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LIGNE EDITORIALE DE PARTICIP'ACTION

Particip'Action est une revue scientifique. Les textes que nous acceptons en français, anglais, allemand ou en espagnol sont sélectionnés par le comité scientifique et de lecture en raison de leur originalité, des intérêts qu'ils présentent aux plans africain et international et de leur rigueur scientifique. Les articles que notre revue publie doivent respecter les normes éditoriales suivantes :

1.1 Soumission d'un article

La Revue *Particip'Action* reçoit les projets de publication par voie électronique. Ceci permet de réduire les coûts d'opération et d'accélérer le processus de réception, de traitement et de mise en ligne de la revue. Les articles doivent être soumis à l'adresse suivante (ou conjointement) : participaction1@gmail.com

1.2 L'originalité des articles

La revue publie des articles qui ne sont pas encore publiés ou diffusés. Le contenu des articles ne doit pas porter atteinte à la vie privée d'une personne physique ou morale. Nous encourageons une démarche éthique et le professionnalisme chez les auteurs.

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L'auteur d'un article est tenu de présenter son texte dans un seul document et en respectant les critères suivants :

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Un titre qui indique clairement le sujet de l'article, n'excédant pas 25 mots.

Nom de l'auteur (obligatoire)

Le prénom et le nom de ou des auteurs (es)

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Une courte présentation en note de bas de page des auteurs (es) ne devant pas dépasser 100 mots par auteur. On doit y retrouver obligatoirement le nom de l'auteur, le nom de l'institution d'origine, le statut professionnel et l'organisation dont il relève, et enfin, les adresses de courrier électronique du ou des auteurs. L'auteur peut aussi énumérer ses principaux champs de recherche et ses principales publications. La revue ne s'engage toutefois pas à diffuser tous ces éléments.

Résumé de l'article (obligatoire)

Un résumé de l'article ne doit pas dépasser 160 mots. Le résumé doit être à la fois en français et en anglais (police Times new roman, taille 12, interligne 1,15).

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Une liste de cinq mots clés maximum décrivant l'objet de l'article.

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-La structure d'un article, doit être conforme aux règles de rédaction scientifique, selon que l'article est une contribution théorique ou résulte d'une recherche de terrain.

-La structure d'un article scientifique en lettres et sciences humaines se présente comme suit :

- Pour un article qui est une contribution théorique et fondamentale :

Introduction (justification du sujet, problématique, hypothèses/objectifs scientifiques, approche), Développement articulé, Conclusion, Bibliographie.

- Pour un article qui résulte d'une recherche de terrain :

Titre,

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Résumé en français. Mots-clés, Abstract, Keywords,

Introduction, Méthodologie, Résultats et Discussion, Conclusion, Bibliographie.

Par exemple : Les articles conformes aux normes de présentation, doivent contenir les rubriques suivantes : introduction, problématique de l'étude, méthodologie adoptée, résultats de la recherche, perspectives pour recherche, conclusions, références bibliographiques.

Tout l'article ne doit dépasser 17 pages,

Police Times new roman, taille 12 et interligne 1,5 (maximum 30 000 mots). La revue *Particip'Action* permet l'usage de notes de bas de page pour ajouter des précisions au texte. Mais afin de ne pas alourdir la lecture et d'aller à l'essentiel, il est recommandé de **faire le moins possible usage des notes (10 notes de bas de page au maximum par article).**

- A l'exception de l'introduction, de la conclusion, de la bibliographie, les articulations d'un article doivent être titrées, et numérotées par des chiffres (**exemples : 1. ; 1.1. ; 1.2 ; 2. ; 2.2. ; 2.2.1 ; 2.2.2. ; 3. ; etc.).**

Les passages cités sont présentés en romain et entre guillemets. Lorsque la phrase citant et la citation dépassent trois lignes, il faut aller à la ligne, pour présenter la citation (interligne 1) en romain et en retrait, en diminuant la taille de police d'un point. Insérer la pagination et ne pas insérer d'information autre que le numéro de page dans l'en-tête et éviter les pieds de page.

Les figures et les tableaux doivent être intégrés au texte et présentés avec des marges d'au moins six centimètres à droite et à gauche. Les caractères dans ces figures et tableaux doivent aussi être en Times 12. Figures et tableaux doivent avoir chacun(e) un titre.

Les citations dans le corps du texte doivent être indiquées par un retrait avec tabulation 1 cm et le texte mis en taille 11.

