

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

FACULTY OF ART

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY
STUDIES**

**AN ASSIGNMENT TO BE SUBMITTED ON THE
FULFILMENT OF THE COURSE -ELS
240(MOLIERE TO SOYINKA: MODERN
COMEDY).**

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

AGU PRECIOUS CHINECHEREM

REG NO: 2015/203912

LECTURER: MR ONYEKA ODOH

JULY, 2017

GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MODERN COMIC WORK

Gender and sexuality are intricate issues in comic works. When gender is discussed, the female folks are being given full consideration on the matter. Women in comedy refer to females who participate in comedic works, as well as their experience within the social environment. While primarily dominated by men throughout history, women have been represented in the field of comedy since the mid 1700s.

Comedy or creative works with the intention of humour is thought to have originated in Greek theatre in 425BCE. Some of the first figures to enter the field, however, were faced with resistance and discrimination. A sense of humour in women was previously thought to have meant the ability to laugh at a man's joke, rather than telling a joke herself. Early acts were often based in the standard roles of women as a housewife and mother. As women gained acceptance to their presence in comedy, they were able to expand the topics that they covered.

Today, feminist comedy draws attention to female issues such as gender inequality, norms, and machismo. As a readily acceptable and understandable medium of communication; this allows women's issues to be more wide-spread in general society. Gender and Sexuality go hand in hand, and is obviously a heavy topic which shouldn't be treated lightly. Gender roles can be visibly seen in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* and J.P Clark Beredemo's *Wives' Revolt*. *Lion and the Jewel* is about the struggle between Baroka, the "Lion", and Lakunle over the right to marry Sidi, the "Jewel". Baroka represents traditional life and Lakunle represents western influence. *Wives' Revolt* is about the struggle/disagreement between the men and their wives over compensation fee. Gender in the two stories is very stratified and strict. They both push male dominated social norms. In our present world of comedy, there is always a struggle in situation and need to be resolved. *The Lion and the Jewel* is quite oppressive in its gender roles as well. In a rant from Lakunle about modernization in a fight with a traditionalist old woman, Sadiku, he says "Within a year or

two, I swear this town shall see transformation. Bride price will be a thing forgotten and wives shall take their place by men” (Soyinka36). This sounds nice and progressive but looking at the next page in the same rant, and will find “we will buy saucepans for the women...no man shall take more wives than one. That’s why they are impotent too soon”. (Soyinka 37). Lakunle apparently still wants women in the kitchen and doesn’t want monogamy for equality, so men will stop being infertile. The gender inequality in this situation is less blatant but you can still see the deeply entrenched social norms that Lakunle may not even realize he is adhering to. *The Wives’ Revolt* by J.P Clark, another comic work that depicts gender roles and sexuality. The women of Erhuwaren were unhappy when their husbands, Okoro, Koko, and Idama banned the domestication of goats, and decided to walk away from their homes so their husbands would feel the brunt of their wrath, and acknowledge their worth. The funny part of the play was when they came back infected as it was Ighodayen, the village prostitute that housed and took care of them while they were away on self -arranged exile.

“It is a man’s world” is a popular saying that we not only hear every day but we see in action all the time. Whatever the man wants they can do; but whatever the women want has to be endorsed by the men- GENDER BIASNESS.