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**THE REPRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN WOLE SOYINKA'S  
*THE LION AND THE JEWEL* AND OLA ROTIMI'S *OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE  
MAD AGAIN*.**

A person's sex as determined by his or her biology, does not always correspond with their gender; therefore, the term 'sex' and gender are not interchangeable as people usually do. 'Gender' is a term that refers to a social or cultural distinction associate with being a male or a female. It refers to the widely shared set of expectations and norms linked to how both sexes should behave. Scholars generally regard gender as a social construct- meaning that it does not exist naturally, but is instead a concept that is created by cultural and societal norms. While the characteristics of 'sex' is general and universal and do not vary with significantly between different human society. For instance, all male around the world are biologically and physically meant to have a penis, etc. Characteristics of 'gender', on the other hand, may vary greatly between different society. For example, in American culture, it is considered feminine to wear a dress or skirt. However, in many middle Eastern , Asian cultures, dresses and skirts (often referred to as sorongs, robes or gowns) can be considered masculine. Similarly, societal and family roles of both sexes differ with gender and with different society and culture. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender roles can vary across different cultures, religion, societies, countries and so on.

A related term, 'sexuality' refers to people's sexual orientation, interest and attraction to others. Sexuality may be experienced and expressed in variety of ways, including thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitude, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. It is associated with desire of an individual and how the individual uses his/her physical and mental power to attract a partner. Usually, social and religion restrictions are always a controlling factor for sexuality.

In Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*, he consciously or unconsciously represented male characters as strong, powerful and metaphorically as a lion, a symbol of irresistible power. They are also portrayed as initiators, doer of something, and commander in chief, the king while their female counterparts (Sidi, Sadikou) are represented as goals and/or beneficiaries of men's action and associated with processes of sensing and emotion. In the opening scene of the play, we witness Lakunle's mouth playing games and sexual advances towards Sidi in order to conquer her heart. Lakunle as it can be seen, is the actor of most of the actions expressed by the material processes and Sidi is the goal or beneficiary. Most of the material processes are strict actions directed towards Sidi. Although Lakunle in the opening scene is dealing with love affairs in his attempt to win Sidi's heart, he still uses processes totally detached from feeling. On the other hand, the actions taken by Sidi are not straight and direct ones which can bring about changes. They are rather actions designated to avoid men's tricks and behaviour, a kind of an escape and self-protection against men's preposterousness. Men here, are presented as more active and dynamic than women. In the same vein, Baroka and choices of processes in his exchange with Sidi, Sadikou and his other wives portray a man of authority and of action. This is exemplified in the following utterances in which Baroka appears:

Sadikou: Baroka swears to take no other wife after you

Sidi: Baroka merely seeks to raise his manhood above my beauty (p. 21)

Baroka: Did I not at festival of rain, defeat the men in the log-tossing match? (p. 28)

Baroka: Do I not still with the most fearless ones hunt the leopard and the boa at night  
(p. 28)

Baroka: I also change my wife when I have learnt to tire them (p. 43)

All the material process identified in the above utterances can be read as presenting Baroka, representing men in general, in a dominating position and the women are considered the second sex, gullible and essentially for serving men and presented as submissive to the will of the men. The polygamous society gives importance to the Bale. It allows him to marry as many wives as he wants. He just uses them for his pleasure and after the arrival of a new favorite, he sends the last favourite to an outhouse. The society is represented as being disrespectful to women as Lakunle says “they are used to pound the yam or bend all the day to plant the millet ...to fetch and carry, to cook and scrub, to bring forth children by the gross” (p. 7,9). Women’s role in the society is represented as basically domestic. Even in the beginning of the play, we see Sidi coming into the stage with a pail of water on her head which indicates preparation for housework, while men are portrayed as the sex eligible to go out and work. (Sidi is walking with a pail on her head while Lakunle is at work). The subservient and domestic role of women in the play is shown through the character of Sidiku, Baoka’s wife. Women are expected to be obedient, submissive and respectful to their husband irrespective of nothing. They do not have a say or contributions to the decision making of the family. For example, when Baroka is pretending to be sad from allegedly losing his manhood, Sidiku massages his feet. It was even her duty to fetch new wives for her husband whether she is in favour or not. Sidiku can only speak when given permission, she addresses him as “My Lord” and only continues speaking after he says “you have my leave to speak.”

Also, men are represented as authoritative and educated. King Baroka is a good example. His intelligence is seen through his ability of successfully ruling a village and this brings great authority to his name. His authority is also shown in the way he has great control over all his wives. His intelligence is also depicted when his cunning plan to capture Sidi finally pays off.

The issue of gender and sexuality is also obtainable in Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*. In this play, women are naïve, ordinary and foolish. Women are also portrayed as illiterates in the characters of Mama Rashida and Sikira who are viewed as uncivilized and uneducated about people, places and issues. For instance Sikira concludes that Liza, being an 'oyibo' and educated, that she will be very authoritative and domineering towards them because she believes that is how educated people living abroad behaves. Women are also portrayed as the sex to be ashamed of their body. They are not meant to wear any clothing that will expose any part of their body. Religion has put restriction to women's freedom of expression through dressing. Lejoka reprimands Sikira when she wears a short gown sewed by Liza. Also when Liza comes home from the beach in a bikini, Lejoka has to force members of his party to face down so as not to see the bare body of his wife. The men in the play represented by Lejoka-Brown, is represented as being authoritative and having the final say in the home. We see the manner Lejoka heads his household and his wives. He controls them, their dressing, their manner of speech, their source of livelihood etc.

Rotimi is however, supportive of the feminist cause in *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*. He distances himself from the inferior viewpoints held about women in society. He revolts against the debased look society has of women and their confinement to the domestic realm. Women are not considered highly in state matters. In the play, the advocacy for women's liberation is advanced by Sikira in her conflict with her husband. Rotimi seems to agree with DeleMont's position that "Cliches and myths such as a woman's place in the home. Women only work pin money and women are too emotional... and even the right place

for women in the movement is prone underlie a great many theories in sociology.” Sikira’s rebellious stance and theory of equality of the sexes is the result of Liza’s pedagogic role in the play. Liza is seen as the transporter of sexual equality from the western scene to the African setting. Sikira’s quest for self-identity is vividly conveyed in one of her caustic responses to her husband “Do as you say, do as you say! It is always do as you say. Always command, command, command! Why don’t you show some respect and let me do as I want, just once!” (p. 57). The play represents women as constantly being restrained from achieving their goals and desires by the male folks usually in the position of their husbands and the society at large.

At the end of the play however, the play gives a show of what the society ought to be in respect to its attitude towards gender and sexuality: Freedom from marital and societal restraints for both sexes because as Liza says “Both man and woman are created equal.”