Les références de citations sont intégrées au texte citant, selon les cas, de la façon suivante :

- (Initiale (s) du Prénom ou des Prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'Auteur, année de publication, pages citées) ; - Initiale (s) du Prénom ou des Prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'Auteur (année de publication, pages citées). Exemples :

- En effet, le but poursuivi par **M. Ascher (1998, p. 223)**, est « d'élargir l'histoire des mathématiques de telle sorte qu'elle acquière une perspective multiculturelle et globale (...), d'accroître le domaine des mathématiques : alors qu'elle s'est pour l'essentiel occupée du groupe professionnel occidental que l'on appelle les mathématiciens (...) ».

- Pour dire plus amplement ce qu'est cette capacité de la société civile, qui dans son déploiement effectif, atteste qu'elle peut porter le développement et l'histoire, S. B. Diagne (1991, p. 2) écrit :

Qu'on ne s'y trompe pas : de toute manière, les populations ont toujours su opposer à la philosophie de l'encadrement et à son volontarisme leurs propres stratégies de contournements. Celles-là, par exemple, sont lisibles dans le dynamisme, ou à tout le moins, dans la créativité dont sait preuve ce que l'on désigne sous le nom de secteur informel et à qui il faudra donner l'appellation positive d'économie populaire.

- Le philosophe ivoirien a raison, dans une certaine mesure, de lire, dans ce choc déstabilisateur, le processus du sous-développement. Ainsi qu'il le dit :

le processus du sous-développement résultant de ce choc est vécu concrètement par les populations concernées comme une crise globale : crise socio-économique (exploitation brutale, chômage permanent, exode accéléré et douloureux), mais aussi crise socio-culturelle et de civilisation traduisant une impréparation sociohistorique et une inadéquation des cultures et des comportements humains aux formes de vie imposées par les technologies étrangères. (S. Diakité, 1985, p. 105).

Pour les articles de deux ou trois auteurs, noter les initiales des prénoms, les noms et suivis de l'année (J. Batee et D. Maate, 2004 ou K. Moote, A. Pooul et E. Polim, 2000). Pour les articles ou ouvrages collectifs de plus de trois auteurs noter les initiales des prénoms, le nom du premier auteur et la mention "et al" (F. Loom et al, 2003). Lorsque plusieurs références sont utilisées pour la même information, celles-ci doivent être mises en ordre chronologique (R. Gool, 1998 et M. Goti, 2006).

Les sources historiques, les références d'informations orales et les notes explicatives sont numérotées en série continue et présentées en bas de page.

Références bibliographiques (obligatoire)

Les divers éléments d'une référence bibliographique sont présentés comme suit : NOM et Prénom (s) de l'auteur, Année de publication, Zone titre, Lieu de publication, Zone Editeur, pages (p.) occupées par l'article dans la revue ou l'ouvrage collectif.

Dans la zone titre, le titre d'un article est présenté en romain et entre guillemets, celui d'un ouvrage, d'un mémoire ou d'une thèse, d'un rapport, d'une revue ou d'un journal est présenté en italique. Dans la zone Editeur, on indique la Maison d'édition (pour un ouvrage), le Nom et le numéro/volume de la revue (pour un article). Au cas où un ouvrage est une traduction et/ou une réédition, il faut préciser après le titre le nom du traducteur et/ou l'édition (ex : 2^{de} éd.).

Ne sont présentées dans les références bibliographiques que les références des documents cités. Les références bibliographiques sont présentées par ordre alphabétique des noms d'auteur. Il convient de prêter une attention particulière à la qualité de l'expression. Le Comité scientifique de la revue se réserve le droit de réviser les textes, de demander des modifications (mineures ou majeures) ou de rejeter l'article de manière définitive ou provisoire (si des corrections majeures doivent préalablement y être apportées). L'auteur est consulté préalablement à la diffusion de son article lorsque le Comité scientifique apporte des modifications. Si les corrections ne sont pas prises en compte par l'auteur, la direction de la revue *Particip'Action* se donne le droit de ne pas publier l'article.

AMIN Samir, 1996, *Les défis de la mondialisation*, Paris, Le Harmattan.

AUDARD Cathérine, 2009, *Qu'est-ce que le libéralisme ? Ethique, politique, société*, Paris, Gallimard.

BERGER Gaston, 1967, *L'homme moderne et son éducation*, Paris, PUF.

