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DEPARTMENT: ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES

TOPIC: THE PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN TWO MODERN COMIC WORKS

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities connected with being male and female the relationships between woman and man and girls and boys. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and accessed in a woman or a man in a given setting. In most cases, there are conflicts and inequalities between woman and man in decision making opportunities, responsibility assigned. Gender equality offers to the equal rights, obligations, and opportunities of adult female's human races, girls and male children. But in most cases, gender inequality is the order of the day, which is gotten from this mentality that "men is superior to women and therefore is the weaker sex" Sophocles once said that "silence gives the proper grace to women "men are often perceived as the dominant sex; women are just asked to perform in the kitchen and also to please their spouse. The female feminist Virginia woolf wrote "A room of ones own", in which she declares that men have treated women as inferior. She states that the society believes that men have treated woman are inferior to me; men controls the income, while women just seek at home.

Sexuality is seen as that which is characterized by sex or sexual activity. In most African societies, the female gender is subdued and reduced as a sex object

and culturally seen as object of sexual satisfaction and also good for domestic chores. We will discuss these two terms (gender and sexuality) in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* and Ben Jonson's *Volpone*.

In *The Lion and the Jewel*, Baroka is portrayed as someone that is gender and sexually conscious. He is known to be very craft, married to many to many wives and numerous concubines. He sees woman being inferior to men and holds the female genders as an instrument for satisfying his sexual urge, this is obtained in him having numerous wives and is still trying to add sidi to their number. He also shows his authoritative behavior with his wives. He demands and receives; instructs and shuns. Proof of this is when he told his youngest wife to pluck his arm pit hairs, she did not do it right and was asked to leave him. She had no choice but to obey.

Soyinka also presents women in a degrading picture. Women with little brain to understand simple thing, as in the case of Sidi and Lakunle, who tags Sidi as a woman with smaller brain than him, since she refuses to marry him unless he pays the bride price.

Again, Soyinka considers women 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 is confirmed through Sadiku, who tries her best to convince

Sidi to marry her husband Baroka so that Sidi would be the last wife and when he dies, she will be the first wife of the new Bale who inherits the deceased Bale's property including all his wives.

The gender discrimination is also seen in Sadiku who can only speak when given the permission to.

Women were also regarded as subservient and domestic because they had to live a submissive life to their dominant husbands whether it is to please them sexually or caress and treat their bodies the way it was requested, in the play, Baroka admitted that no other wife could pluck his arm pit hairs like Sadiku.

In *Volpone*, female sexuality is examined in the characters such as Celie and Lady would be politic. These characters portray the misperception and low status of women in Renaissance literature. Celie represents the epitome of femininity in Renaissance literature. She is beautiful, submissive, quiet and helpless to resist her husband's control over her every movement. It is disturbing that her gender renders her a victim to her husband, Corvino who treats her far less like a Lady and far more like a prisoner by keeping her locked in her room, he thinks of her as his most prized possession. We see that she was sexually harassed by Volpone and because of his act; the matter was taken to court where she appeals to heaven to expose him.

Another instance is when Volpone and Mosca devises a plan in order to steal Corvino's wife from him in which Mosca lies to Corvino that Volpone is sick and the final part of the Doctor's plans, is to sleep with a beautiful woman so as to warm his blood, Corvino agrees to let his wife sleep with him. This act shows that women are being used for sexuality without having to hear from their point of view.

In conclusion, women are really and badly relegated to such a degrading position in the great role in it's developed by men. They are also presented in the bad picture in many of the literary works, especially by male workers such as Ben Jonson, Soyinka, Elechi Amadi and others not mentioned here.