

The presentation of Gender and sexuality in The lion and The Jewel and La Mandragola.

Gender is The properties that distinguish organisms on the basis of their reproductive roles and it's society role. In the "The lion and The Jewel" gender is more presented or better said the dormant theme to Sexuality which is to some extent abysmal. As a representation of African culture particularly Yoruba in a fictional village ilujunle, gender imbalance is seen and is in particular a reality in our African society. This is seen where even the education Lakunle ridicules, belittles Sidi's woman power . He admonishes her that she should not carry things on her head because her neck will be squashed, but she retorts that he said he did not care about her looks before. He agrees but says it is unwomanly to carry loads thusly. Also is Baroda who is a man respect and honour couldn't condone Sidi's unruly behavior even though he wants to marry her even when she enters, he asks her if there was no one to stop unwanted strangers from entering his house. Sidi is surprised.

Baroka starts to act a bit friendlier towards her, but he asserts that it annoys him when young women are spiteful or forward. Until she claims repentant.

This issue of gender presentation in this drama is a reference to this biblical allusion based on the belief in the bible where God created man first and woman also automatically in rank man is higher. Soyinka consciously and unconsciously presented male characters as powerful, strong and metaphorically as a Lion symbol of irresistible power. They are also portrayed as initiators, doer of something, commander in chief, the king while their female counterparts (Sidi/Sadiku) are presented as goal and or beneficiaries of men's action and are associated with processes of sensing and emotion. Just written above the female sense of emotions and sensing is seen when Baroka is in bed in his luxurious room. His current favorite wife is plucking hairs from his armpit. he tells Sadiku to come comfort him. Sadiku tickles Baroka's feet when he lies down. The women manages the kitchen and home this is seen when Sidi Sidi asks if weak women are not the ones that pound yams and plant millet this is typical a female stereotype gender roles even in nowadays modern society. The symbol of strength is seen in Baroda even as 62 his able to wrestle down an opponent and win love.

Polygamy an aspect of gender presentation in this work. In a typical African culture and the fictional illujunle the female gender is subjected to one husband per-life time while the male a full description of polygamy Baroka at 62 has many

wives and still want one more and still win over the young single western minded guy.

Another yet to be discussed presentation of the Lion and The Jewel is Sexuality . Sexuality is simply is a person's tendency of sexual attraction, especially whether heterosexual or homosexual . Sexuality is both heterosexually viewed in the drama in the contemporary view of sex as regards to Lakunle and traditional view of Sex (Sidi, Baroka) . traditionally sexuality is disdained mostly as it regards to sex before marriage, a traditional society where the payment of bride price is highly recognized most especially the virgin maiden. This shows that in "The Lion and The Jewel" chastity is valued and respected if a young girl keeps herself pure before marriage her bride price is paid thus portrays her as a jewel and a recognized wife. Also when Sidi is willing to marry Lakunle but he must pay her bride-price or she will be a laughingstock: the village will say she was not a virgin. Also is her willing to marry Baroda who recognizes the importance of brilliance and virginity over the young lakunle. While the contemporary view of Sexuality is seen in the character lakunle. His a character who because of civilized mind disposed the payment of bride even with symbol of Virginity accustomed to it which he calls "savage custom, barbaric, out-dated, / Rejected, denounced, accursed, / Excommunicated, archaic, degrading, /Humiliating, unspeakable, redundant. / Retrogressive, remarkable, unpalatable" (7). Also his still will to marry her even after been deflowered by Baroka, Sidi come running and sobbing "it was a trick" Lakunle is horrified and asks if she is still a maid. Sidi shakes her head no. Lakunle recoils, but then stands tall. He says his love is selfless and he will still marry Sidi. He also does not need to pay the bride-price anymore, because she is not a maid. Sidi looks at him, puzzled. She asks if he would still marry her; when he says yes. A contemporary view of sexuality is not barbaric and low viewed this implies that even if the bride to be is being defied by another the love still exist. Also is western view of love making which to them is not bad for married couples to kiss in the public is not frowned at but traditional it's is. To Sidi Lakunle tells her She should not be his chattel or his property. She will be a modern wife, and they will kiss in the street. A western view of love making is romantic per-say and quite enviable but to an illiterate mind Sidi is disgusted, which wearies Lakunle. He calls her a "bush-girl" (9). She finds him and his words of love mad, and sees why everyone thinks him to be a fool.

