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STUDIES**

**TOPIC:  
GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN LION AND THE JEWEL AND  
MARRIAGE OF ANANSEWA**

**AN ASSIGNMENT  
PREPARED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENT OF  
THE COURSE: ELS 240  
(MODERN COMEDY)**

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**JULY, 2017**

# **GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN LION AND THE JEWEL AND MARRIAGE OF ANANSWA**

## **ABSTRACT**

The concept of gender and sexuality is no new phenomena in the literary world. Numerous books have been written to depict the roles of male and female in a stereotyped world and female's sexuality in the society.

This work pays attention to Wole Soyinka's *Lion and Jewel* and Efua Sutherland's *the Marriage of Anansewa*. This works portrays how woman are seen as objects to be sold and bought.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Gender

The modern English word 'gender' comes from the latin word 'genu' which means 'kind', 'type', or 'sort'.

The word 'gender' was initially used simply as an alternative to sex as a biological category, over the years, it has carried out a more in-depth meaning.

Gender refers to features or personalities possessed by males and females which differentiate them from each other. Simply put, gender is the state of being male or female.

The gender system which specifies certain roles for men and women is a creation of the societal norms of a community or the culture of a people. No individual is born into the world with a script specifying one's role in life but society specifies set down roles for male which differs from the female and sets them apart right from childhood.

The phenomenon, gender, is a controversial one and has given rise to other concepts such as gender roles, gender inequality, gender identity among others.

Gender roles as stated earlier are stereotyped responsibilities, attitudes and characteristics placed on both the male and female which sets them apart. For example, society believes that women are Fragile, weak and emotional while their male counterparts are strong and practical. These roles are so fixed that society frowns on any abnormality to these roles.

Gender identification refers to a personal identification with a gender role in society.

Gender inequality is a result of societal and cultural norms which restricts a certain sex from peculiar roles. In a male domineering world, the females usually get restricted from certain roles, functions and achievements.

## **SEXUALITY**

According to the Longman Dictionary, 'sexuality' refers to the things people do, think and feel that are related to their sexual desires.

Sexuality pertaining to womanhood deals with a wide range of behaviours and processes. These include concepts such as sexual behaviours, sexual identity and the roles of social, cultural and religious institutions on sexual activity. Over the years, the woman is seen as a sensual being and a sex object by men to be used for their satisfaction and sexual relief. This belief has led to disastrous effects on women such as sexual abuse, domestic violence and disregard for the woman as a human being.

Aspects of female sexuality include issues relating to biological sex, body image, sexual or orientation, value, gender role and communication in our society.

## **PLOT SYNOPSIS**

The lion and the jewel is a comedy set in the small remote village of Llujinle. There are three central characters Lakunle, an eager but naïve school teacher who accepts western ideas and modernity without really understanding them, he tells Sidi that he will not pay her bride price. Baroka, the village Chief, who sees modern ideas as a threat to his power, and Sidi, the jewel of the village, a beautiful woman who will choose one of the men for a husband. The characters are exaggerated: Lakunle is arrogant and talks too much, and Baroka is cunning, but they are ultimately likable. At the end, the men will have to deal with each other. As Baroka says, “the old must flow into the new”.

In the marriage of Anansewa, Ananse an old rogue who want to make as much money as possible by marrying off his daughter Anansewa. He promises her to four different Chiefs at the same time: the chief of the mines, Togbe Klu iv, the chief of Sapa, and the chief who is chief. Anansewa receives gifts from all four chiefs, who are unaware of their rivals. Ananse suddenly finds himself facing a catastrophe when the chiefs all decide to come and offer the ‘head-drink’ which will place the seal on their marriage. To get out of his difficulties, Ananse persuades Anansewa to pretend to die, and announces her death to the chiefs. They respond by sending messengers who tell how the chiefs would have cared for Anansewa.

At the end Ananse allows chief who is chief to marry his daughter.

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN LION AND THE JEWEL AND MARRIAGE OF ANASEWA

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 status than men. Throughout the play, women are valued for their outward appearance and sensuality. Sidi becomes relevant only after her beauty is displayed in a foreign magazine and Sadiku reminisces about her days as a young woman when she was the Bale's favourite. Women are also portrayed as the less intelligent gender, which is evident in the way that both Sidi and Sadiku falls for Baroka's trick.

The image of women as portrayed in most plays presents a female character whose, sole ambition and inspiration in life revolves around marriage and procreation. She inspires to perform these natural roles efficiently and any contrary aspiration and conduct by a woman is condemned, the man is encouraged to fulfill

and actualize himself while the woman is content to remain in the hearth, as a wife and mother.

These roles saddle her with the responsibilities of producing, nurturing children and taking care of the home.

Right from childhood she is constantly reminded of these duties so that by the times she reaches adulthood, she comes to accept them.

Efua Sutherland's "the marriage of Anansewa" we meet a man called Ananse. Ananse plans to give his daughter, Anansewa in marriage to four different chiefs to amass wealth by collecting money and gifts from them. Meanwhile, Anansewa is not aware of the plan and has never seen any of the chiefs before when she realizes her father's plans, she cries out in exasperation. "oh! My father is selling me ... like some parcel to a customer". She resists but her father uses intimidation and blackmail to force her into submission.

Women are presented as a means out of poverty. Ananse's plan to use his daughter to escape from abject poverty further Portrays the subjugation of women .

Women are also presented as voiceless; she can't even choose her own husband. She relies on her father for the choice of life partner.

CONCLUSION

A playwright mirrors the society but unfortunately, the image of the African woman reflected in this mirror is not wholly authentic since it does not reflect the hardworking and self-assured woman but women as objects to be sold and bought. The buyer therefore must examine it properly before paying for it.



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