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**REG NO: 2015/201200**

**DEPARTMENT: ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES**

**COURSE CODE: ELS 240**

**COURSE TITLE: MODERN COMEDY: MOLIERE TO SOYINKA**

## **The presentation of gender and sexuality in J.P Clark's *Wives Revolt* and Wole Soyinka's *Lion and the Jewel***

According to the dictionary, "gender is the state of being male or female (typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones)." In languages such as Latin, French, and German each of the classes (typically masculine, feminine, common, neuter) of nouns and pronouns distinguished by the different inflections which they have and which they require in words syntactically associated with them. Grammatical gender is only very loosely associated with natural distinctions of sex. Gender is a socially constructed definition of women and men. It is not the same as sex (biological characteristics of women and men) and it is not the same as women. Gender is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life.

Your sexuality is not defined by who you have sex with it is about how you feel and how you choose to identity yourself. Straight, attracted mostly to people of the opposite sex or gender. Gay, attracted mostly to people of the same sex or gender (used by guys, and often girls too).

In general terms, "sex" refers to the biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and genetic differences. "Gender" is more difficult to define but can refer to the role of a male or female in society (gender role), or an individual's concept of themselves (gender identity).

Gendered sexuality is the way in which gender and sexuality are often viewed as likened constructs, whereby the role of gender in an individual's life is informed by and impacts others' perceptions of their sexuality. That is, when we talk about gender, we are talking about the common state of being a male or female. And when talking about sexuality, we refer to it as the way the society sees or portray these genders.

So in J.P Clark's *Wives Revolt* and Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*, we are going to see the how some of the comedy writers portrays the roles of genders and sexuality, the discrimination of gender in the society and the reaction against it which shows the importance of women in the society. So, in discussion these concepts in these plays, we are taking them simultaneously. Wole Soyinka and J.P. Clark are famous writers that have depict the image of our society and tries to fight against them though, indirectly. So, we are going to start with J.P. Clark's *Wives Revolt* to touch how the male and female genders are presented.

In the J.P. Clark's *Wives revolt*, for example, both the male and female genders are subject to assumptions of heterosexuality. This is not to say that there are no very dramatic episodes in the play. The penultimate scene, in fact, is where the play truly comes alive for the first time, especially with the physical fight between Okoro and his wife. There is also the very effective visual of Okoro in the fourth Movement carrying a baby on his back. The problem here, however, would be how to make the baby act and cry according to script, except, again, we would have to resort to the use of a mechanical medium. One cannot help imagining that the play would have been a lot more effective if the playwright had adopted an Athol-Fugard-style narrative monologue interspersed with illustrative skits, a simulation of the television documentary. With the number of folkloric songs in this play (an asset) it would also have been possible for the playwright to adopt the Anansesem motif. As it is, however, the playwright relies heavily on dialogue which easily becomes unnatural as he forces in extraneous reference after extraneous reference without due regard for conversational coherence. This is the only way our playwright is able to bring in so many themes in such a short play. A list of the themes, which are mostly verbally-asserted rather than enacted, is given below, after an enunciation the major one.

The play also presents women as inferior gender ones in the society. In the play when the village sells the oil, the money is shares into three, the elders, the men and the women. This triggers a conflict or rather a protest from the side of the women that why not share the money into two whereby one part will go for the men and the other for the women. To agitate over the inferiority of the male gender over women, this question is asked, "Are the elders not part of the men?"

The play teaches that women are indispensable in society and ought to be treated with respect. The dialogues of Koko and her male-chauvinistic husband help to place in pejorative light a lot of the traditional African attitudes to women and women affairs. Early and polygamous marriages are implicitly criticized that the women are accused of witchcraft is significant since this is the same manner in which women in African societies are unjustly targeted during witch-hunts. The listings of female chores in Movement III show the subordination of women in society. Although the fire-making and water-fetching difficulties of Okoro and Idama are farcical, they do illustrate the importance of women in the African home. Their inevitability is making most clear when Okoro asks the crying baby he is backing if it wants to be breast-fed. and proceeds to rave at the poor child accusing it of failing to realize that “those with full breasts” have walked out of town (These instances, also, however, show that there is need for basic survival skills among men in African societies) The continuous reference to old girls (an attempt by the playwright to translate the pejorative 'emetogbe') indicates that there is a high rate of divorce in the society. Koko is used to very effectively describe and upbraid the injustice of African divorce, which discountenances all the contributions the wife has made to the building of the home as she is usually sent packing without alimony. In fact, her bride price has to be refunded by her family. Adultery attracts for the female threat of death by cutlass while it is condoned for males. The norm in African matrimony appears to be discontentment, bickering and recriminations. The in-laws do not help matters, being given to unconditional negative regard and expectations. These various examples and issues should be brought up and exhaustively treated during group study discussions, drawing, especially, on traditional experience.