Rape as a presentation of sexuality is seen when Baroda tricks Sadly and Didi about his infertile manhood only to take away the pride of the proud Jewel of

illujunle. Baroka takes away Sidi's virginity as against her will when in our society nowadays is case worth prosecuting the offender. But who those this in Baroda's society, where is the nerve to protest by Sidi, the male is a dominant sex and gets away with I'll treated matted on the lower sex female.

Another presentation of sexuality can be seen as love and lust. Baroda wants to have Sidi not because of love but because of lost, her beauty and her new status in the village as regards to the popularity of her been in the magazine. He takes away her virginity and yet marries her not as a single wife but last out of many. Lakunle in contrast love's Sidi and willing to marry her against all odds in a Christian church but refusal to pay her bride.

Virginity for the highest bidder, Sidi views her sexuality as a weapon, men as her opponents, and her virginity as a treasure to be sold only to the highest bidder. This shows her rejection of the young educated Lakunle who refuses to pay her bride price to marrying The Bale who is rich and his willingness to pay even as old as 62 years.

In La Mandragola gender and Sexuality is used interchangeably but in contrast to Lion and The Jewel no gender discrimination and conflict of culture. Beginning with La Mandragola, we find Lucrezia, who has the desire to be a mother, which her impotent husband cannot make her, but also a desire to select a sexual partner other than her husband. She still was not allowed to express this desire, but the audience acknowledges that Lucrezia has such a desire, and accepts it. Throughout the play, this almost silent character, if we compare the amount of lines she is given with her importance to the work, is able to work through a male character, utilizing opportunities which arise in order to change circumstances in her favor. Still, Lucrezia is not able to verbally express her desires. More to say the female gender here doesn't have much to say but rather the male. Ideas of gender shifted from established binaries, to blurred shades of varying levels of agency and desires. Characters, much like the people they represented, became more complex. While by no means did gender inequality cease to be an issue, it was brought seriously into question for the first time, with ultimately important changes made. In La Mandragola, we see that the allowed and expected desires of women had begun to expand from this simple maternal desires to more complex human desires, including sexual desires. Woman who had for so long been seen as the inferior version of man, was now taking on more depth with deeper with a larger sense of equality and more similarities between the genders. Gender balance is reached when two characters interact in such a way that one is performing the

initiative role and the other the appropriate resultant role. In *La Mandragola*, Lucrezia is not consulted as to her own initiative desires, merely presented with the initiative desires of others such as Callimaco. As such, the only expression she is allowed is to accept the appropriate resultant role. While she is consulted, she is not truly given a choice in the matter. She is presented the plan, with the intent of being persuaded regardless. Since she accepts, though, the interaction is harmonious. Sostrata has an initiative desire, for her to agree to the mandrake plot. She then expresses an initiative role by presenting her desire to Lucrezia. Lucrezia then adopts the appropriate resultant role, which would be expressing acceptance of involvement in the plot. Ultimately, there is a successful exchange. Lucrezia's inability to express an initiative role does not mean no women are allowed to express the initiative role, however.

There has been an advancement in *La Mandragola* to respect with the expression of initiative desire, but still the women are not allowed to realize their desires themselves. Lucrezia who wants the Object (desire), in this case being the displacement of Niece, her husband, something she does not have the power to do as a woman in Renaissance Italy. Callimaco falls in love with Lucrezia, however, and does have the ability to displace Niece through a larger plot enacted with the help of a group. In the end, Lucrezia gets her desire, to have a lover that is not her husband, through the efforts of Callimaco, a male-figure with male power privilege.

