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PRESENTATION OF SEXUALITY AND GENDER IN ANY TWO COMIC WORK:

Moliere's "Tartuffe" and Soyinka's "the Lion and The Jewel."

Modern comedy works intends to be humorous and amusing by inducing laughter. It deals with human relations, focusing in family matter such as lover relationship, sexuality, gender, satire and all others. The main character face conflict but they do overcome the situation and the play use to end in happy resolution. Tartuffe by Moliere is one of the comic work that presented sexuality and gender role. As was tradition in the seventeenth century setting of Moliere, Tartuffe in which the French aristocracy was in power, the society was a patriarchal one. So Orgon is clearly the head of the household although the rest of the family has much better sense than he but they do obey him because of his position which Moliere tries to satirize the arrogance of patriarchs who feel superior to others in their family simply because of their position. Orgon who is so blind in his devotion to a belief that he cannot make accurate judgment as to the sincerity of others who would use the belief to deceive him which made Tartuffe easily achieve total power over Orgon's actions because of his gullibility. Tartuffe **downfall** was base on his quest of sexuality that masks him with overwhelming piety, modesty and religious fervor. Orgon sees for **himself** the reality of Tartuffe he refuses to listen to either Dorine who feels that Tartuffe has seize over the master place or his own wife Elmire. Orgon completely dominates his children to the extent of ordering Damis out of the house because he has dared to alight Tartuffe by reporting the religious man's attempts to seduce his stepmother. Tartuffe advance towards Elmire does reality finally confront Orgon's **idealism** and Tartuffe.

Orgon and Madame Pernelle are blind to the truth concerning Tartuffe and fall victim to his trick. **Lust** is the primary vice that Orgon and Madame rebuked, for instance when Tartuffe refuses to look to Dorine's breast and Madame criticizing the household's negligent of morality. **Sexual** desire is what cause Tartuffe's downfall. He only lazy around, eat, sleep, try to seize Orgon's property and use

his wife. He cannot control himself with Elmire. It is only this **final act** of moral corruption that provides especially Orgon and the whole family the evidence to deal with Tartuffe. The play suggests that sexuality is a natural part of humanity and also the most dangerous when we pretend it does not exist and hide instead and show off abstinence and virtue we are not. It seems that sexuality is mostly presented as **flaw** to the main character especially towards female character by male ones. We see it clear in this play which also contrasts with Jero's play, when Brother Jeroboam who struggles to steer clear of the temptation of sin posed by women which he admits his weakness. Tartuffe's downfall is based on his fake of abstinence and virtue.

Gender is significant in the construction of self, is the condition of being male and female. It denotes those socially roles, behaviours, actions and features that are considered as society fit for men and women. These roles result in gender inequality that is those differences between men and women that deliberately give favour to one group by this favour the other. Gender is examined with special reference to feminism which is a movement that recognizes and at the same criticizes male supremacy and implies strategies to change it. Feminism claims for equal rights for women and argues about women's equal share in society prospects. Tartuffe portrays gender roles, since it was written in the 17th century when females were suppressed from their views, wants or desires, they are soft spoken, calm and generally pretty dull which is applicable in his play. In the case of Mariane is the most conventional female figure in Tartuffe, she is soft spoken, calm and pretty dull. Her obedience to Orgon leads to problems but she is only acting in a way consistent with the standards of her time which is harmful to her. She was dominated by her father which after the announcement of her marriage proposal to Tartuffe, is so emotionally devastating to her who loves Valere whom her father has previously approved as her fiancé. Elmire and Dorine are different, they seem to disagree with Orgon's belief and try their possible best to prove their capability which at last Elmire triumphs. They are quick-witted, strong-willed and a bit saucy which made a match for their male counterpart any time, any day. Dorine even in her position as a servant but was allowed as more freedom to speak her mind. Elmire who is also

subservient to Orgon is shown when Tartuffe proposes his sexual advances, Elmire politely tells him that she will not report Tartuffe's inappropriate conduct to her husband in an attempt to bargain with him in return for her silence. She requests of him to advocate the marriage of Valere and Mariane by renouncing all desire to dispossess but Tartuffe who is arrogant refuses her request which made Elmire devise a trap in order to expose the religious hypocrite for the philanderer that he is by convincing her husband to hear for himself the reality of Tartuffe. Women **role** are presented as strong and wise enough to come up with **evidence of proof** that subdues the **conflict** between Orgon and Tartuffe. Dorine and Elmire represent the real alternative to traditional gender roles; they are the real protagonists in Tartuffe, the only actions who are able to take action. But **male** characters seem weak, gullible. Damis who is being subdued from his speech of truth about Tartuffe to the extent of him being disinherited. Orgon also is gullible enough and unjust to understand the real piety. Cleante who is seen as a **paragon** by Moliere to be emulated in his belief of a true piety. He was not able to achieve his aim in convincing Orgon meaning that male counterparts are weak towards achieving their goal or coming up with solutions to expose Tartuffe.

Reflecting on the second comic work that portrays sexuality and gender roles in Wole Soyinka's "The Lion and The Jewel". Sexuality is one of the themes that were present as several instances of impotence on the part of Lakunle a young and modern man who desires for the affection of Sidi the village beauty which the opposition in his quest is Bale the old lion of the village. Lakunle attempts to be committed to his case of seeking modernity and making social changes and hopes that this will be enough to attract Sidi to him but he is unable to actually effectively flirt with her and half-plays at platonic love of her. The Bale on the other hand is wise and cunning despite his old age proves to be more than a match for Lakunle in winning the heart and affection of Sidi. Sidi was object to Bale who duped her by his impotent act and raped her to have her consent in marriage without her objection which he used to conquer the Jewel. Also sexuality is displayed by Lakunle who forgets Sidi almost immediately by chasing after another village girl who shakes her buttocks at him when the air is festive and he runs

after her, meaning that since he has been frustrated by Sidi does not mean he cannot have an alternative.

The play also displays gender roles in fullness. In the village of Illunjinle, women play a subservient and domestic role as opposed to men who are expected to be the authoritative and educated figures. It is a male-dominated society. Here, as females were not allowed to go to school, whereas the males are assigned to go to school to get an education. The community is being invaded by the colonizers and introduced education. Lakunle is the village teacher, who speaks to Sidi in the beginning of the play. We see Sidi coming onto the stage with a pail of water on her head, which indicates preparation for housework. In this society, women are expected to clean the house, pound the yams, fetch and carry, and scrub, how women are the child bearers and take care of the children, and prepare food for the family while men are out at work. (Sidi is walking with a pail on her head while Lakunle is at work). Also, Baroka seduced Sidi with his wise words, which show how educated and knowledgeable he is. In Illunjinle's society, women are not supposed to be as educated as men. Women are to be educated in **domestic areas**. Also, because it is a male-dominated society, men can have as many wives as they like, but women cannot have more than one husband at a time. In the play, when we see Baroka, who had many wives, polygamy shows how men can have authority and power over women by having multiple wives and making them subservient to them. So it was discrimination to Sidi, to marry Lakunle, the village teacher, who has not much to his name and still agrees to be with her. Sadiku is also subservient to Baroka; she massaged his feet when he pretends to be angry about losing his manhood, it was her duty to fetch new wives for her husband. She can only speak when given the permission. It is shown 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." All indicate how men in the village are seen as authoritative and educated, overpowering the female ones. In this play, gender is inequality.