

NAME:ONWUNYIRI CHINAZA

REGNO:

REG NO:2016/237688

DEPARTMENT:ENG AND LIT STUDIES

ELS 240:MODERN COMEDY

**PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ANY WOLE
SOYINKA”S *LION AND THE JEWEL* AND OLA ROTIMI”S *OUR
HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN***

In most of the comic works, we see the subjugation of women overtime where women will be viewed as inferior beings and men will be the superior. Men expose their propensity to suppress women. Women are seen as being responsible for the ills of the society. They are noted for moral bankruptcy, loose tongue, gossip, rumor mongering etc.

In Soyinka’s “Lion and the Jewel”, the females in Ilunjile were not allowed to go to school whereas the males are assigned to go to school to go and get an education. In Ilunjile, Lakunle is the village teacher who speaks to Sidi on how women are the child bearers, they are to pound yams, to fetch water and carry and scrub as he sees Sidi carrying a pail 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.

We also see the issue of gender through the character of Sadiku who is the wife of Baroka. Women are expected to be obedient to the men of the village and cater for them. For instance, when Baroka 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 King’s bedroom

and addressed him as “My Lord” and only continued speaking after Baroka said, “You have my leave to speak”. Baroka’s authority is also shown in the way he has great control over his wives and the way they obey him without hesitation as seen in the scene where his ‘favourite’ Ailatu was plucking his armpit hairs desperate of his approval and when she hurt him and Baroka sent her away, she obeys immediately.

We can also see the gender inequality in Lakunle who referred to women of Ilunjile as ‘Bush girls’ because of their illiteracy. We see the imbalanced spread of education between the women and the men in the society, men had the upper hand while women were expected to look after the home and husband. Lakunle continuously belittled Sidi by making constant remarks about how she was less intelligent and weaker than he is simply because she is a woman and he felt no remorse in saying them because he felt justified in what he is saying and did not even see it as offensive. It was a common known fact to the men in the society, women are ‘worth less’ than men, they are uneducated and all they worth were reproduction and servitude to the man and his household. A man simply had to pick a girl from the community and pay her bride price if she was a virgin but nobody will ask the man if he is a virgin or not which shows gender discrimination and months or years later, he could go out and repeat the same process again and obtain as many wives as he so desired. The women have no say; they just have to submit to their husbands.

In Ola Rotimi’s play *Our husband has gone mad again*; we see the presentation of this gender and sexuality before the arrival of Liza. The man of the family, Rahman Lekoja-Brown, is the god of his own household. His orders are so potent and as final as those of the gods. He prides himself as being more prudent than his father because he[Lekoja-Brown] acquires as many women as he can ‘handle’ unlike his father who had a hundred and fifteen of them. In fact, he handles them as he does his other possessions. His marriage to the two wives at home is a testimony to his prudence. He acquires Mama Rashida, a “well mannered, quiet, well-bred African pigeon” from his elder brother and he

marries Sikira to meet the demands of his political ambition. To him, women meant nothing and their feelings doesn't matter to him because he has planned to settle Sikira with money and send her away after the election.

Though they live together under the same roof as husband and wives, the man is far removed from his wives emotionally and otherwise and this is evident in his relationship with them. His communication with the wives is mostly in the form of commands and orders to which they unreservedly respond "Yes My Lord". The women have neither voice nor choice; neither ambition nor power and are completely dependent on their husbands. Lekoja-Brown is their mouthpiece. The house is 'peaceful' because patriarchy- that obnoxious belief that man must be-on-top of woman. The women are complacent about their subservient position. For them, it is a natural state. They do not agitate for another state because they are unaware of an alternative way for wives within a traditional family.

It was later the arrival of Liza, a Kenyan lady, a medical doctor and the only one who Lekoja has married for love that exposes the enslavement of the women. She has refused to be "doomed to becoming one of the three sacrificial slaves" in the "nauseating, clay-walled, gas chamber" of a house all in the name of a wife. The women through the help of Liza now come to know that they have been in the subjugated position because they lack the knowledge of and the power to agitate for an alternative. In the end, the women now believe that they are not worthless as they are perceived to be.