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TOPIC:

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

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THE PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN LION AND THE JEWEL BY WOLE SOYINKA AND ARMS AND THE MAN BY GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Gender refers to the social identities, expectations and privileges different cultures construct for members of the different biological sexes. Gender expectations, which vary greatly between cultures, establish the boundaries of acceptable individual social behavior such as dress, marriage, property rights, household duties and "sexuality," one's self-expression as a sexual being. Unlike biological sex, cultures may accept or assign many more than two genders. During the time of Shakespeare, there was a social construct of gender and sexuality norms just as there are today. There was a hierarchy of sexes and each had their own role in society. Men were masculine, they were not ruled by emotion, they were strong and hard working. Women belonged in the home, they were ruled by men and by their emotions and therefore were thought to often make bad decisions. Masculine men can play effeminate women roles (which they did on stage) and effeminate women can play masculine men roles. During the time when William Shakespeare was alive and writing, there were social norms about gender and sexuality that existed similarly as they do today. A major difference is that today there are feminist movements out to abolish gender inequality where as during Shakespeare's time, women were fully aware of their role in society and generally shared the same viewpoint as the men did. Woman's place was within doors, her business domestic...Women...themselves accepted this divorce between the private (feminine) and public (masculine) sphere.

In *The Lion and the Jewel*, women are really considered the second sex, essentially created to serving men. It is about a young beautiful girl, Sidi, over whom two men are fighting in order to win her heart. The first one, Lakunle, symbolizes

modernity and western culture. The second, Baroka, the village chief, symbolizes tradition and Yoruba's culture. Both will play all tricks to convince Sidi to accept their project of marriage but it is Baroka who wins and marries her at the end. The results of this work shows that the playwright portrays the male character as a strong creature with rational matters, while the female character represented a woman as being more concerned with the emotional side in their relationships. When the teacher Lakunle and Chief Baroka vie for her affection, at first she will have nothing to do with them. The pedantic schoolmaster's ideas of what is 'civilized' are truly laughable. Lakunle promises Sidi that they will eat: Together we shall sit at table -Not on the floor - and eat, Not with fingers, but with knives And forks and breakable plates Like civilized beings. Finally she agrees to marry Lakunle if he will pay the bride-price: I've told you, and I say it again I shall marry you today, next week Or any day you name But my bride-price must first be paid.

The sympathies of the audience are entirely with Sidi. It is Sadiku, the chief wife of Baroka, very cleverly tries to convince Sidi into a visit to the Palace. So that Baroka may use coaxing or force according to circumstances. She invites Sidi to a supper party to be given by the chief. Sidi declines and says that Baroka is in the habit of inviting to his parties only girls on whom he has designs. Always, they become his wives or concubines by the next day. As a woman in a polygamous society, Sadiku has been trained to put-up with many things which may hurt her self-respect as an individual. She has not merely to put up with the favourite her husband has been choosing from time to time, but also to invite the woman on whom his fancy falls to marry him. On the surface, she is loyal to her husband and, if her attempts to persuade Sidi are typical, she puts her heart and soul in recruiting new brides for her husband. But Soyinka portrays her individuality in revealing to us her long-standing resentment at sharing her husband with many women. Her stifled self-respect asserts itself

in her dance of triumph at the supposed loss of manliness by Baroka and in her attempt to celebrate it by a mummer's show: Sadiku: Ask no questions my girl. Just join my victory dance. Oh Sango my lord, who of us possessed your lightning and ran like fire through that lion's tail- Sadiku: - Is Baroka not more of a man than you? And if he is no longer a man than what are you?.. Sadiku is interesting by herself, an old woman who is not soured by life and whom age has not deprived of high spirits.

In George Bernard Shaw's play, *Arms and the Man*, it pays attention to difference between characters of social class and gender or sexes. George Bernard Shaw pictures gender role in characters, Louka, Catherine, Sergius, and other. There is masculinity in Louka's character while annoying Nicola. She reveals her control through her interaction with Sergius. Mrs. Petkoff also shows masculinity in controlling house hold works in absence of her husband Mr. Petkoff. In first act of the play, Raina is threaded by Bluntschli who runs and escapes from soldiers. He threatens a defenseless woman with his gun and allows her to hide him behind the curtain. Nicola is a principle male servant of Petkoff household and Louka is beautiful maid and Nicola's fiancée. Nicola has his ambitions and wants to be a businessman. When he realized that Sergius has romantic desire to Louka, he decided to have Louka as a customer rather than a wife. So he encourages her to engage with Sergius. It can be deduced that Nicola used Louka as an object for gaining his wish as Bluntschli who used Raina as an object to save himself. Here, Shaw illustrates the condition of women in society and the way they are behaved by men. Nicola is satisfied for achieving customer like Louka in his business rather than worry about his fiancée. He is ready to separate from Louka and encourage her to do it only for his ambitions. On the other side, Sergius prefers Louka to Raina when noticed Raina's hidden secret of chocolate cream soldier. He

announced his engagement with Louka who is a lady like Raina now. Mrs. Petkoff

also shows masculinity in controlling house hold works in absence of her husband Mr. Petkoff. It can be understood from her servants conversation. Nicola: Be warned in time, Louka: mend your manners. know the mistress. She is so grand that she never dreams that any servant could dare to be disrespectful to her; but if once suspects that you are defying her, out you go.

George Bernard Shaw further shows the vulgarity and impoliteness of the Petkoff towards women when Raina explains that Bulgarians of good standing people in our position wash their really hands nearly every day or the time, Petkoff blames his wife's chronic sore throat on washing her neck every day.

"Catherine: Oh, my usual sore throats; that are all. Petkoff: [with conviction] that comes from washing your neck everyday. I have often told you so". His lecture on the foolishness of frequent bathing is a sign of how wealthy men behave with women. For these people there is no difference between high and low class of women.