

**UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA**  
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**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS EDUCATION**  
**(EDUCATION/ENGLISH)**

**TOPIC**

**THE PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MODERN  
COMIC WORKS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **THE CONCEPT OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY**

The difference between sex and gender is frequently aligned with the contrast between nature and nurture, between biology and culture and between form and matter.

The sexologist John Money used the grammatical term 'gender' to distinguish masculine and feminine characteristics in hermaphrodites from their miscellaneous male and female physical state. He defined gender role as "all those things that a person says or does to disclose himself or herself as having the status of boy or man, girl or woman.

This money exposed the constructedness and malleability of gender, sex establishes a person's physiological function. Whereas gender is a product of learning, experience and indoctrination.

Sociologists, Judith Jutler, West and Zimmerman see sexuality (sex) as persons biological features and outward appearances. Nonetheless, discrepancies between sex and sex categories emerge when a person's "gender" is displayed. The sociologists hence see gender as an acting based on social norms, which is only established during human interactions.

## **SEXUALITY AND GENDER IN THE PLAY “OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN” BY OLA ROTIMI**

Women in Nigeria are discriminated against, they are marginalized, oppressed and exploited and above all abused. These tendencies also define their place in society, what they should do or should not do.

In the play, women are heavily restrained by their husband upon marriage. Most of their engagement revolves around domestic work and some are rarely allowed to leave their homes. A typical example of this gender denigration through religion is “mama Rashida”. She is not only uneducated but has been turned into a property that is passed on from one man to another. That is, from Lejoka brown’s brother to himself.

Mama Rashida lacks foresight and does not even have a voice of her own. She even refers to Lejoka Brown as master. It takes the grace of Liza for her to realize her inner potential as a business woman.

Women are also presented in the play as illiterate. This is because most culture in Nigeria still tends to invest in their sons instead of their daughters. Sikira and mama Rashida are uneducated. Only Liza can boast of an impressive resume probably because she is not a Nigeria and was educated in US.

In the play “The Rover”, the institution of marriage created rather large disparities for the sexes, as women were subordinated to their husband’s or father’s authority. As such, the propertied classes attempted to secure the conveyance of their estate with the upper classes. Daughters were objectified in this process, as they represented the exchange of estate and fortune rather than of persons.

Florinda in “The Rover” is used by her brother and father as a marriage partner for the old Don vincertio, a rich aristocrat.

Hellena on her own part is “designed for a nun,” which is against her wish. Therefore, the denouncement of this ill custom forms the action in the play.

In the play Hellena acts according to her sexual drive, which clashes with patriarchal conceptions of femininity. Since her role is in part breeches part, their association with role qualities becomes evident, destabilizing traditional instances of gender displays. Disguising themselves as man, they translate her ‘masculine’ desire to count into physical appearance. Her male costumes reveal her need to conceal her feminine nature as patriarchal norms silence female sexual intents.

Alphra Behn draws on the persistent pre-modern belief that women have erotic desire as well. She reveals that society’s expectations have restricted their image to prostitutes but also that this restriction is false. In their masculine dress, the virgins obtains more freedom to act and speak because as Ezilaggi notes,

“dominance is still gendered masculine. Helena apply her knowledge of gender binaries and roles including male privilages in discourse and turn them to her advantage.

Besides, Helena claims to be as inconstant a lover as Willmore when she states that “our business as well as our humours are alike: yours to Cozen as many maids as will trust you and I as many man as have faithf” Helena endeavour to have Willmore recognize they are an equal terms regarding that intelligence and eloquence.

## **SEXUALITY AND GENDER IN THE TRIAL OF BROTHER JERO**

The characters of “The Trials of Brother Jero are bound to their gender roles with many personality trait explicitly attributed to a character’s sex. Men consistently struggle to steer clear of the temptation of sin posed by women.

Brother Jero himself admits that he has one weakness which is “women” the basis of the central conflict between his desired self image and reality.

Chume, too, fight the urge to bear Amope for her constant pestering. Women are described as “fickle”. “The plague” and “daughters of discord”. This characterization by Jero and Chime places blame on women for the burden they place on men and their sinful nature.

The women of the play on the other hand feel eved to the will of men and therefore, similarly limited.

Amope complains that “it is a tough life for a woman” as she most depend on Chume and what he provides, which she deems insufficient for her needs.

The barrier between men and women causes lapses in understanding and strained relationship. In this way, the theme of gender drives much of the plot in the play.

Wole Soyinka in his lion and Jewel portrays women as object that must be possess at all cost (the jewel) Baroka has many wives but still seek to have Sidi.

## **CONCLUSION**

Gender and sexuality are usually portrayed in plays. The reward of a hero is usually a woman. Women are being looked at as an object to possess. Therefore, gender and sexuality as terms is important in analyzing works of art (play or prose).