “Amma experienced commitment to one person as imprisonment, she hadn’t left home for a life of freedom and adventure to end up chained to another person’s desires” (p. 23). Evidently, Amma is engaging in a non-monogamous relationship. Hence, I contend that, a rejection of monogamous/heteronormative structure can be a decolonial practice for Black lesbian women, such as Amma, who engage in it. It is indicative that Evaristo’s objective in this narrative is to restore traditional knowledge of African identity and by extension resisting monogamy which is a western imposed ideology. Not for any purpose of showing “promiscuity” but to first demonstrate that there are alternative ways of living and second, to remind readers about traditions peculiar to Africans before colonialism.

Conclusion

This paper argues that Black lesbian women’s involvement in non-monogamous relationships may be a decolonial mechanism to regain agency; that familial rejection is a strategy consciously employed by African/Black families in the continent and in diaspora as a way of (re)asserting racial and cultural identity; and that racism, sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia remains the core reason behind Black sisterhood.

Furthermore, this paper investigates into what it means to be Black, female, and queer in contemporary Britain by using intersectional theoretical frameworks. It examines the lives and the lived experiences of African and/or Black women living in Britain who are hardly represented in British literature. I foreground my argument by connecting Black British

women's underrepresentation in British literature, to historical events such as the Transatlantic slave trade and colonialism. In the introduction of this paper, I argued while citing Ifi Amadiume, Frantz Fanon, Judith Butler and Sylvia Tamale that gender is interconnected with race, and that gender also cuts across sexuality. However, I contrast this argument by citing that although Tamale (2020, pp. 5-6) and Butler (1999, p. 6) maintain that gender, sexual, and racial identities interlink, Amadiume and Fanon contend otherwise. These two scholars insist that though gender intersects with race, race does not interweave with sexuality. Both Amadiume and Fanon remain invaluable critics in exploring intersectional concepts of race, gender, and sexuality. I also referred to other scholars such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (*Epistemology of the Closet*) and José Esteban Muñoz (theory of disidentifications). I maintain that Muñoz's discourse on cultural studies, of race, gender, sexuality, and class, and Sedgwick's contention that all oppressions are differently structured and are also interconnected in complicated ways gives credence to the work of critical legal theorist, Kimberle William Crenshaw.

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