

**UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH & LITERARY
STUDIES**

**TOPIC
PRESENTATION ON GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN
ANY OF THE TWO PLAYS STUDIED**

**AN ASSIGNMENT
PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE: ELS 240
(MODERN COMEDY; MOLIÈRE TO SOYINKA)**

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The word “gender” is a derivation from the Latin noun “genus” meaning kind or group. It is commonly used to denote the biological and anatomical differences between males and females as defined by primary and secondary sex characteristics.

In J.P. Clark’s *Wives Revolt*, it reveals the subordination of women as being part of the overall exploitation and injustice that is both inherent and inevitable in all male dominated, chauvinistic or patriarchal society. In this play however; women are treated more or less like animals; it is a society controlled by men.

Men in this literary text are therefore likened to the bourgeois or capitalists class who, though fewer in number controls much of the society’s resources despite the fact that the females represent the oppressed majority whose work is undervalued. This proposition is illustrated in the text, where Okoro, husband to Koko, Idama Okoro’s close friend and other village cabinets sell their land, a communal asset (property) that belongs to the entire community, ordinarily

should be divided equally among the members of the community inversely , the male chauvinist share the money among themselves at the expenses of women. As if the ill-treatment they display against women is not enough they make a bye- law that women should stop rearing goats, on the ground that the goats are constituting nuisance or fomenting problems in their community. On that process, they start killing the goats without having sense of guilt even when they know that those goats are being reared by their women. They men are being so inconsiderate by the exhibition of this unfair treatment towards women folk, wives per say the women decide to leave the village for the men and settle in another distance place from their own village for being treated callously by their men (Husband). Instead of them (men) at this point, realizing their unfair treatment and callous disregarded, they ask them to go away still, that they prefer staying alone than being with them.

Their men refuse to ask them to come back until they recognize the role, their wives play in their various homes. Even upon recognizing the roles their women play in their

various homes some of them more especially Okoro are still so obdurate that nothing happens. When the women return there is reconciliation they reunite with their husband and above all, there is a new society been formed at that spot.

Now at this juncture, it is palpably visible that women are being denied of some many things such as: participation in social, economic and cultural issues that critically affect them and at the most extreme cases, voice and inclusiveness in decision making process. It is indispensable however, to note that it is due to their (men) callousness over women that makes the women to be stricken or inflicted by a chronic disease from the toilet they use during their sojourn to another village. Succinctly, without men being so cynical over women, they wouldn't have fell into such victim.

We also have the same parallel structure with Moliere's *The Miser*, where Harpagon constricts his daughter, Elise to marry a fifty years old man called Anselme without being care to know whether his daughter Elise loves him or not.

Meanwhile, Elise is in love with Valere the very boy that rescues her from being drowned. Harpagon is a rich man as well as very miserly, who doesn't want to spend his money that is the reason, he wants an old man to marry Elise instead. Elise being his daughter, goes to him on a regular basis to allow her to marry a man of her choice and the father says that he has provided for her a man to marry. In this play, Elise has nothing to say, she has no voice to retract the views of her father towards her marriage life. And this opposition triggers into a serious issue between them, that makes Valere, Elise's beloved ask Elise so that both of them will leave the community since her father has refused him to marry her. Not until the fifty-year-old man (Anselme) discovers that Valere and Mariane and his children Harpagon, never allows them to marry each other. Mariane is a girl that Anselme Harpagon's son loves whom he (Harpagon) equally loves too. And these Valere and Mariane are two children to Anselme whom he thinks have lost for years with their mother (his wife). This play however depicts how Elise is shabbily treated by her father on whom to marry

this is to ascertain every available point that he wields power over her; as a woman she has no option rather than to succumb to his own view, whether she likes the development or not. From the foregoing collectively, it can be inferred, that women receive unfair treatment from men. From the two text studies. *The wives Revolt* and the *Miser*, they portray or detect the spheres of gender inequality at every point. In both two texts however, women are not allowed to exercise their freedom, lack of profound concern simply because they are women, denial of voice and participation in social, economic, personal and cultural matters.

Consequently, this formed the basis of superiority /inferiority or super ordinate /subordinate relationship of males and females in their respective literary domain.