

THE PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ANY TWO MODERN COMIC WORKS

In Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*, women were presented in various ways that makes the society see them as very weak and can be manipulated with the commonest of things. In the village of Ilujinle, women play a subservient and domestic role as opposed to men who are expected to be authoritative and educated figures. We see this when the school teacher, Lakunle who reminds Sidi on how women are child bearers, how they are to pound yam, fetch and carry the scrub when he sees Sidi carry a pale of water in the village which shows preparation of house work.

The story is set in male a dominant society where we see Baroka is the leader of the village, a position which has been passed down from generation after generation from father to son and never a woman. The domination of men is identified throughout the book. The women are to follow rules of men. Baroka sees himself as a lion who can conquer anything he desires.

Ilujinle is portrayed as a patriarchal society where men are seen as the alpha and omega. Men can have as many wives as they like but women cannot have more than one husband at a time. Just like Baroka who has many wives, shows how men can have authority and power over women by marrying multiple wives and making them subservient to them. Baroka show his authoritative behaviour with his wives which he demands, receives instructions and never accepts their opinions. Sadiku goes out to lure the women he wanted, this shows how women a reduced to nothing. She had to perform any task that Baroka her husband requested.

Baroka seduced Sidi with his wise words and the way he rules the village and his mischievous plan to get Sidi as his wife; a plan no one saw coming showed how educated and knowledgeable he is. Women are not supposed to be educated; they cook, clean the house make babies and please their husbands. Everything they do is controlled by their husbands and education they receive is to complete domestic tasks. Baroka's wives play these roles. His favourite wife is seen kneeling beside him and plucking his armpit hairs her task is pleasing her husband as a woman and a wife in the village. Lakunle the educated teacher referred to Sidi as a bush girl because of her illiteracy, we see here the imbalanced spread of education between the men and women in the society.

In Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, most of the 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 relationship roles which most of the male character in the play firmly occupy.

However, the play also compares male authority, love, sex and courtship to the social expectation of women by exploring two examples of marriage and under a comedic English relationship.

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 going close to the window. Corvino's rule over Celia is extreme but it was stereotypical for Italian men to be jealous and controlling of their wives. Celia represents the stereotypical renaissance ideal of a woman. She is silent, chaste and obedient. As a woman she is considered to be an unreliable witness. No matter how virtuous a woman is she is considered to be untrustworthy and an inferior creature.

Jonson's position on gender role can be clarified to an extent through an examination of Corvino and Volpone who try to exhibit male authority over Celia through sexuality attempts to woo her to Volpone who in turn attempts to rape her. Jonson believes oppression and violence to be reprehensible; he believes that the oppression of women is less important than the moral lesson about excessive desire and greed. Lust and rape are bad, but based on the play it is good because they are form of avariciousness.