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TOPIC

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

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WHAT IS GENDER?

Gender is the fact of being a male or female, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences, not differences in biology. Gender is also way of talking about men and women. Gender role is the idea that people should behave in certain ways because of their gender. For instance, it was traditionally the role of the man to earn money and the role of the women to educate the children. Observed behavior can either come from the person or be a result of social and cultural factors a person is exposed to. This role is dependent on the culture and history of the society that they are part of. It is a set of societal norms dictating the types of behaviors which are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for the people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality.

On the other hand, sexuality encompasses nearly every aspect of our being, from attitudes and values, to feelings and experiences. It is influenced by the individual, family, culture, religion, spirituality, laws professions, institutions, science and politics. Sexuality is inborn. Once a child is born, the sex of that child

is determined either as a male or a female. Sexuality include: sensuality, intimacy, sexual identity, sexual health and reproduction.

So, the presentation of gender and sexuality is the way an author presents his characters. He does that through role and language that characters disclose. In the Lion and the Jewel, Wole Soyinka presents his male characters as, strong, powerful and metaphorically as lion, a symbol of irresistible power. They are also portrayed as initiation, doer of something and commander in chief, the king etc, while their female counterparts (Sidi, Sadiku & Favourite) are represented as goals and or beneficiaries of men's actions and associated with processes of sensing and of emotion.

In art, a literary work consciously or unconsciously reveals and is determined by both the writer's view and the socio-historical development of its time, so much so that even those writers who apparently invent their own literary terms still deal with pressing contemporary issues.

In the Lion and the Jewel, women are really considered as the second sex, or weaker sex essentially created for serving men. Baroka and Lakunle are presented as professionals in the work. Their trick to persuade Sidi show that Baroka represents the old culture and the authority in the house. There is no real husband and wife relationship in his marriage to his wives. He is the head and the dictator.

None of his wife dares challenge him. His wives are denied every right to live free. Their attitudes show that they are not free from him. For instance, when Sadiku tells him about Sidi's respond, he arrogantly backs at her. He tells her that she has not done her best to convince her. The relationship there is too official. When he tells Sadiku about his manhood failure, she feels pity for him and comes out to rejoice over female's victory on men. This simply tells us that she is not comfortable in her marriage as a wife. His wives cannot take decision for themselves.

On the part of Favourite, another of Baroka's wife, her movement is not guaranteed. For instance, when Sidi goes to Baroka's house, he asks her to check if Favourite is not in her usual place. Favourite is indirectly made the gate woman. She stays there to inform Baroka "the Bale" about someone's arrival. Honestly, from my own perspective, this is not love. This is not respect as well but living in bondage. The type of comment he made because Favourite is not in her usual place should also tell us that they cannot stand to take decision. Even when Favourite is massaging him, he lies down and she stands up to do that asking him if she has improved. In a marriage if the both parties exercise equal freedom, both should romance each other and not like the way Baroka does his own.

On Sidi's part, Lakunle doesn't want to pay the bride price because he sees it as barbaric, obsolete, outdated etc. but on the other hand, I see it that he does not

respect the feeling of Sidi. He wants his opinion to prevail but it does not work out the way he planned it. Sidi finally falls prey to the Bale “Baroka”. He uses his position, material things to win her.

All these portray women as the weaker sex. They are on the losing side.

Just like in the Rover. Because of gender role and inequality, Florinda is not allowed to marry the man of her heart Belvile but the one chosen by her father Don Vincentio. However, her brother Don Pedro also wants her to marry his friend Don Antonio. When Hellena her sister depends her love of Belvile with their brother Don Pedro, she is confined in a room just because she expresses her thought. Automatically, she is not to talk about anything concerning love because as tradition demands, her father is the one that decides what she will be or do with her life. That is why, she is to be a Nun. So, all these are gender inequality that Alphonso Ben portrays in her work.

Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again – Ola Rotimi

In this comic work written by Ola Rotimi, he presents gender as equal. So, there is gender equality in this work. Though, before the arrival of Liza, the white woman and wife of Lejoka Brown, his wives also are relegated to the ground. The tone in which it is written is original in the sense that it conveys the Nigerian style of thoughts and deeds. He weakens Lejoka Brown, an educated and unwise man

who is even involved in politics. His two wives Mama Rashida and Sikira represent the inequality of gender until the coming of Liza which liberates women from their position to the extent that Sikira overthrows her husband in their political career.

Liza is a liberal woman who tries to carry out all her activities strategically to influence her environment the way she wants it to be influenced.

On her arrival at Lejoka Brown's house, she turns Sikira to her personal maid. She brainwashes Sikira that men and women are equal and Sikira carries it out. It is from her influence that Sikira picks interest in politics and as luck may have it succeeds and even outshines her male counterparts. This is what it supposes to be. Man and woman are supposed to be seen and heard in the society not man alone.

I am not violating the command of God in the Bible that a woman should be under her husband. True, women should be under their husbands as it is ordained from the beginning of the world but woman's right should not be tampered with. Respect, submissive and deprivation of one's right are different concepts. Traditionally, Africans believe that a woman is like a property possessed by a man. That is why their interests are not carried along. But Ola Rotimi has a different

concept all together. This experience I believe is the experience he gets from abroad during his course of study. Else, he would have even been maybe the worst.

So, Ola Rotimi presents both sexes as equal. The way he makes Lejoka Brown educated but unwise is the way he makes Sikira and Mama Rashida uneducated and unwise. It is only when Liza comes that she enlightened both Sikira and Mama Rashida to know that women have right of their own, which makes Sikira to exercise such in her political carrier and outshines her male rival.

CONCLUSION

Presentation of gender and sexuality is different from feminism. While some writers present their male characters as strong and superior, some present theirs as inferior and weak. The same goes to the females. What influences the way a writer presents his character is mainly the society's value. So, time and value directly or indirectly influences author's way of presenting his characters to his audience. His believe and experiences also contribute. Through the language of the character and his role, the audience can infer if that character is strong, superior, weak, inferior, wit, comic, tactic, etc. character.