

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

FACULTY OF ART

Department Of Art ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES

TOPIC:

**THE PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY USING TWO
PLAYS**

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENT OF THE COURSE ELS
240**

MORDERN COMEDY

BY:

OKEKE CHRISTIANA AMARA

2015/200037

LECTURER:

Mr. JOHN ODOH

JULY, 2015

GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ANY TWO MODERN COMEDY

During the time of Shakespeare, there was a social construct of gender and sexuality norms just as there are today. There was a hierarchy of sexes and each had their own role in the society. Men were masculine, they were not ruled by emotion they were strong and hard working. Women belonged in the home, they were ruled by men and by emotions and were therefore taught to often make bad decisions. Works like Wole Soyinka 'The lion and the jewel, and Johnson's *Volpone* exhibits the act of gender and sexuality.

In Wole Soyinka's *The lion and the jewel* we find the theme of sexuality and gender inherent in the character of Lakunle, Baraoka and Sidi. Here he finds women being portrayed as properties used by men to hide their shame, we can find these in the character of Baraoka where he tricks Sidiku into believing that he was impotent just to lure Sidi into coming to see him. Here, men used women as a means to save their pride. We can see these for the reason he gives for wanting to marry Sidi such as, her being a virgin. Men sees women as a means of pushing their pride up, instead of seeing women as their pride.

We see gender and sexuality still in the role of Baraoka where the writer uses him to create an imagery of women as though they are clothes, when tired of should be changed. We can find these when he tells Sidi that wives are things that should be changed when tired of. Example food. When we get tired of a particular food we eat a different type of food, because we have varieties of food. So we are women.

We find these in the role of Lakunle where he describes women as those with smaller brains than that of men. That is why they always seek the permission of men before making any decision because they can't make any meaningful decision on their own.

Wole Soyinka uses the character Lakunle to satirize the societal reasons for marriage. The people see marriage as should be based on domestic chores and child bearing. These can be found in page 7. Lakunle “an ignoble custom, infamous, ignominious shaming our heritage before the world. Sidi I do not seek a wife to fetch and carry, cook and scrub, to bring forth children by the gross.

We can also see gender and sexuality in the marriage between Celia and Corilino. Though Celia is virtuous, she is kept under Corilino's extremely careful and cruel control. Corilino keeps her indoors almost at all times, and he forbids her at one point, from even venturing too close to a window. Corilino's rule over Celia is extreme but it was stereotypical for Italian men to be jealous and controlling of their wives-likewise, Celia represents the stereotypical renaissance ideal of a woman. She is silent, chaste, and obedient. This is shown to work to both her advantage and disadvantage. Her sterling reputation initially gives her credibility in court, but her testimony is quickly undermined since, as a woman, she was considered to be an unreliable witness (even to a crime of which she was a victim). The power of Celia's reputation cannot stand up to the stereotype that women are too hysterical and emotional to be trustworthy and rational, even though men who argue against her are known to be deceitful. The cruelty of the impossible position in which Celia finds herself in court illustrates that seventeenth century women couldn't win no matter how virtuous, women were considered to be untrustworthy and inferior creatures

We can also see through an examination of Corilino and Uolpone, who both try to exhibit male authority over Celia through sexuality (Corilino attempts to seduce her to Uolpone, in turn attempts to rape her) for a while, it seems that Uolpone will get away with this rape attempt, but at the end of the play, Uolpone is

punished, though it seems like the primary reason for his punishment is his continuous deception of the play's other men, rather than attempt rape.

Lady would be, the second woman in the play, is the opposite of Celia. The play contrast her marriage to sir politic would be. A quintessentially English marriage with the Italian marriage between Coruino and Celia. Lady would be is more independent than Celia, which reinforces the stereo-freedom than married Italian women. Lady would be is able to wander uenice on her own, and she is seen without her husband just as often as with him which is in contrast with Celia, who is prevented from even leaving her home. Lady would be is also much more talkative than Celia, though the play doesn't exactly suggest that this is a good thing. When lady would be visits uolpone, he jokes in asides that she is also long winded that he's only pretending to be sick, she's actually making him ill by talking carelessly. Though the male character in the book don't like lady would be, they fear her and that is the major reason why they dislike her.