DIAGNE Souleymane Bachir, 2003, « Islam et philosophie. Leçons d'une rencontre », *Diogenes*, 202, p. 145-151.

DIAKITE Sidiki, 1985, *Violence technologique et développement. La question africaine du développement*, Paris, Le Harmattan.

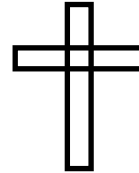
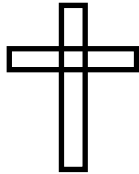
NB1 : Chaque auteur dont l'article est retenu pour publication dans la revue *Particip'Action* participe aux frais d'édition à raison de **55.000** francs CFA (soit **84 euros** ou **110** dollars US) par article et par numéro. Il reçoit, à titre gratuit, un tiré-à-part.

NB2 : La quête philosophique centrale de la revue *Particip'Action* reste : **Fluidité identitaire et construction du changement : approches pluri-et/ou transdisciplinaires.**

Les auteurs qui souhaitent se faire publier dans nos colonnes sont priés d'avoir cette philosophie comme fil directeur de leur réflexion.

La Rédaction

NE LES OUBLIONS PAS



L'année dernière, alors que le précédent numéro du ***Particip'Action*** était sous presses, nous avons appris avec beaucoup de peine le décès de notre très cher collègue et ami, le Professeur titulaire Taofiki KOUMAKPAÏ du département d'anglais de l'université d'Abomey Calavi au Bénin.

Cette année-ci, c'est également avec beaucoup de douleur que nous venons de perdre un autre très cher collègue et ami, le Professeur titulaire Serge GLITHO du département d'allemand de l'université de Lomé au Togo.

L'un et l'autre étaient titulaires d'un doctorat de troisième cycle et d'un doctorat d'Etat. Pendant de longues années, ils ont été des membres très appréciés du comité scientifique et de relecture de notre revue commune. Nous les remercions très sincèrement pour leur amitié et leur engagement.

Il s'agit de deux éminents enseignants-chercheurs qui, dans leurs domaines de spécialités, ont formé une relève solide et digne de confiance.

Gardons au plus profond de nos cœurs, la mémoire de leurs précieuses contributions au développement de nos deux pays.

Lomé, le 22 juillet 2022

Pour *Particip'Action*,

Pr K. M. NUBUKPO, Directeur de publication

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SEX, RACE, AND GENDER: HEALING THE CLEFT BODY IN PARKS'S *VENUS*

Yao Katamatou KOUMA*

Abstract

Sex, race, and gender remain topical issues in African American drama. Several playwrights have assessed their definitions, interconnections and mainstream ideas which mostly conflict individual perceptions. Likewise, S. Parks's *Venus* (1996) re-interrogates this conflicting relationship through a physical portrayal of the heroine. Her enormous posterior arouses curiosity, love, hate, sexual appetite, libidinal, and voyeuristic regards among the audience. Because of these differences, she becomes a prey of social pressure. The objective of this study is to show how the playwright counterbalances the traditional paradigms by redefining the terms in order to reconstruct the dismembered woman. In light of J-F. Lyotard's understanding of postmodernism, this article asserts that knowledge legitimacy is not the appanage of the socially privileged minority. It is the consequence of inclusive discourses between the elite and the marginalized citizens.

Keywords: sex, race, gender, postmodernism, female representation

Résumé

Le sexe, la race, et le genre restent des sujets d'actualité dans la littérature africaine américaine. Plusieurs dramaturges ont abordé leurs définitions, interrelations et la tendance générale qui s'opposent à la perception individuelle. Dans cette optique, S. Parks, dans *Venus* (1996), s'interroge sur cette relation conflictuelle à travers le portrait physique de l'héroïne. Son énorme postérieur suscite la curiosité, l'amour, la haine, l'appétit sexuel, des regards voyeuristes chez le public. Ainsi elle est devenue une proie de la pression sociale. L'objectif de cette étude est de montrer comment la dramaturge contrebalance les paradigmes traditionnels en redéfinissant les termes afin de reconstruire l'image défigurée de la femme. À la lumière de la théorie postmoderniste de J-F. Lyotard, cet article souligne que la légitimité de la connaissance n'est pas l'apanage de la

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minorité privilégiée. Elle est la conséquence des discussions inclusives entre l'élite et les citoyens marginalisés.

