

Chapter 26

Queen Bee and Her Female Subordinate in Ifeoma Okoye's "Between Women": An Intra-Gendered Discourse

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ABSTRACT

A significant number of studies have proven that women in the African cultural milieu are not only the oppressed but also are the sustainers of their own oppression. Some scholars have captured the prevalent crisis between wives and their mothers in law. Not much, however, has been written on abhorring intragender relationships between some female domestic servants and their mistresses. Using the content analysis approach of qualitative research method and the theory of Focus feminism, the chapter, therefore, studies Ifeoma Okoye's "Between Women" to highlight the daily routine activities of the domestic servant, her working hours, feeding pattern, and remuneration. These may provide insights into the type of relationships that exist between the mistress and her domestic servant. The study reveals that a desired gender justice has not been achieved. The mistress has not used her good offices to foster a fellow woman. It recommends a more harmonious intragender co-existence amongst women.

INTRODUCTION

In most patriarchal societies, the best liabilities of women incorporate giving, securing and nursing first their young siblings, their life partner, their children and grandchildren. Inconsequential female seldom participates collectively; one lady's prosperity carries little advantage to the female community. High accomplishing ladies have minimal motivator to put resources into different ladies, so most ladies benefit from rebuffing endeavoring peers (Benenson, 2003). She also maintained that apart from a few selected friends, ladies are prime contenders for physical assets, mates or statuses. Do women really underestimate their fellow women? Or then again would they say they are being used? What is the relationship

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between effective female managers and their subordinates? Do some female leaders depict queen bee disposition? What is a queen bee syndrome all about?

Some psychologists at the University of Michigan allude to ladies in an important or influential position, who treat other female subordinate more critically, as sovereign queen bees. "Sovereign queen bee", is commonly used to refer to a grown-up female honey bee that lives in a hive, generally the mother of the multitude of honey bees in the bee hive. It is uncommonly taken care of to turn out to be physically mature. A lady who acts as though she is the main individual in a specific field is likewise considered a queen bee. For example, Margaret Thatcher, the U. K's first female Prime Minister has been presumed a sovereign queen bee for not promoting the profession of ladies in her bureau. Rather than going about as coaches, some effective female supervisors pull up the stepping stool behind them on the grounds that, most likely, they see different ladies as threats. An effective lady, who doesn't utilize her great workplaces to help ladies advance or sabotages her female partners, is a sovereign queen bee. Sovereign queen practices are generally set off in male dominated societies in which women are debased (BBC News, 2018).

Baykal et al (2020), in their research "Queen Bee Syndrome: A Modern Dilemma of Working Women and its Effects on Turnover Intentions", examine the Turkish white-collar women workers and the possible effect of queen bee syndrome on turnover intentions. The person-organization fit theory is adopted for the study. The research reveals that the queen bees consciously stay away from the female subordinates and make life and workplace environment difficult for them. They conclude that queen bee attitudes result to higher levels of inconveniences that may lead to turnover intentions (p.175). Despite the findings, Baykal et al (2020), however, add that not all women in leadership positions are queen bees. They maintain that "some women in higher management positions promote and motivate subordinate women and they serve as a role model for them" (p.167). In most African societies for instance, gender stereotypes suggest leadership to be a masculine and unfeminine trait (Baird, 1976). At times similar leadership style may be evaluated differently for men and women (Bartol and Butterfield, 1976). Based on some of these skewed perceptions, some high-achieving women who display "extreme competence or success in their professional sphere" may be tagged queen bees. It may be necessary to note that "a successful performance of women (as a typically male task) is not primarily attributed to their ability but to chances, extraordinary effort or even cheating, whereas men with the same achievement are simply seen as competent" (Deaux, 1976, p.318). The average female boss is afraid of being thought weak or seen as a woman rather than a boss. She detests being perceived with feminine traits who unlike the male boss is expected to be understanding and compassionate. Males seem to be rated higher for leadership (Rosen et al, 1973) even when the women's leadership qualities are more favorable. The female bosses have higher expectations for effective and successful leadership (Garland et al, 1982) and as a result, they tend to "display such stereotypically masculine behaviors" (Baril et al, 1989). This may be why, (Rosen and Jerdee, 1973) feels that the evaluation of female leaders is purely based on expectations and perceptions.

The above assumptions, nevertheless, are refuted by (Sobczak 2018) in her research "The Queen Bee Syndrome. The Paradox of Women Discrimination on the Labor Market". She argues that queen bee phenomenon is prevalent. The queen bees, according to her, exhibit similar patterns of behaviors; behaving more like men by being domineering, and emphasizing how they are different from other women (p.57). She laments that the queen bee syndrome leads to gender discrimination in the workplace. The queen bees have weak bonds with their female subordinate and like to fraternize more with the women in high-ranking positions (Shepperd and Aquino, 2013). In confirmation, Cawon et al, 1998, support

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