Sexuality a view in *La Mandragola*: As man conquers the world, so too he conquers the female. In Niccolò Machiavelli's *La Mandragola*, fortune is always seen from a male point of view. The term fortune, meaning chance or luck as an external or arbitrary force affecting human affairs, is often used in this work yet not Lucrezia—the principal female character—is able to control her own destiny. Each woman's life, and its set course, is controlled by

feelings of weakness, fear, and intimidation that stem from being seen, not as woman, but as an object to be possessed. For Lucrezia, in *La Mandragola*, Her main function is simply to provoke the men who want her. When it is her sole purpose to provoke the "pazzia" of Callimaco, who would have undoubtedly ended up like Orlando were he not able to fulfill his sexual desires with Lucrezia. Lucrezia has nothing to do with the success or failure of Callimaco's plan. She has no say in the matter and in order to achieve success Callimaco only has to convince Lucrezia's husband, Messer Nicia, that the plan he has put forth is a good one. Once in Lucrezia's bedroom, Callimaco is able to force himself upon her. Sex is

something that men do to women; men take the initiative, make things happen, and control the event. This case is no exception and only after he has had his way with her body, does Callimaco take a chance and tell her the truth about himself and thereby introducing her to a world of satisfaction and adultery. Lucrezia's only desire, the reader is told, is to live an honest life in the grace of God.²⁷ In the words of Callimaco, Lucrezia is "honestissima et al tutto aliena dale cose d'amore."²⁸ Were it not for all of the pressure from outside forces, Lucrezia would never have sinned. It is through the experience of sexuality that women learn about gender, female subordination and male power.

Historically, women have been able to increase their bargaining power with men by refusing to give in to a man's sexual desires. By holding out on sexual favors, women could influence the men that courted them. As female beauty and implied sexuality are associated with male success, a beautiful and sexy woman is seen as an enviable prize for a successful male. For Lucrezia it is instead the opposite. Their power comes from giving in to a man's sexual advances. Once Lucrezia becomes the woman possessed, she ceases to be the woman desired. After Callimaco possesses her body, Lucrezia holds the key to his happiness and it becomes something that she can give to him, or take away, whenever she pleases. Lucrezia is the object that Callimaco must have and will stop at nothing to possess.

Lucrezia's life is ruled by those around her and it is not until she allows herself to be possessed by Callimaco that her situation begins to improve. In exchange, however, Lucrezia gives up her humanity. Her status is reduced to that of a thing, a mere sexual instrument. Callimaco, who always has a kind word when it comes to Lucrezia, is obviously not interested in her because of her high moral character. He seems best able to express his true feelings when speaking with the devious Ligurio, a man who will do anything to improve his own situation. When talking to Ligurio, Callimaco offers no praise of Lucrezia instead only his need to possess her. His love is an expression of the lover's physical needs and his selfishness is made clear throughout the play. Even though Lucrezia's problems stem from her husband's sterility, she is to blame for the failure of conception. By taking Callimaco as a permanent lover, Lucrezia is able to resolve the legal problem of an heir and secure her own future. In accepting Callimaco, Lucrezia establishes the ground rules and tells him: "Perhò io ti prendo per signiore, patrone, guida; tu mio padre, tu mio difensore et tu voglio che sia ogni mio bene." Were something to happen to Messer Nicia, Callimaco, who readily accepts Lucrezia's proposal, would be right there to take his place. Lucrezia gains some power over Callimaco

by exploiting her own weakness. Females learn the subtle lesson of controlling powerful men through demonstrated helplessness but this “learned helplessness” also serves to entrap women.⁵⁹ Callimaco has taken title to Lucrezia’s body, a great sexual convenience as well as a testament to his intellectual stature, and in return he has to assume the burden of protecting her from potential harm. This is what Callimaco promises Lucrezia. He has gained access to her body and in return she is given the protection and security that her situation previously lacked. After being under the control of others, Lucrezia finally has a chance to gain some control over her own situation and it is an opportunity that she will not let slip away.

The presentation of gender and sexuality in the above plays though the same vocabularies but different contest of usage. Terms to appraise the authors ability to present in reality a real life situations of a two cultures and how they see life, sexuality and gender differently. It’s discrimination gender as in *The Lion and The Jewel* and sexual frown at flirt before marriage that is no payment of bride price for deflowered maidens and a somehow or near balanced gender view in *LA Mandragola* where Lucrezia is been begged and talked into accepting to conform to her husband wishes. Gender pride in women arouses after a potential has been discovered eggs Sidi having seen herself on the magazine thinks there is no female equal to her and men are subjected to her charge also in *LA Mandragola* Lucrezia having been satisfied by Callimaco and having the tendency to give birth to a heir her rights increase in her home and mouth.