Mots-clés : sexe, race, genre, postmodernisme représentation féminine

Introduction

The issue of race, as perceived in the twentieth century and before, has generated a new social pressure in the eve of the twenty-first century. Grounded in biblical teachings, the first wave of scholarly works was sustained by the binary oppositional conceptions of 'God' and 'Satan', 'good' and 'evil' and the story of "the outward race and the stock of Abraham" (M. Banton, 2018, p.11). Several landmark works: J. C. Nott and G. R. Gliddon's *Types of Mankind* (1854, p.68), J. Milton's *The Paradise Lost* (2005, p.10), and C. Lamb's *The Essays of Elia and Eliana* (2013, p.30) emphasize the two distinctive groups: the far superior and the inferior people. This gap was widened, when the second wave of prominent scientists and philosophers methodically reassessed the human species by strictly examining bodily diversities. At that very moment, Saartje Baartman arrived in Europe and brought the scientific research process to the highest point. As a result, due to her physical traits, she was considered an exotic freak, who, together with animals, was exhibited in Dunlop's museum. (A. Heilmann, and M. Llewellyn, 2010, p.123). After her death, the anatomist G. Cuvier, who dissected her body, published *Le règne animal* (1817) referring to hereditary varieties as races. His conclusion was further used by R. Knox (1850, p.145), and C. Darwin (1871, p.215) who meant to "apply these generally-admitted principles to the races of man". Consequently, human beings are sorted out on the basis of their bodily, sexual and gendered diverseness. Disconcerted, African Americans through various creative works respond to this hasty perception of race. Among them is the playwright S. Parks, who in order to refute these established principles, published *Venus* (1996) fictionalizing Baartman's story. Through

the character of The Baron Docteur, representing G. Cuvier in the play, Parks inveighs against the scientific approaches and exposes their weaknesses. Several scholars: J. Robinson (2015), S. Garrett, (2010), L. S. Warner (2008) and many more have explored how Parks (J. L. Young, 2014, p.700) “characterizes Baartman as a troubled woman, a sex object [...]”. This article is a continuum of the several critical reactions to Baartman’s visitation. It goes beyond the objectification discourses, to show how Parks reconstructs the cleft body in order to reexamine dialectically the garbled concepts of race, sex and gender. Postmodernism is the main literary tool used here. J-F. Lyotard (1984, p. 60), best known for his articulation of postmodernism, believes that faith in the established paradigms has ebbed, and thus, knowledge has had to seek its legitimation not universally, but locally. This means that the re-localization of the terms: sex, race, and gender, sheds more light on the binary oppositions of the oppressive anatomist’s ideologies and Baartman’s iconoclastic posture. The methodological approach consists of considering the encounter between Baartman and the anatomists, a form of dialog that permits to collect and examine behavioral data used by both parties to sustain their perception of race, sex and gender. This study is structured around two sections. The first section examines the dominating fallacious approaches invented by the eight anatomists to oppress the marginal, whereas the second explores Baartman’s understanding of the terms that conflicts the former.

1. The Fallacious Approaches

In Parks’s *Venus*, Baartman’s body has been misunderstood. It is considered the hapless guinea pig of an ingenious anthropometrical study conducted by eight anatomists, to incubate oppressive racial, sexual and gendered politics.

1.1. The Epitome of an Inferior Race

The Baron Docteur's racial politics is grounded in the findings of Baartman's facial exploration. From the anatomists' perspective, the data recorded reveals a new human species. The Baron reports: "The Face: Remarkable for its great breadth and flatness presenting to me resemblances to Mongolian and Simian (previously noted by several other scholars)" (S. Parks, 1996, p.93). The heroine's facial flatness and largeness are labelled abnormal. The reason is that:

[T]he Face outline: being broad in the *malar* region contrasting above the forehead but tapering suddenly to form a narrow chin. The great space between the eyes was 1.8: Remarkable.

[...] eyelids horizontal apertures were a full. 95 (...) dark brown

[...] the nose broad and much depressed...Nostrils...were patulous, of regular oval form: 5 in length and 3 in breadth *Septum Narium* short and broad.

[...] Aperture of mouth: 1.7 inches in width with lips

[...] Ear 2.3 in its vertical diameter the lobe quite underdeveloped (S. Parks, 1996, p. 93).

