

# Intersection of Gendered Voices

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## Foreword

A CERTAIN possibly outmoded view of woman in most societies seems to be that woman is ideally “retiring, servile, and entirely domestic.” But, whether outmoded as currently held by whomsoever, such a view is *mistaken*. For, the truth is that woman is an unfathomed bundle of excellence; she is an excellent *wife*. She is an excellent *mother*.

If you were to turn to the biblical book of Proverbs, in the final chapter’s final verse, you would see that woman is “manufacturer, importer, manager, realtor, farmer, seamstress, upholsterer, and merchant,” even if some women do not like these essences to be catalogued by a man or men, and even if some men need persuading to accept the truth. But yet, woman’s *dignity* and *strength* do not come from such amazing achievements as catalogued here. Woman has gold-embroidered VIRTUES by her *reverence for God* (Prov. 31:30).

In contrary presentation to the mundane overemphasis on *physical* appearance, the excellent woman is excellent not so much because of surface beauty as because of *character*. Character endows her with *irresistible attractiveness*. On it is built her family’s outstanding social placing. A woman is forever a *composite, rose-like portraiture of concrete idealism in womanhood*, or her human nature per se. As a *model*, this woman of Proverbs defies all efforts by any single, alive woman to imitate her. No one can reach her, in all ramifications. To reach her essence is a lifetime endeavour. In her *industry, integrity* and *resourcefulness*, she is an *inspiring spirit*!



The book you are about to enjoy, Dr. (Mrs.) Imoh Emenyi's condensed expansion, yes, *succinct*, re-ordering of her brilliant University of Calabar Ph.D. dissertation on the male-female dialogue in literary/dramatic endeavours, from "Mother Africa" to the "Diaspora," carefully bridges the usually misunderstood gap between the *essence of woman* (in dialogue with her social surroundings or in silence) which gender equality advocates ought to be fighting for, *and* the superficiality of often contradictory, or even at times cynical, masculine mis-envisions of the real source of all creativeness.

Following patterns drawn analogically from literary discourses, in Mikhail Bakhtin's *vision* of the essential DIALOGIC engagement of the voices, Dr. (Mrs.) Emenyi has put together "talking" voices. Any serious scholar and curious layman must listen to these voices, in the theatre exchanges of social paradigms as men and women mingle *survivalist* ideas and notions of the philosophic self. She comes out *affirming* gender without cynically or aggressively casting aspersions on the so-called anti-gender or gender-dense groups usually virulently dismissed as chauvinists by hardened pro-woman, dyed-in-the-wool and trenchant Anglo-American inspired feminists.

*Voices...* is a corrective, therefore, and uniquely independent-minded middle-of-the-road, but not compromising, philosophically informed and sensitive, sensible book. It is a prize-able possession no person can ignore once the sweet-smell of the well-inked, neatly packaged and befittingly trimmed compendium hits his/her knowledge-seeking mind.

**Kalu Uka**

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## Preface

SCHOLARS generally agree that research is the lifeblood of scholarship, the salt of the learning process and is central to the liberation and cultivation of the mind. Emenyi's *Intersection of Gendered Voices* is a quintessence of sound scholarship in deconstructing Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in the novel to apply it successfully to theatre. Her research explores the different voices in well-known selected works, integrating their reactions, their views and interactions by their utterances. She examines the characters as individuals engaged in a struggle of performance within the parameters of spontaneous action.

This work effectively and refreshingly brings four giant writers from two continents under one critical umbrella: Wole Soyinka and Zulu Sofola of Nigeria, Africa and LeRoi Jones and Lorraine Hansberry of the U.S.A. The research builds bridges across the ocean, across the chasms of racism and sexism, across cultural and traditional issues and values.

Emenyi is to be commended for the courage in tackling a little known but very important theory and the novelty of applying it to a different genre. This opens the way to many other possibilities, to new insights, fresh ideas and visions. It is remarkable for the balance it strikes in the rapprochement between Africa and Blacks in Diaspora.

*Intersection of Gendered Voices* is the product of a thorough and painstaking research. It is the result of enormous

courage and critical maturity. It brings to attention an emerging and serious critic in the area of African and Afro-American literature. It is a voice with strong potentials for growth in quantitative and qualitative scholarship.

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