

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA NSUKKA
FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES

TOPIC:

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

AN ASSIGNMENT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT OF THE COURSE (ELS 240) MODERN COMEDY:
MOLIERE TO SOYINKA.

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

There has always been the question on gender and sexuality since the 18th century in Europe and America. The woman question has often been raised in the quest of the humans to really understand the role of women in society. Their roles and place in society is questioned by scholars.

Prior to the 18th century, there has always been the unequal treatment of the two genders in the human society. In this situation, the male was considered as the superior to the female. The male gender had the right and will to own properties and to head houses. The female gender, thus, was not considered as having equal capabilities and roles as the man. The male gender had all the capabilities and roles that were more recognized and powerful in human society.

It was in the 18th century that the idea of feminism surfaced to tackle the lack of regard of the female gender. Feminism was championed in the early age by some female scholars like Mary Wollstonecraft's ideology in her age was antagonized by her contemporaries, and she lived a scandalous life in her time. John Stuart Mill wrote in support of the female gender, and so, tackled the unequal opportunities and roles of the two genders in human society. Feminism was well established in the 20th century, although the foundation had been laid for it in the 18th and 19th century. Feminism can be defined as the movement that struggled for the equal

treatment of the two genders. It had three waves, but the third and the most recent wave were more radical than any other.

Literary authors have often tried in different capacity's to portray the human world in the most probable way they can. Jolin Dryden writes that literatures are the imitation of life. Literary authors endeavor to imitate life in the most probable way. Although formalities might have issue with the link of humans or life to literature, it cannot also be entirely disassociated from life. And one of the aspects of life is the issue of gender and gender relation. As these writers write, there is also the presentation of gender and sexuality in their works.

THE PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN TWO COMIC PLAYS.

The chosen texts for this assignment are “The Lion and The Jewel” by Wole Soyinka and our Husband Has Cure Mad Again by Ola Rotimi. One of the featured of a good comic play is the satire embedded in its plot. Satire ridicules ill human elements and situations. And so critic can be sure of the true writer’s opinion or mind based on the issue of gender and sexuality. Therefore, the focus of this assignment will be on the text alone.

This assignment will study the selected texts comparatively and in that way, link it in their similarities and differences. A critic must note, however, that the texts are not wholly connected. The plots differ greatly, and the only concern of the assignment is on their relatedness on the issue of gender and sexuality.

Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again is a text that focuses on the ignorance of individuals who seek political positions. Although the individual might be experienced in the other spheres of life he had worked in, the individual is largely ignorant in the political affairs of a state and how the politics of the state runs. Major Lekoja Brown the concerned characters does not listen to political advice, and in the comic element of Bergen’s inelasticity, he remain stiff, averse to other

opinions and disregards the female gender. His fall comes from the least expected part of his life.

“The Lion and the Jewel” is a text that focuses on the love affair of two young people. The young man pursues the young girl in the sophisticated manner, but the girl refutes his interest. The young girl, though beautiful and sophisticated herself, she does not like the revolutionary idea of the young man, Lakunle. To the young woman, Sidi, the proper rites of the marriage must be done in the customary way. Sidi refutes Lakunle for his revolutionary ideas, but she does not also easily agree to Baroka’s declaration of interest in her. She however falls foolishly to Baroka’s plan. And the text is quite sarcastic in its use of another woman, Sadiku, to make Sidi lose and her pride to the cunning Baroka.

The two texts are similar in the presentation of the female gender as calm, submissive and unwise. Sidi and Sadiku have all these characteristics in Soyinka’s play. Sadiku is one of the wives of Baroka who he does not love anymore, but she all he asks her to do, even when he tells her to go and inform Sidi of his interest in her. She is calm in her conversation with other characters, submissive to her husband and unwise to detect the plan of Baroka. Sidi is also calm in her conversation with the other characters, except Lakunle of course. She is submissive to the laid down culture and procedure, and she also becomes submissive when she marries Baroka. The text, indirectly, presents her as unwise in her relationship with

Baroka and Lakunle. It is ironical that the aged man she rejects earlier is the one she gladly runs to.

The female characters in the other texts are wiser and more reasonable. This wise nature is caused by the arrival of Liza into the house. She is more educated than the other wives, and this makes her to champion a rebellion against the attack military strategy of Major Lekoja- Brown. The other wives, slowly, begin to revolt against their husband and they also pursue their dreams too. Mama Rashida begins to earn more money in her business and Sikira chooses to enter politics and goes for the office that her husband had interest in.

The female characters in *Our Husbands Has Gone Mad Again* are presented as submissive and calm at first. However, when Liza gets into the family, the revolutionary and entrepreneuring character of the other wives become established. They begin to challenge the strict authority of Major Lekoja-Brown.

While the female characters in the texts are presented as calm and submissive, or partially calm and submissive, the male characters are presented as domineering and powerful and young ones like Lakunle are presented as revolutionary and individualistic in their view about the culture and environment.