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REG NO: 2014/196813

DEPT: ARTS EDUCATION(ENGLISH)

COURSE: ASSIGNMENT ON MODERN COMEDY

CODE: ELS 240

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

DEFINITION OF TERM

SEXUALITY

In short, sexuality is an integral part of who we are, what we believe, what we feel, and how we respond to others. Which means that whether you like it or not and whether you say anything or not, you will have a strong influence on the sexuality of your children. Silence may even speak louder than words.

GENDER

The word gender has been used since the 14th century as a grammatical term, referring to classes of noun designated as masculine, feminine, or neuter in some languages. The sense denoting biological sex has also been used since the 14th century, but this did not become common until the mid 20th century. Although the words gender and sex are often used interchangeably, they have slightly different connotations; sex tends to refer to biological differences, while gender more often refers to cultural and social differences and sometimes encompasses a broader range of identities than the binary of male and female Women have been strong

lead characters in film and television for a few decades now. Women's roles in comedy has changed overtime, though. From television shows like “I love Lucy” where women were funny because they were pretty and played on the stereotype of a lovely woman who tried to cook and clean, to films like “Bridesmaids” where the women are sex oriented, and vindictive to each other, women have had an important, changing role in comedy films. Before, there was a time when women had to be attractive to be considered funny. Now women are in comedy and are just as vulgar and witty as their men costars.

sexuality as humor in comic plays

In movies, like Anchorman, women are objectified, but they prove how strong they can be. The lead actress, Christina Applegate, proves her costars wrong about her being a useless woman by making it in the newsroom. The men start off saying things like, “Don’t get me wrong I love the ladies, I mean they rev my engine, but they don’t belong in the news room.” In the end, she is not a woman for them to demean, she’s a powerful co-anchor of the news station. It is a very humorous film and it is a film that started using vulgarity to create humor for women in films.

Bridesmaids is another film that uses vulgar notions and vocabulary. The women are very comfortable with dropping the “f” word and their sex life is an open book. The opening scene is the main character, Kristin Wig, engaging in sexual activity. It is still very comedic and a hit in the box office because people love potty mouth humor, but it uses women being vulgar and raw to make the audience laugh. It shows that women can get just as dirty as men and it is accepted.

GENEDER AND SEXUAL ROLE IN VOLPONE

Most of the play’s characters are men who operate in the traditionally male sphere of commerce. At the time in which the play is set, men were wholly responsible for

finance and they were expected to have power over women in relationships, roles that most of the male characters in the play firmly occupy. However, the play also compares male authority, love, sex, and courtship to the social expectations of women by exploring two examples of marriages, one an extreme depiction of an Italian marriage and the other a comedic English relationship.

The Italian marriage is between Celia and Corvino. Though Celia is virtuous, she is kept under Corvino's extremely careful and cruel control—Corvino keeps her indoors almost at all times, and he forbids her, at one point, from even venturing too close to a window. Corvino's rule over Celia is extreme, but it was stereotypical for Italian men to be jealous and controlling of their wives. Likewise, Celia represents the stereotypical Renaissance ideal of a woman; she is silent, chaste, and obedient. This is shown to work to both her advantage and disadvantage. Her sterling reputation initially gives her credibility in court, but her testimony is quickly undermined since, as a woman, she was considered to be an unreliable witness (even to a crime of which she was a victim). The power of Celia's reputation cannot stand up to the stereotype that women are too hysterical and emotional to be trustworthy and rational, even though the men who argue against her are known to be deceitful. The cruelty of the impossible position in which Celia finds herself in court illustrates that seventeenth century women couldn't win—no matter how virtuous, women were considered to be untrustworthy and inferior creatures. Jonson's position on gender roles can be clarified, to an extent, through an examination of Corvino and Volpone, who both try to exhibit male authority over Celia through sexuality (Corvino attempts to whore her to Volpone, who in turn attempts to rape her). For a while, it seems that Volpone will get away with this rape attempt, as several men during the play conspire to say that Celia is lying about her accusation. At the end of the play, Volpone is punished, but it seems that the primary reason for his punishment is his

continuous deception of the play's other men, rather than the attempted rape. It's difficult to discern Jonson's ultimate statement (if any exists) about sexual oppression. However, it could be argued that, while he shows sexual oppression and violence to be reprehensible, Jonson believes that the oppression of women is less important than the moral lesson about excessive desire and greed. Lust and rape are bad, in other words, but only because they are a form of avariciousness. The crime Volpone seems most guilty of in the play is excessive greed for money at the expense of Voltore, Corbaccio, and Corvino.

Lady Would-Be, the second woman in the play, is the opposite of Celia. The play contrasts her marriage to Sir Politic Would-Be—a quintessentially English marriage—with the Italian marriage between Corvino and Celia. Lady Would-Be is more independent than Celia, which reinforces the stereotype that married English women were given more freedom than married Italian women. Lady Would-Be is able to wander Venice on her own, and she is seen without her husband just as often as with him (contrast this with Celia, who is prevented from even leaving her home). Lady Would-Be is also much more talkative than Celia, though the play doesn't exactly suggest that this is a good thing. When Lady Would-Be visits Volpone, he jokes in asides that she is so long-winded that he's being tortured by her "flood of words," and that, though he's only pretending to be sick, she's actually making him ill by talking ceaselessly. Much of this scene, we can note, is taken from an ancient Greek book called "On Talkative Women,"

suggesting that Jonson might have believed that there was some truth to the stereotype that women talk excessively (more generously, one could argue that Jonson is merely engaging with the literary tradition of depicting women in this way). Lady Would-Be, however, also breaks the mold of a renaissance woman in that she appears to be educated, certainly much more so

than Celia. Her long-winded speeches are so filled with literary references and allusions that Peregrine is shocked when she yells at him.

The differences between Lady Would-Be and Celia illustrate different societal roles for women in Italy and England, which suggests that gender roles are culturally contingent, rather than biologically determined. In this way, the play challenges stereotypical gender roles and assumptions about women, though it sometimes affirms stereotypes, too. At the very least, *Volpone* complicates the role of women in society by showing that women—like men—can be well read, virtuous, well educated, and well spoken.

THE PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN THE PLAY 'LION AND 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.