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**TOPIC: THE PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ANY**

**TWO COMIC PLAY**

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

Gender and sexuality are two different words that are interwoven. Mostly, they work interchangeably in the sense that mostly we encounter sexuality where there is gender. Sexuality is the sexual habits and desires of a person while gender has to do with the state of being male or female. In gender and sexuality, there is mostly the representation of male or female gender with the way they play their different roles concerning sexuality. In most literary works and our contemporary world, different gender is given respect based on the rank or value they have in a particular community.

Talking about gender now, female gender is been treated lower than the male gender. This can be seen in our different families, in the church, in our political environment, even in the Bible. Based on African cultural context, female gender is seen as inferior while the male gender is considered superior. Africans prefer to give more respect to “a one year old boy” to an old woman. The regard for male supersedes that of a female and this is one of the problems that people encounter in African cultural society, because any woman who did not born a male child is seen as not having a child at all. Also, the degradation of female gender is seen in the Bible, when Jesus feed the people with loafs of bread and fishes, it was only the males among them that were recorded.

In terms of sexuality, the male sexuality is still more respected than that of the female sexuality in the cultural context. There have been several occasions where a man and a woman are caught in an illegal sexual act, the male gender will be set free while the female gender will be punished.

In some of the modern comic plays, gender and sexuality are portrayed very well. Looking at Wole Soyinka "the Lion and The Jewel", gender and sexuality is seen in and out of the work. In the work, female gender is marginalized as property. They believe that female genders are properties that could be bought, sold or accumulated. Baroka, the king of Sidi's village married several women and amid the wives are still young girls. The respect for female gender is lacked that the old king engages in what can be called child abuse. It is seen as child abuse because the youngest wife can be his daughter but they don't look at it as abusing the female gender and that is even the reason why he still wants to marry Sidi as his wife as old as he is. He uses this as way of getting between the legs of all the ladies he wants to have. It is the sexuality of Sidi that makes Baroka to keep on persisting that he will marry her. The sexuality of the female gender most of the time is what attracts the male gender to them. This is portrayed in the character of Baroka and Lakunle in their quest to get Sidi as their wife. Even Lakunle who claims to be modern still falls a victim of this act. He looks down on Sidi for having a smaller brain but it is still the female sexuality of Sidi that attracts him to her. This comic work also presents the female gender as people who can be as easily deceived. The character of Sidi and Sadiku is deceived by Baroka that he is now impotent and Sadiku tells Sidi, who still believes what Sadiku says without questioning what she has heard from Sadiku.

In Tartuffe by Moliere, gender and sexuality really portrays very well in this work. The role of male gender is still seen as been more superior to the female gender. Characters like Orgon and Tartuffe portrays the male gender and shows they are at greater height to the women. While Mariane represents the female gender that is portrayed as an obedient and submissive female character who remains calm from outwardly expressing her opinion. She is the character who

reflects what the society find acceptable in women and displays what function women play within a hierarchical system. This is apparent within several scenes between her and Orgon. The scene where Mariane expresses her distain towards her father's plan only to have it utterly dismissed by Orgon shows the dilemma most women at that time faced. Their voices were largely unheard even though it is rational and morally right. The female gender is also use as the object of wealth, power and ownership. This is seen when Orgon states that he wants to grant Tartuffe into his family, so that Tartuffe will be Mariane's husband. Also, Mariane supports ideal women by her soft spoken nature and her decision to delegate the responsibility of vocalizing her direct distain towards her father's plan to Dorine. Marine holds a blind obedience towards men even though men's decision can lead to an unfavorable outcome. Notwithstanding that, the female gender is used to convince Orgon to follow through with her plans. She displays a great understanding of men and expertly uses persuasive language to expose Tartuffe within her grand scheme. Elmire demonstrates that women are capable beings who deserve more than what the patriarchal hierarchy deems them.

Sexuality is actually a prominent theme in this work, although there was no real sexual act in the play, we can still find it in the play. Tartuffe is carried away by this lust for Elmire. He wants to have sex with her regardless of the fact that she is married to Orgon. It is as a result of this that Orgon throws him out of his house and finally lands himself into trouble. He displays his lust for Elmire when he proffers his love for her. He professes his love for her without knowing that Damis is hearing him from outside. He goes on to profess love to her right in her home without considering her husband. As if that is not enough, he still proclaims love to her on the second occasion without knowing that Orgon is hiding under the table. He is deceived by Elmire who tells him that she is ready to be his lover. Tartuffe not knowing the trick continues to profess his

love for her until Orgon comes out from his hiding place. This sexual act displayed by Tartuffe shows how immoral he is. Even though he did not make love to her, it is a sexual attitude because he would have succeeded if not for the interference of Orgon and Damis.