The significant thing again in this play is the unsavoury consequences of the traditional condonation of gender discrimination in African societies. The events here re-enacted are true history but have, ofcourse, been creatively remoulded to succinctly convey the social lessons intended. An oil company had given monetary compensation to the Erhuwaren community for the despoilment of their land through oil exploration. The money was shared into three parts: one part to the elders, one part to the males and the third part to the females. The females, led by the wives, felt that the sharing was unfair, since all the elders were males (females, no matter how old they become are not admissible to the elder's council) they protested this inequity so stridently in a public meeting. When three men testified before the elders that their wives had started turning

into goats to harass law-abiding townsfolk, they were believed. Rather than appease the aggrieved women, therefore, the town ruler responded by banning all goats (a domestic animal mostly owned by women while men owned pigs) from the town. The women, therefore, decided to march in protest through a number of Ughievwen clan towns and ended up in Eyara, a traditional rival town in the creation of Udje satiric songs. While the protest lasted, the men had to do all the domestic work, including childcare. In the end, the men learnt the importance of the role of women in society and agreed to share the compensation equally with the womenfolk and, in addition, pay compensation to them. The obnoxious law was also repealed. Haven discussed much on J.P. Clark's Wives Revolt, lets switch attention to Wole Soyinka's The Lion and the Jewel.

In the play, it does not seem that Soyinka consciously tries to make a statement about gender, but he does so nonetheless. On the one hand, he creates two female characters that are sassy, opinionated, manipulative, and independent. On the other hand, both of them are ultimately pawns in the games of men. Sidi does not want to marry either Lakunle or Baroka, but Baroka tricks her, rapes her, and then gets to marry her. She is an object and nothing more. Sadiku is also tricked, and sees her elation over the Bale's impotence and the power of women vanishes as his plot is made clear. Women may seem like they have power in mid 20th century Nigeria, but they ultimately do not, "gender and sexuality".

In the play, men are portraying polygamous (the only gender that can come out any time and marry). This comes into play when we see Baroka who had many wives. Polygamy shows how men can have authority and power over women by having multiple wives and making them subservient to them. Also Baroka seduced Sidi with his wise words which show how educated and knowledgeable he is. In Illunjinle's society, women are not supposed to be as educated as men. Women are to be educated in domestic areas. In the beginning of the play we see Sidi coming onto the stage with a pail of water on her head which indicates preparation for house work. In this society women are expected to clean the house, take care of the children, and prepare food for the family while men are out at work. (Sidi is walking with pail on her head while Lakunle is at work).

Because of the village 'Illunjinle' they figure that it is a male dominated society. Here as females were not allowed to go to school where as the males are assigned to go to school to get an education. In Illunjinle, Lakunle is the village teacher, who speaks to sidi and how women are the child bearers, they are to

pound the yams, to fetch and carry and scrub; as he sees Sidi carrying a pale of water in the village. Also because it is a male dominated society, men can have as many wives as they like but women cannot have more than one husband at a time. So it was discrimination to sidi, to marry lakunle, the village teacher who has not much to his name and still agree to be with the bale.

In the village of 'Illunjinle' women play a subservient and domestic role. This is shown through the character Sadiku who is the wife of King of the village, Baroka. Women are expected to be obedient to the men of the village and to cater to them by all means. The way they dress, behave and speak are controlled by the men. Sadiku does this by maintaining the household and raising the children and catering to her husband's needs. For example when he was pretending to be sad from allegedly losing his manhood she massaged his feet. It was even her duty to fetch new wives for her husband. Sadiku can only speak when given permission. This was shown when she entered the Kings bedroom and addressed him as 'My Lord' and only continued speaking after he said 'You have my leave to speak.'

In conclusion, the presentation of gender and sexuality in modern comic work depicts the illness our societies are going through. We see in the plays, the superiority of men over women, limitation of women right in the society and the agitation of the women against such act.