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GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN THE LION AND THE JEWEL BY WOLE SOYINKA AND PYGMALION BY BERNARD SHAW

This essay present a painstaking analysis of Gender and sexuality in terms of gender discrimination, servitude , superiority and inferiority complex or sexism in The Lion and The Jewel by Wole Soyinka and Pygmalion by Bernard Shaw

The two plays present the gender and sexuality in terms of men superiority to women. In African tradition as seen in The Lion and The Jewel. The vicious circle which encompasses the third world women within gender roles and the patriarchal system is clearly emphasized by Soyinka in a very straightforward and realistic way

In Pygmalion we sees a lady who desires to be independent but although she is a strong character, We never see her actually obtain her independence in the play. So the play present that despite women's role in the world of the play they ultimately cannot escape the constraints of their sexist world

ANALYSIS OF THE TWO PLAYS USING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

In 'The Lion and The Jewel' by Wole Soyinka in the story's village 'Ilujunle', women are subjected to playing a subservient and domestic role, as opposed to the men who are expected to be authoritative and educated figures. This statement can be easily proven using two main characters 'Sidi' and 'Lakunle'.

Lakunle was the village school teacher which meant he was quite well educated as opposed to Sidi, who was like many women in the society Lakunle referred them as 'Bush girls' because of their illiteracy. We see here the imbalanced spread of education between men and women in this society, men had the upper hand in education, while women were expected to look after the home and husband.

Lakunle continuously belittled Sidi, by making constant remarks about how she was less intelligent and weaker than he was, simply because she was a woman, and he felt no remorse in saying such things to her because he felt justified in what he was saying and did not even see it as offensive, it was a common known fact to the men in their society; women were worth less than men, they were uneducated and all they were worth was reproduction and servitude to the man and his household. The most unorthodox part about these conversations that Lakunle had with Sidi is that

they were in an effort to obtain her as a wife. He insulted her and begged her to marry him in the same breath.

Sidi on the other hand did feel a bit wounded by his remarks, she responded by reminding him of all the work women were expected to do in the community like pounding yams and carrying children and how it was ludicrous to call women the weaker sex. This shows how Sidi truly felt about the role of women in their society, she truly felt that there was nothing wrong with living in servitude to the men and she even felt a bit proud of the fact that women were able to endure so much; she did not feel oppressed in the slightest bit. She felt that Lakunle was out of place and disrespectful for thinking of it from that angle, in her opinion the men deserved to be served and have the highest authority because that was just the norm, but that did not mean that women were worthless. Despite Lakunle's insults, Sidi still agreed to marry him if he paid the price. It was as simple as that in their society, there was not a lot of love and romance involved in marriage. A man simply had to pick a girl from the community that he liked and pay her family a certain price if she was a virgin, (if she wasn't then he did not even have to) and a few years or even months later he could go out and repeat the same process again and obtain as many wives as he so desired. The women had no say, they were just to submit to their husbands and be accepting of his other wives.

Men are presented as being intelligent and wise as oppose to women who are presented as being gullible and inferior. Baroka is the leader of the village, a position which has been passed down generation after generation from father to son, never a woman. Baroka shows us his cunning in his schemes e.g. the prevention of the railway that would bring civilization straight to Illunjinle, leaving him as ruler undisturbed and the lie he told to Sadiku knowing her personality that it would reach Sidi's ears. Baroka also shows us his "authority" in the "promises" he makes to Sidi about all he could give her as well as the great control he has over all his wives and the way in which they obey without hesitation.

In the book women are represented as child caretakers, cooks, cleaners, water-fetchers and washers. They are to see to all of their husband's desires, in the community women were also circumcised as a sign of obedience and servitude. It is shown that the only time a woman may truly show power over a man is when she has taken the last of his seed and he is left impotent, the celebration of this event truly shows as to the lack of power women hold in the village.

Sadiku is a prime example of servitude and domestication of women in the society i.e. She can only speak when given permission. When Baroka lied about being impotent she comforted him by massaging his feet, it was even her duty to fetch new wives for him.

In Pygmalion. The title of the play is taken from the myth of Pygmalion. In this story, Pygmalion scorns all the women around him and makes a sculpture of his ideal woman. The sculpture is so beautiful that he falls in love with it and it comes to life. By titling his play after this story, Shaw calls attention to questions of femininity and

gender. As Pygmalion sculpts his ideal woman Higgins and mold Eliza into an ideal lady. These two narratives show how unrealistic and even unnatural the expectations that society often has for women are. Pygmalion's perfect woman can only be attained with an artificial construct, a sculpture. Similarly, the ideal noble lady of British society in the world of Shaw's play is a kind of fake, only a role that Eliza must learn to play. Pygmalion can thus be seen as showing how oppressive unrealistic ideals of femininity can be: to attain these ideals, Eliza has to be coached, disciplined, and taught. She has to pretend to be someone other than who she really is.

The play further explores gender roles with its other female characters. As it is set in the early 20th century, before women gained many basic rights and privileges, the play's other female characters Mrs. Pearce and Mrs. Higgins are largely confined to their respective households. Nonetheless, they both play important roles. Mrs. Pearce ensures the functioning of Higgins' household and reminds him of his own manners. And Mrs. Higgins takes Eliza in when she leaves Higgins and Pickering, and helps resolve things at the play's conclusion. These two characters thus demonstrate how women might still exert some agency within an oppressive Victorian society. But despite any redeeming aspects to women's roles in the world of the play, they ultimately cannot escape the constraints of their sexist world. At the end of the play, Eliza must choose between living with Higgins, living with her father, or marrying Freddy. In any case, her future can only be under the control of a man of some sort. She tells Higgins that she desires independence, but—although she is a strong character—we never see her actually obtain her independence in the play. Eliza is greatly transformed over the course of the play, but it would take even greater transformations of society itself in the 20th century for women like Eliza to have real independence.

CONCLUSION

In the early 20th century this sexism was still at its peak especially IN Africa where educating ladies is as unimportant believing that women education ends in the kitchen whereas men are being treated as being superior and are being giving a befitting education which makes them authoritative

From the above play we read we see sex discrimination, inferiorities of women to men. So effort should be made to encourage gender equality And avoid inferiority melted to women in society