

NAME: UGWUJA CHARLES ONYEDIKA

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TOPIC: A PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MOLIÈRE'S TARTUFFE AND ,THE LION AND THE JEWEL BY WOLE SOYINKA

INTRODUCTION

Many indeed have tried to look at the presentation of Gender and Sexuality in any two modern comic works, according to their own perspective, orientation and point of view of the subject matter. However, I will love to look at it from this dimension, exploring it separately but jointly.

Definition of Terms

Gender: According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia Dictionary, Gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, [masculinity](#) and [femininity](#). Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological [sex](#) (i.e. the state of being male, female or an [intersex](#) variation which may complicate [sex assignment](#)), sex-based [social structures](#) (including [gender roles](#) and other [social roles](#)), or [gender identity](#).

Sexuality: The afore mentioned dictionary, equally defines it as, the quality of being sexual, or the way people experience and express themselves as sexual beings. This involves [biological](#), [erotic](#), [physical](#), [emotional](#), [social](#), or [spiritual](#) feelings and behaviours. However, having given the definition of the above concepts, we shall be focussing on the aspect of gender as characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, [masculinity](#) and [femininity](#) and its role , likewise sexuality as it has to do with the quality of being sexual, or the way people experience and express themselves as sexual beings, in each of the works we are going to make use of, in the course of the discourse

A PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MOLIÈRE'S TARTUFFE AND LION AND THE JEWEL BY WOLE SOYINKA RESPECTIVELY

This section focuses on the role of Men as belonging to the masculinity and the women as falling under the femininity class, as it has to do with gender and on the other hand, the way they experience and express themselves as sexual beings which pertains to sexuality with a close look at Molière's Tartuffe and Lion and The Jewel by Wole Soyinka Respectively.

Nevertheless, the work Tartuffe, by Molière ,opens, presenting us with Madame Pernelle, Orgon's mother in her haste to live his son's house and her nagging attitude as a woman. She nags at virtually everybody in Orgon's house. This is witness in the way she criticizes Dorine, the maid, Damis, Mariane and even her flipote servant. In the play, she undertakes the role women who as are victims of religious hypocrites like Tartuffe. She

believes him so much, to be a true man of God, who has no evil or capable of doing any evil, such that she discredits any evil act people accuses him of in the play. Her believe in his good nature evidence in the following conversation between her, Damins and Dorine as the following line presents thus;

DAMIS: Your Monsieur Tartuffe is a blessed soul, no doubt—

MME. PERNELLE: He's a good man, and should be listened to; I can't bear, with patience, to hear him cavilled at by such a fool as you.

DORINE: If one were to hearken to him, and give in to his maxims, we could do nothing but what would be made a crime of; for the critical zealot controls everything.

MME. PERNELLE: And whatever he controls is well controlled. He would fain show you the way to Heaven; and my son ought to make you all love him.

Madame Pernelle religious attitude, believe and trust in Tartuffe, the fake and dubious man of God, continues to run in the play, towards its end, to the extent that she doubts his son, even when the family's plans to unveil the true personality her ideal man of God works out and the allegations against him proves true.

This the following lines presents thus;

MME. PERNELLE: What's all this? I hear terrible mysteries here.

ORGON: They are novelties that I am an eye-witness to; you see how finely I am fitted for my care. I kindly pick up a fellow in misery, entertain and treat him like my own brother, heap daily favours on him; I give him my daughter and my whole fortune; when at the same time the perfidious, infamous wretch forms the black design of seducing my wife. And not content with these base attempts, he dares to menace me with my own favours, and would make use of those advantages to my ruin which my too indiscreet good-nature put into his hands, to turn me out of my estate, which I made over to him, and to reduce me to that condition from which I rescued him.

MME. PERNELLE: I can never believe, son, he could commit so black an action.

However, Orgon's Mother, later finds out the truth that Tartuffe is truly a fake and religious hypocrite, when she witness Tartuffe exhibiting his true behaviour, which surprises her greatly and says this;

I am stunned, and am tumbling from the clouds.

On the other hand, Orgon, son to Madame pernelle, father of mariane and Damins and master of Dorine as a masculine with regards to gender, suffer the same fate of complete believe in the sincerity and honesty of Tartuffe, as a devout man of God, which later violates his expectations of what he expects of him, when he picks him, as a poor and wretched man from the street. Orgon in the play becomes an authoritative father and master, as a result of his ignorance of Tartuffe's real personality and character. He develops confidence in Tartuffe as a devout man of God, which turns him against his family's house hood, as result of his not believing anything his family says against Tartuffe as true, but only what the fake man of God

says as the truth. His believe, in the false nature of Tartuffe makes him to disown his son Damins, when he tells him, that, the former is making sexual advance to his wife Elmire. Orgons confidence in the false man of God, as man who owns the family, leads him to the act of forcing marine to marry Tartuffe, who is a betrothed of Valere as we find in Act ii, Sc ii. Orgon, goes to the extent of giving the right of inheritance of his house to Tartuffe. He is indeed, the initiator of most of the sexual harassment and scandal the women suffers in the play, as a result of his bringing in Tartuffe into his family and equally partaker of such suffering as we see towards the end of the play when Tartuffe turns against him as the play contains in Act v, Sc iv. Nevertheless, the role of Dorine as fearless maidservant, who plays the role of a mother, standing for what she believes is the right thing for Orgon's children, especially as it has to do with Mariane's Marriage to the false Tartuffe, even before her master Orgon.