The above quotation highlights some of Baartman's corporal sizes. The examination of the given references, compared to the average of a normal human face size, reveals some gaps. For example, her inter-pupillary breadth is 1.8, whereas the mean is 2.2. Her nostrils distance is 5 in length and 3 in breadth while according to Z. Heidari, et. al. (2009, p. 91), the average lengths are "1.8 length, 1.3 breadth". P. Taquet (2019, p. 190) underscores that the annotation of her ears and skull is amazingly similar to that of a monkey. Likewise, R. Knox (1850, p.157) believes, the Hottentot's "face is set on like a baboon's". These frontal patterns illustrate her classification as a beast and the anthropometrical exploration is considered an efficient scientific method that testifies to the existence of a new human race so far undiscovered. In addition to the facial data, her muscular system is also meticulously examined and compared to other inferior primates'. The character of The Baron Docteur says:

The condition of the *Flexor brevis digitorum pedis* presented rather anomalous characters it might be said to form 2 distinct muscles. This

condition interests us because of the well-known fact that in the chimpanzee, and all inferior Primates, a considerable portion of this muscle always arises from the long flexor tendon while in man alone the whole of it commonly takes origin from the *Os calcis* (S. Parks, 1996, p. 97).

The anatomists explain that Baartman's muscular system is beast-like, because her *Flexor brevis digitorum pedis* is surprisingly composed of two distinct muscles similar to a chimpanzee's. Her typically bestial muscular system becomes the irrational argument used to maintain her in chains. The literary critic J. L. Young (2014, p. 703) comments that "The Hottentot was produced like a wild beast, and ordered to move backwards and forwards and come out and go into her cage, more like a bear on a chain than a human being". Her bodily differences are recorded as the principal features of her odd race. C. Craig and P. Scully (2009, p.3) believe that "The Hottentot Venus confirmed to Europeans the inferiority of the Hottentot and people with dark skins." For them, she epitomizes the racial otherness that has climaxed the scientific classification of the human species. Through the postmodernist lens by J-F. Lyotard (1984, p.8), the conclusion to this investigation is considered scientific knowledge legitimated by a scientific community. Because of this scientists' legitimacy, their assumption (B. Sweetman, 2005, p. 140) "quickly motivates a political agenda" and becomes an oppressive mindset.

1.2. Mythicizing the Sexual Identity

The anatomists' anthropometrical assessment of Baartman's private parts: breast, buttocks and vagina, constitutes a pretext to mythicize her sexual identity and gender role. She is not clearly identified as an ordinary woman, but a mere female creature. She is a primitive, amorphous and ugly living thing. It reads:

The female Hottentot under my care has the usual falling off of appearance common in women of 30 years old. Her *mammae* are

flaccid and elongated [...] Her breasts she usually lifted and tightened beneath the middle part of her dress, but, left free, they bulkily and terminated obliquely in a blackish areola about 1 and ½ inches in diameter pitted with radiating wrinkles, near the center of what was a nipple so flattened and obliterated as to be barely visible... (S. Parks, 1996, p.109)

Her *mammæ* are villainous, shapeless, and monstrous that predispose her to savage sexual drives. C. Craig and P. Scully (2009, p.33) opine that the scientists occasionally discussed the Hottentot's breasts, but increasingly they focused on the buttocks and genitalia. They held that the more primitive the mammal, the more pronounced the genitalia and the bodily enticements to procreation. In other words, the anatomists saw hypersexuality and uncontrolled sexual impulse in the female Hottentot's body. They assume that this complex sexual predisposition illustrates her weird physiology and unmanageable sexual cravings. The bulky genitals and vagina lips justify the misleading reasons which the anatomists used to speculate on the mystery of her sexual identity. By doing so, they intend to arouse curiosity among people:

The *labia majora* were small. The clitoris sized moderate to large and had a well-developed prepuce all situated far more conspicuously than in the European female...the remarkable development of the *labia minora* which heretofore is so general a characteristic of the Hottentot or Bushman race was so sufficiently well marked that it well distinguished itself from those of any of the ordinary varieties of the human species. (S. Parks, 1996, p. 149)

