

Equality in Maths and Genre

In maths, equality signifies that a relationship between two entities have the same value. For instance, x might be equal to y ($x = y$). Right? OK. To complicate things a little, the entities might themselves be more intricate BUT still equal. Take for example, $(3 + 2) = (7 - 2)$. Last but not least, you could also reverse the equations as follows: $y = x$ or $(7 - 2) = (3 + 2)$; but the equality of the entities would remain. The equal sign is therefore a relational symbol.

Unlike plus, minus, multiply etc. which are associated with actions and gradings, the equal sign only communicates a *relationship* between entities, and one of equal value. In other words, it does not communicate that an entity is greater, lesser, weaker, stronger, or anything of that nature. Certainly, it does not insist that the entities must be clones.

Let's repeat that: equality does not necessarily mean sameness, it means the same value.

Of course, equality is not only mathematical, it is also cultural and psychological. In Nigeria, women and men do not have the same value according to the law. But even in countries where the law grants the genders equal rights, such as the Scandinavian nations, women and men still do not necessarily enjoy their equal status due to cultural denigration.

But, to make a pun, let's go back to square one. On equality day, let us remember what we were already taught as five-year olds.

Heck, let's end with a mathematical equation explaining the feminist raison d'être:

$$\text{If } \text{♂} = \text{♀} \text{ then } \text{♂} = \text{♀} \neq \text{♂} \approx \text{♀} \text{ or } \text{♂} \geq \text{♀} \text{ or } \text{♂} \equiv \text{♀} \text{ or } \text{♂♂♂♂♂♂♂♂♂♂♂} = \text{♀}$$

Bet 10K, or £20, that even a child can solve it.

Hi! I'm a writer, blogger, columnist, lecturer and speaker and the founder of the feminist blog, [MsAfropolitan](#), which connects feminism to contemporary culture from an Africa-centred perspective. I've been listed alongside Michelle Obama and Angelina Jolie as one of "twelve women changing the world" by ELLE and my work has been used as a case study at universities around the world..