Nevertheless, we shall be looking at sexuality, at this point of the discourse, as it has to do with the way people experience and express themselves as sexual beings, that is, the way people works to achieving their sexual desires. Tartuffe in the play is the character, I will be focussing on, as it has to do with sexuality, whose action towards this, runs in the play. The false holy man of God, in the first instance makes his sexual advances by wooing Elmire in Act iii, Sc iii, the wife of Orgon, telling her about his love for her, not considering the fact that, she is the wife of Orgon, who in the act of trying to help him from his penury accepts him as a member of his family. Moreover, he makes his sexual advances in full form, when Orgon and Elmire sets a trap for him in for the latter to prove her allegations against him, here, he touches Elmire in a sexual manner while Orgon hides under a table as the play contains in Act iv, Sc v. The about points are all, I can say for now, as it has to do with gender and sexuality in Moliere's play 'Tartuffe'.

However, as it has to do with *The lion and the Jewel*, by Wole Soyinka, I will be assessing the same role of Men as belonging to the masculinity and the women as falling under the femininity class, as it has to do with gender and on the other hand, and the way they experience and express themselves as sexual beings which pertains to sexuality. I will be looking at the role of men first, as belonging to masculinity as it has to do with gender stating from Baroka and then Lakunle. The antithesis to Lakunle, Baroka is a very impressive character in the play. He does not sounds like Lakunle, the chatterbox, rather through his actions, he proves himself as a man of action. Physically he is very strong and vigorous. His worldly wisdom keeps him as a head of the village for a long time. He keeps control the village under his rule; he isolates the commoners as far as possible from modern ideas, even modern transportation, like railways. In the first section of the play, "Morning" when the villagers enact the dance of the lost traveller, Baroka enters. Immediately all stop the play, all go down prostrate and kneeling with the greetings of 'Kabiyesi' and 'Baba'. Although the people mock him in the dance, they pay respect to the post he holds. In another scene, before entering the room of Baroka, his senior wife, Sadiku goes down on her knees at once and bows her head into her lap. It shows that even in home also, his people show their respectfulness to him. In the seduction scene, Sidi the young and mischievous girl, on seeing him in his house, she greets him, "Good day to the head" ("*The Lion and the Jewel*", 36).

According to the tradition of the society, the people consider him next to god, so they give much respect him at least for the post he holds, the Bale of the Village. The polygamous society gives importance to the Bale, it allows him to marry as many girls he can. Lakunle on the other hand Lakunle, who stands to represent “progress”, Lakunle treats himself to be their representative of the modern revolution against men like Bale and asserts what he considers a moral war. Lakunle, the semi-European, stands as a revolutionist village. However, as it pertains to the role of women as belonging to the feminine class, they perform a polygamous role as property that men can inherit. It is known that from both Christian and Islamic religions children and wives inherit the property of their father when he dies, but not the wives that the deceased person leaves behind. This Sadiku confirms, who tries her best to convince Sidi to marry her husband Baroka(the Bale) so that Sidi will be the last wife and when he dies she will be the first wife of the new Bale who inherits the deceased Bales property. Women also play the role of marriage march-makers. Not only marriage march makers but wives whose husbands are tired of them and their only importance is to find other wives for them, as in the case of Sadiku a wife of the Bale who almost throughout the play keeps ups and downs in order to woo Sidi for him. She really plays a very tremendous role in getting Sidi for the Bale, for instance, as is evidence in the following lines;

Sadiku: Well, will you be Baroka’sown Jewel?

Will you be his sweetest? Princess, soothing him on weary nights?

What answer shall I give my lord? (Soyinka1963: 20).

Nevertheless, as it has to do with sexuality, that is, the way people experience and express themselves as sexual beings, Sadiku makes the sexual advances on behalf of Baroka, by wooing Sidi and equally through her spread of the news of Baroka’s impotency, which finally entraps her, giving Baroka, the opportunity to seduces her in his place or house, in this way, putting lakunle on a loser position in the play.

CONCLUSION

On an ending note, gender and sexuality are two concepts that are predominant in comic works, the above ones serving a perfect example.

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