According to the anatomists, Baartman's gifted biological potentialities are clear-cut from the ordinary types. This renders her sexual identity enigmatic. Hence, they drag the voyeuristic audience to the amazing discovery to explore and acknowledge her sexual deviation: "She was surrounded by many persons, some *females*! One pinched her, another walked round her, one gentleman *poked* her with his cane, uh *lady* used her parasol to see if al was, as she called it, '*natural*'" (S. Parks, 1996, p. 69). The lady, in this excerpt, stands for people who question Baartman's

puzzling sexual identity because they cannot believe that Baartman is endowed with a normal female sex. Since the scientists' definition is known as the norm, any abnormal form is alienated. When elaborating on postmodern perspectives on sex, Helen K. Gediman (2016, p. 1061) juxtaposes the anatomists' vision to Freud's awry assumption that:

all that is active is masculine; libido is always active; therefore libido is always masculine... sexual desires are masculine; therefore women with sexual desire are masculine and not feminine. In the early days of psychoanalysis, since there was no such thing as feminine libido, all female sexuality was believed to be patterned on a putative active male libido. Since passivity was equated with the feminine and activity with the masculine, women who are active and empowered had to be regarded as masculine.

That quotation uncovers the scientists' short mindedness and archaic discourse on female sex that all women are sexually passive. Any unlike behavior is classified as abnormality. Thus, because of her highly pronounced sexuality, Venus Hottentot is humiliated under the fallacious politics established by the privileged social class.

1.3. The Hypersexual Dolly

Based on her racial and sexual enigma, Baartman's gender role throughout the play is meticulously framed and imposed on her. She is made a sexual object and commodity. Her pathologic body is transformed into a prey of street sexual predators. Parks explains that she is a (J. Young, 2014, p.700) "troubled woman, a sex object" in the hands of unblushing scientists. She is dispossessed of her own body and made a sexual doll, a merchandise for lucrative marketing. She is the receptacle for the audience's irresistible sexual drives. S. Gilman (2010, p. 21) observes that "[S]he is perceived as the embodiment of sexuality and of all that is associated with sexuality, disease as well as passion". She is made a prostitute as most of the nineteenth century women. S. Gilman (1985, p.228-231) explains that:

By the eighteenth century, the sexuality of the black, both male and female, becomes an icon for deviant sexuality in general...the black figure appears almost always paired with a white figure of the opposite sex. By the nineteenth century...The relationship between the sexuality of the black women and that of scientific discourse concerning the nature of black female sexuality is examined. Buffon commented on the lascivious, apelike sexual appetite of the black, [...] He stated that this animallike sexual appetite went so far to lead black women to copulate with apes. The black female thus comes to serve as an icon for black sexuality in general.

The author highlights the scientific discourse on the nature of black female sexuality. Her extraordinary sexual desire, as compared to white female sexuality seen as the norm, is labeled apelike. This is the stereotypical conceptualization of black women sexuality imposed on Baartman. b. hooks (2015 p.104) believes Sarah is reduced to a mere spectacle, to entertain the audience which paid to see her buttocks and fantasized about the uniqueness of her genitalia. Clearly, b. hooks's observation delineates Venus's role as a sexual toy. S. Maurer (2000, p. 38). sheds much light that Baartman's trial has rather reinforced the deceptive image of black women because "[c]ultural conceptions of black women as sexually unrestrained were further developed...they were viewed as both sexually available and morally impure...they were referred to in terms of their sexuality and ability to reproduce." Consequently, the anatomists' knowledge of race, sex and gender is based on irrational approaches, limited to hasty bodily observations with preconceived ideas. The imposing politics is simply a sophistic discourse, because Baartman's corporal differences should not be considered abnormalities but the icon of human nature as a whole.

2. The Iconoclastic Perspectives

J-F. Lyotard (1984, p.7) made an insightful observation that: "Scientific knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge [...]". This statement discredits any totalitarian and one-

dimensional scientific view. Without any confrontation with another contradictory idea, the eight anatomists' one-sided conception of race, sex and gender throughout the play is illegitimate. Apart from their iconic visions, the marginalized pseudo-woman who has been commoditized has her own opinion about her own body. That is the (M. Ghasemi, 2016, p.14) “mininarrative” which results from her personal impressions, inner feelings, dreams, emotions, expressive regard and relationships with other people. The examination of her corporal, in addition to her inner state, focusing on the emotional sensibilities, denies entirely the scientists' hegemony.

2.1. The Uniqueness of the Human Race

Human language, owing to its richness, remains a key feature of human racial uniqueness. The literary scholars, C. Craig and S. Pamela (2009, p. 132-133.) note that:

Enlightenment intellectuals [...] had been fascinated by the place of the Hottentot in history and culture. Hottentots seemed to European philosophers to exist at the nexus of nature and culture...Naturalists and European philosophers wondered, did the Khoekhoe have language, considered to be the most basic gift distinguished man from beast and thus civilization from the rest of the animal kingdom? In short were they human?

