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INTRODUCTION

Before going into the presentation of gender and sexuality in two comic plays let us look at the meaning of gender and sexuality.

Gender simply means the state of being male or female. Gender refers to the widely or socially constructed characteristics or set of expectations and norms linked to how women and men, and girls and boys should behave and this includes their sexual behaviour, attitudes and feelings. Gender is often talked about in terms of masculinity and femininity.

Sexuality refers to one's self-expression as a sexual being. Sexuality is the sexual habit and desires of a person or the state or quality of being sexual. When we talk about sexuality, it has to do with feelings and attraction one feels towards other people.

PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN BEN JOHNSON'S "VOLPONE"

In Ben Johnson's Volpone, Celia represents the epitome of femininity in renaissance literature. She is beautiful, submissive, religious and faithful. Celia is quite and helpless to resist her husband's control over her every moment. Although it is disturbing that her gender renders her victim to male characters such as Corvino and Volpone who treat her as though she is a

possession to the won. Corvine treats her like a prisoner by keeping her locked in her room. We see how she was sexually harassed by volpone, because of her husband's excess greediness; the matter was taken to court where she appeals to heaven to expose him. Because masculinity and femininity cannot exist without each other, both men and women must be voluntarily or forcibly complicit to function within this binary. By examining female sexuality and morality, it is not only the characterization of Celia but also, that of lady would-be politic, Johnson reveals how women are caught in a double-bind within the patriarchal structure of renaissance England. They must either conform to their feminine roles or risk being alienated from the communities. Celia, the wife of corvine (one of Volpone's victims) has entirely conformed to the feminine role of a proper married woman.

Celia latter stands for herself, this is seen in act three when she protests corvine for prostituting her out to volpone in order to gain his riches. She says to corvine, "sir, let me beseech you, affect not these strange trials; if you doubt my chastity, why lock me up forever....." in this situation, Celia only hopes for God to rescue her from this situation. This essay seeks to unravel the reasons as to why masculinity is threatened by female strength and autonomy, not to victimize the female characters within Johnson's play.

PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN "THE LION AND THE JEWEL" BY WOLE SOYINKA

In the village of illunjinle "women play a subservient and domestic role. This is seen through the character Sadiku who is the senior wife of the King (bale) of the village Baroka. Women are expected to be obedient and submissive to their husbands and to cater for them by all means. For example when Baroka pretends to be sad from allegedly losing his manhood, Sadiku is seen massaging his feet. It was even Sadiku's duty to fetch new wife for her husband. Sadiku can only speak when given the permission. This is seen when she entered the king's 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 authoritative and educated. Women are not educated as men; they are to be educated in domestics' works. As seen in the play, Sidi coming onto the stage with a pale of water on her head. Women are expected to clean the house, take care of the children, and

pound the yam. Baroka proves that he is educated by the way he seduced Sidi into sexual intercourse. He used his wits and wisdom to catch Sidi's attention and in the end his intelligence made him to successfully conquer the Jewel (Sidi). The superiority of men or husbands over their wives is seen where Baroka's favourite wife was plucking the hairs in Baroka's armpit and how he orders her to leave the room.

Lakunle an educated teacher always alter abusive words to Sidi, calling her and other girls bush girls because they are not educated. Women are not allowed to go to school but stays at home to do domestic works.

Conclusion

Sexuality is influenced my gender norms; social expectation linked to gender influence how women and men behave and this includes their sexual behaviour, attitude and feelings