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**Representation of Gender and Sexuality in the Lion and the Jewel and
Moliere's *Tartuffe***

AN ASSIGNMENT

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Representation of Gender and Sexuality in the Lion and the Jewel and Moliere's *Tartuffe*.

Sexuality on the other hand is defined in Wikipedia as the quality of being sexual, or the way people experience and expresses themselves as sexual beings. This involves biological, erotic, physical, emotional, social, or even spiritual feelings and behaviours.

Gender is simply the state of being a male or a female. *It can also* refer to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. These tell us that gender has to do with masculinity and feminism. Did you just notice something? Masculinity comes before feminism in the sentence above. Why? Well, God created Adam before Eve.

In the book 'THE LION AND THE JEWEL, ILLUNJUNLE is the village presented in the book. In this village, it is posed to be a male dominated society, which can be identified throughout the book. The women are to follow rules of men and women are subservient to men. Baroka, the village chief, has more than one wife because it is a polygamist society. Baroka sees himself as a 'lion' who can conquer anything he desires. Baroka is expected by us to treat his wives equally. but however, he actually has a favouritism. Whatever Baroka orders, his wives are to obey. After his hand in marriage, they actually become his property and have to do as he says. They are fulfilling his desires. These wives have to do their jobs to the best of their ability or they actually get run out. He has the choice to have as many wives as he wants and no other wife has authority to disagree to his decisions. Theses wives have to submit to Baroka

and follow his demands. These men are allowed to have numerous sexual partners where as Baroka wants his wives all to himself. Whatever he feels to do to them as his owned property, he has authority too. Baroka is so selfish that if a wife fails to do her duty...he asks her to leave and never return. He views himself as higher than women and thinks he has power over his wives.

Sadiku, Baroka,s eldest wife has to also submit to Baroka, no matter how old she may be. Sadiku was also given the responsibility to go out and persuade Sidi to marry Baroka, whether she liked it or not. Woman in this soceity has to deal with their own husband going out to seek other women. Poor Sadikua as the eldest wife also has to take responsibility for the rest of Baroka's wives. Whatever Baroka ordered her to do, she had to do it. She also had to fulfil his desires and submit herself fully, even though the other does did. Sadiku, like every other wife had to cook, clean, make sure that Baroka was satisfied...whether it came to pleasures and basic needs. She still had to rub him if he needed a massage, and even had to go out to get him more wives. She also had to deal with other women taking her place as the main or favorite wife...and had to accept that they would gain more than her...even if she has spent almost her whole life with this man.

All this evidence shows us that men were more respected in the society and were posed as the head of women. Women were viewed as lower than men...of less value.

Looking at the lion and the jewel Women are seen as inferior; this is why they play a subservient and domestic role in the Illunjunle village. Take Sadiku, Baroka's eldest wife, for example. Her job was to meet her husband's every demand. Sadiku was convinced that she caused Baroka to become impotent; this is proof that one of her jobs was pleasuring her husband. Also, Baroka admitted

that no other wife could pluck his arm pit hairs like Sadiku in the novel. Women were 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.

Men are seen as authoritative and educated. Baroka, for example, at his old age has many wives and is still known as the King of the Village. He 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. The wife had no choice but to obey. Furthermore, Baroka proves that he was educated by the way he seduced Sidi into intercourse. He used his wits and wisdom to catch Sidi's attention and in the end his intelligence allowed him to successfully conquer the jewel. 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.'

Men in the village are seen authoritative and educated. King Baroka is a fit example. His intelligence is seen through his ability of successfully ruling a village thus far and in return this brings great authority to his name. His authority is also shown in the way he has great control over all his wives and the way in which they obey without hesitation. As seen in the scene where Baroka and 'favorite' laid in bed and she was plucking his armpit hairs desperate of his

approval and when she hurt him he sent her away abruptly. His intelligence also is depicted when his cunning plan to capture Sidi is revealed.

Moliere in *Tartuffe* reflects a lot on the role of men and women within a family. During this time, it was common for the man to be the head of the household and women to be submissive to the men. Men held the power in the family and made all the decisions. In this play, a man's point of view is the only view that matters. All else do not serve an importance. His lack of trust and awareness for other people's feelings and needs has caused great conflict in his family. The actions taken by Orgon and his family members express how this play views marriage and relations between men and women. There are many differences between men and women.

Marriage as we see in this text is a decision not to be countered by the father of the house. This is exactly the role of Orgon. Women and daughters are expected to be docile. Orgon and Mariane are having a conversation about Mariane marrying Tartuffe. When Orgon asks Mariane to prove her love for him by doing anything he asks, Mariane responds by saying, "Then my obedience will be my proof." Despite the fact that her actual lover is Valere, the old man's decision has to stand. Tartuffe being a religious hypocrite would have undoubtedly been a terrible husband but since Orgon is obtuse to this fact, he is insistent in his matrimonial decision between Tartuffe and Mariane.

Something similar in these two works used above is that young ladies are viewed as properties of their father that should be given to whosoever pleases them (fathers). The opinion of the female gender is never considered. Is she even permitted to make any? This is not only abasement but also an abuse to the sexuality and gender of the female figure.