Several European intellectuals, scientists and philosophers, failed to recognize the Hottentots' humanness, because they prejudicially concluded that their language was animal-like. Likewise, The Baron Docteur and his crew assert that Baartman is not a complete human being, but a wretched female creature because of her click language. However, the playwright counterattacks by endowing Baartman with attitudes to establish her full humanness. Apart from walking upright and reasoning, speaking is one of the most distinctive human skills among the living creatures that Baartman wonderfully possesses:

Our Anthropological scholars present will remember that although, while during her stay with us, she picked up uh bit of English, French and even Dutch all *patois*, the native language of this woman is said to have consisted entirely of an almost uninterrupted succession of clicks and explosives. (*Rest*) A language of *clicks*.... (S. Parks, 1996, p. 95)

Baartman is a multilingual woman. Maybe she is a hyper-polyglot person, because she can speak, in addition to her mother tongue, many European languages. Firstly, concerning her native click language, several linguists have examined its features. H. Tindall (1857, p.4) stresses that some missionaries have taken an interest in the Hottentot language, and have published several works on it. This means that Baartman's language comprises human linguistic characteristics that cannot be mistaken for non-human communication signs. T. Güldemann (2007, p. 10), one of the specialist scholars of click languages, sustains that clicks are human common speech sounds, and as phonemes they have a high functional load in some languages such as Khoe-Kwadi, and Tuu. His viewpoint shows that The Hottentot language is, like any other language, a cultural material that Venus carries on to Europe. It represents the conveyor of the native speakers' civilization. Secondly, Baartman is a brainy multilingual woman, because acquiring many European languages requires key intellectual abilities. I. Laka (2011, p.25) explains:

In fact, humans are distinctively and characteristically capable of learning, knowing and using more than one language, a trait that is unheard of in other species with communicative systems. Given this inherent feature of the human language faculty, linguistic diversity does not constitute an insurmountable obstacle in the path of human cooperation...

In light of that passage, if Baartman is capable of "learning, knowing and using more than one language", then she possesses the required human skills. She is even a (S. Parks, 1996, p.140) "splendid wife" who exposes her mental capacity by learning within a short period of time three foreign languages. Thus the human race is not limited to skin color and facial

anthropometrical analysis. It includes mental state and linguistic competences.

2.2. The Sexual Yoke

Baartman's sex is a tool to deconstruct the scientists' erroneous image of black women. It is employed to invalidate the assumption that (S. Gilman, 1985, p.225) "the Hottentot female remained the representative of the black female *in nuce*, the essence of the black, especially the sexualized black woman." Baartman's hypersexuality should not be connected to the bodily and racial patterns. Considering its complexity and elusiveness, sex may be used to shape gender, but more importantly, it embodies human debasement and debility.

Sex, as crafted in *Venus*, permits to distinguish a female from a male. After dissecting the Hottentot Venus's reproductive organ, the anatomists confirm that she is a female. Though they focus on the salient structure of (S. Parks, 1996, p. 148-149) the uterus, the labia, the clitoris, the prepuce, the pudendum... to mythicize her sex, the recognition of her femaleness is not linked to the gigantic form of her genitalia. M. Goodwin (2011, p.772) believes that biological sex organizes itself into male/female regardless racial diversities. Thus, Parks uses sex to exhibit the hapless plight of human beings under sexual cravings. For example, Baartman's encounter with the public and The Baron Docteur uncovers human frailty under the yoke of sex:

I am a friend of yrs from way back. Im sure you remember at least my face we went to school together...I must cut straight to the point:
In yr liaison with that Negress, Sir, you disgrace yrself. Not to mention the pain yr causing sweet lovely wife. A year in bed is plenty, Sir. Surely yve tired of her heathen charms by now. (S. Parks, 1996, p. 113)

The Baron Docteur's hypersexuality is overtly unveiled when he fails to control his sexual appetite before the Hottentot Venus's show. Even though he labels her as a wild female creature, he cannot hide his animal-like lust. In the quotation above, his friend writes in the letter sent to him that he disgraced himself when having sexual intercours with Venus. At this point, Parks highlights how sex breaks the social barriers to put human beings at the same level irrespective of their forms, color and social hierarchy. M. Foucault (1976, p. 15.) stresses that sex reveals to people their real nature and dismantles the social order. In their quest for sexual pleasure, the infatuated couple is brought to an amorous discussion. When reading this episode from a postmodernist perspective, sex appears as a tool that challenges the rigid discourses embodied by The Baron Docteur. Therefore Baartman is not the only sexually enslaved creature, because the great chain also symbolizes a sexual chain on the neck of The Baron Docteur who haplessly drags it along.

