

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA NSUKKA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ART EDUCATION (ENGLISH)

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

AN

ASSIGNMENT

**PREPARARED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
OF THE COURSE: ELS 240**

(MODERN COMEDY)

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INTRODUCTION

The word sex is very common in today's society majority of people know what sex is. But sex is only a small part of who we are as sexual beings. Even people who are not having sex are sexual beings. And so there's another word that you should know and use too. That word is sexuality. Here are some of the things that are included when we talk about sexuality: Sexuality is much more than body parts and sex (though it includes these things, too). Sexuality includes our gender identity (the core sense that we are female or male). Sexuality is an integral part of who we are, what we believe, what we feel, and how we respond to others. Which means that whether you like it or not and whether you say anything or not, you will have a strong influence on the sexuality of your children? Silence may even speak louder than words. Gender is a socially constructed definition of women and men. It is not the same as sex (biological characteristics of women and men) and it is not the same as women. Gender is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life.

Gender is obviously a heavy topic and should not be touched on lightly. There is only so much I can say on the topic without overstepping some bounds but in this post I'll be looking at the roles these topics play in the play *The Lion and the Jewel* by Wole Soyinka, and Sexuality in Oscar Wilde's *Importance Of Being Ernest*. *The Lion and the Jewel* is about the struggle between Baroka, the

“lion”, and Lakunle over the right to marry Sidi, the “Jewel”. Baroka represents traditional life and Lakule represents western influence. Gender in this story is very stratified and gender roles are strict. *The Lion and the Jewel* is quite oppressive in its gender roles but that is not as in focus as in a rant from Lakule about modernization in a fight with a traditionalist old woman, Sadiku, he says “Within a year or two, I swear, this town shall see a transformation. Bride-price will be a thing forgotten and wives shall take their place by men.” (Soyinka 36). This sounds nice and progressive, but look at the next page in the same rant and you find “We’ll buy saucepans for all the women...No man shall take more wives than one. That’s why they’re impotent too soon.” (Soyinka 37). Lakunle apparently still wants women in the kitchen and doesn’t want monogamy for equality, but so men will stop being infertile. The gender inequality in this situation is less blatant but you can still see the deeply entrenched social norms that Lakunle may not even realize he is adhering to. Wole Soyinka examines several gender issues throughout the play *The Lion and the Jewel*. One of the most significant gender issues in the play concerns the role of women in society. Soyinka depicts how women are treated as property in Yoruba culture through the payment of the bride-price. Men are free to buy as many wives as they can afford and women occupy a lower social status than men.

Sexuality we justifies this in Oscar Wilde’s *Importance Of Being Ernest*
Wilde's contention that a whole world exists separate from Victorian manners

and appearances is demonstrated in the girlish musings of Cecily. When she hears that Jack's "wicked" brother Ernest is around, she is intensely desirous of meeting him. She says to Algernon, "I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time." The thought of meeting someone who lives outside the bounds of prudery and rules is exciting to naïve Cecily. Even using the name Ernest for his secret life is ironic because Algernon is not being dutiful Earnest in living a secret life. Various characters in the play allude to passion, sex and moral looseness. Chasuble and Prism's flirting and coded conversations about things sexual, Algernon stuffing his face to satisfy his hungers, the diaries (which are the acceptable venues for passion), and Miss Prism's three-volume novel are all examples of an inner life covered up by suffocating rules. Even Algernon's aesthetic life of posing as the dandy, dressing with studied care, neglecting his bills, being unemployed and pursuing pleasure instead of duty is an example of Victorians valuing trivialities. Once Algernon marries he will have suffocating rules and appearances to keep up. Wilde's characters allude to another life beneath the surface of Victorian correctness. Much of the humour in this play draws a fine line between the outer life of appearances and the inner life of rebellion against the social code that says life must be lived earnestly.

In conclusion Gender equity requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender

equity does not mean that women and men become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal. Which this was really taken out of place in Soyinka's *Lion and the Jewel* and in the aspect of sexuality Sexuality is an integral part of who we are, what we believe, what we feel, and how we respond to others. and it also deals with the passion and feelings we have as humans we see it in Wilde's *Importance Of Being Ernest* Chasuble and Prism's flirting and coded conversations about things sexual it must not always be until two persons are having intercourse then it then term as sexuality, William Wycherley *Country wife* depicts greater part of these in the characters of the play.