2.3. The Gender Fluidity

Baartman represents one of the ideal black female characters in Parks's drama. Due to her resilience, she is able to challenge the established gender role. Gender is not shaped by race. It may be biased by sex, however, sex does not foreordain its destiny. Unlike race and sex, gender is fluid, controllable and essentially socially constructed. This means that being a black female is intractable, but it is also unconnected to one's gender and social status.

To convey her iconoclastic viewpoint on gender policy, Parks equips the heroine with bodily forms and mental skills far superior to all the others'. Not only is Baartman brainy, talented and splendid, but also she is physically strong. These assets constitute the clout used in entrepreneurship to redefine her own gender role and social class. She said: "Im leaving then (...) Home (...) I'll set up a shop and show myself. Be my own Boss make

my own mint.” (S. Parks, 1996, p.54-55). At this juncture, the playwright crafts the epitome of the ideal female gender. She displays another image of the character rising from the ashes. L. Vanmarsnille (2009, p.12) elaborates that Parks’s representation of The Hottentot Venus resists exploitation, because The Mother Showman takes part in the colonial discourse by displaying her in a cage as if she were not a human. However, Baartman overcomes this objectification by taking her fate into her own hands. Her determination conveys a provocative feminist message addressed to all abused women, especially black women. In this vein, J. Joseph (2008, p.14) opines that “[...] Venus is ambitious, bold, intelligent... She refuses to be a victim [...]”. Unlike several critics’ expectations, Parks reveals Baartman’s real facet. In other words, the play is not uniquely about a black woman’s misfortunes, but it rather unveils the resurrection of a dead woman, entombed by haughty social norms. The heroine refuses to surrender pathetically to the anatomists’ gender biased policy. In her conversation with The Chorus of the Court, Baartman (S. Parks, 1996, p.76) said: “To hide yr shame is evil. I show mine. Would you like to see?” This speech displays her project to be at the forefront to waking up women from their torpidity. She believes they must fight down any sort of violence and bias against them. By showing her shame, The Hottentot Venus exposes women’s plight in a patriarchal society, but more importantly, resolves to be the architect of her own destiny. She believes the shame (race and sex) is not anything to be hidden, it is uncontainable and lawless. Thus it does not hold back her entrepreneurial project. From a postmodernist perspective, her nonconformist stance comes as a beam of light that interrogates the traditional values. As quoted by P. Spivakovsky (2015, p.1362) the postmodernist scholar P. Sloterdijk insightfully had a point when he said that: “from the dawn of time, human sentiment has regarded the old as the true, the new always as something questionable. This *archaic* feeling for truth had to be subdued by enlightenment, before we could see the new as

the truth”. The conservativists must accept challenges from the marginalized people. S. Parks (2016, p. 11) believes, they must see themselves in the other, let them in, by letting the other in, they make room for themselves. So it's like a win-win. Therefore, the characterization of Baartman meets the playwright's expectation, because she is a serious woman, who takes herself seriously (S. Parks, 2016, p. 8) albeit the adversities.

Conclusion

This study has shown how S. Parks revivifies the anatomized body of Baartman by reexamining dialectically the concepts of race, sex and gender. Unlike several scholarly works, the essay goes beyond the subjugation and commodification of the Hottentot Venus to explore the heroine's resilience and determination to fight the oppressive traditional values. In light of the postmodernist theory, as defined by J-F. Lyotard, the investigation revealed that the eight scientists' conception of race, sex and gender is grounded in a fallacious anthropometrical study of Baartman's body. And the results have been used as an alibi to institutionalize racial, sexist and gendered discriminative politics. From another angle, Baartman's body unveils extraordinary physical and mental assets that enable her to repossess her body and to reconstruct her own destiny. The Hottentot Venus is not a wretched female creature who is complicit in her objectification. Rather, she symbolizes a woman warrior fighting for freedom and gender equity in an oppressive patriarchal society.

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