

EZEJA, MARTHA CHINONSO.

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GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN THE LION AND THE JEWEL BY WOLE SOYINKA AND  
WIVES REVOLT BY J.P CLERK

In Africa." Bride-price is money or property given by the bridegroom to the family of his bride. Such a system is still followed by the native Africans and Muslims in their religion. Even in India, the same system followed in olden days, but it had gone reverse in the later period. However, the primitive African societies follow the footsteps of tradition and culture, demanding the bride-price to the bridegroom. It is honor to the bride who receives a good price. If a girl marries without the price, it is assumed that she is not a virgin or she is not worth to marry. Sidi the traditional African girl, who is untouched by the foreign ideas and culture, insists on the bride-price and its honor to Lakunle, when she said;

'I have told you, and I say it again  
I shall marry you today, next week  
Or any day you name.  
But my bride-price must first be paid....  
But I tell you, Lakunle, I must have  
The full bride-price. Will you make me  
A laughing-stock? Well, do as you please  
But Sidi will not make herself  
A cheap bowl for the village spit....  
They will say I was no virgin  
That I was forced to sell my shame  
And marry you without a price.

According to the custom of Africa, a girl marrying without the bride-price is a disgrace to the bride. This custom have denied African women right to chose their husband whom they love or cherish but rather a husband who can afford to pay their bride price. Sidi, the beauty of the village, expects Lakunle to pay more bride-price for her beauty and virginity. But Lakunle, who has European sensibilities, is an iconoclast of the African traditional manner. He attacks the traditional African customs of marriage. He calls the system of bride-price: "A savage custom, barbaric, out-dated ... unpalatable". He believes that the custom is a disgrace and humiliation to women, "to pay the price would be / To buy a heifer off the market stall. Sidi is seduced by Baroka, she chooses the seducer as her husband than the semi-witted, Lakunle. Her decision is due to the concept of chastity. Through Sidi, Soyinka brings out the culture of the tradition based rigid society. She would have

chosen young Lakunle to marry, but her loss of virginity makes her to marry the old Baroka, African polygamous society is also portrayed in the text where a man is entitled to marry as many wives as he can. The marrying of multiple wives is legal in Nigeria and it is a prominent feature of traditional life. Wives and wealth are the criteria of wealth of a person. The successor of dead Bale or chief of the area marries the last and favorite wife of the dead Bale, as his first wife. According to the custom, the first wife of the Bale becomes the senior and receives all honors in the family. According to the tradition, a Bale can have as much wives he can. Baroka, the Bale of the village, has many wives. His harem is already full with his number of wives from Sadiku to latest favorite wife, The desire for more girls has not left him even at the age of sixty two. After seeing Sidi's beautiful pictures in a glossy magazine, he wants Sidi the jewel at all cost just to subdue, he doesn't want any other person to be famous because he is selfish, he desires to have her on that night and he expresses his wish to his first wife, Sadiku to woo that young girl for him. It is the custom of the village that the first wife has to persuade and makes the girls to marry her husband; it is a part of her duty to ensure his happiness. By this act, the society emphasizes that the wives have to obey and do furnish all sorts of his desire. It is settled in the minds of the women in the society.. The polygamous society gives importance to the Bale, it allows him to marry as many girls he can, he uses the girls only for his pleasure, and after a new arrival of favorite he sends the last favorite to an outhouse. It shows the society never give respect to women, and they are used to, as Lakunle tells, "pounds the yam or bends all the day to plant the millet ... to fetch and carry, to cook and scrub, to bring forth children by the gross. The custom of dead Bale's last wife becomes the senior wife to the successor, i.e. son. The custom is very awkward and surprise. However, the playwright does not make any condemn, dislike or rejection of it. Instead, by ending the play with the marriage ceremony of the Bale and the girl seems to show that Soyinka nods approval to this custom. By the marriage of the cunning Bale and ignorant and pride Sidi, the author emphasizes that chastity is only for female. All these show that the female society is highly marginalized by the males. The female characters like Sidi and Sadiku are the representation of the doubly oppressed in the society. They are the symbol of self-marginality, particularly Sidi: she never allows any rational idea into her mind, which is advised by Lakunle....greatly supports and argues for her society and its tradition. She does not want to come out of the conventional ideologies. She does not know that she is marginalizing herself for the ideologies of the society. In the play, Lakunle like a champion of feminism, voices for the females, who are fastened with the traditions of the society. But he is portrayed as a foolish and stupid teacher, who never gets any respect from anyone, Sidi chides his state in the village, "You and your ragged books dragging your feet to every threshold and rushing them out aging as cruses greet you instead of welcome.... The village says you're man, and I begin to understand" Even after so much humiliation he tells his dream of new, improved and modern society to her. But his expectation of development is a mirage. And through the

character of Baroka, playwright expresses that the society is not ready to accept the changes, even if it is necessary.

## THE WIVES REVOLT

In this text, Koko, who represents the women, challenges the husband on why money should be shared in a partial formula, knowing too well that the elders are the men. She sees the formula as being unfair and says that it would have been much better if it had been shared just between the male and female folks. Her argument is that by the sharing formula, the menfolk hold the two-thirds of the oil revenue.

The male characters in the play made a new law that is not favourable to their women. They don't seek their opinion, as the women saw it as anti-women, especially as goat is the one of the domestic animals they are allowed to keep in the village.

To stop the menfolk from carrying out the oppressive law, the women plan to stage a protest with the central authority. At a said date they left the village marching through Otughieven, Eijophe, Igherekan, Imode to Eyara, leaving their children and husbands to fate. They made their husbands do the domestic chores such as babysitting, cooking, sweeping, taking the children to school and other tasks considered the prerogative of the women by themselves. Here the male and female folks saw their shortcomings and blame themselves for it. While the male blamed themselves for pushing their women to the extreme with their laws, the women call for caution, realising that they, the women, ought not to have gone to the extent of allowing their anger to take the better part of their emotion. The play evenly apportions blames to both gender, highlighting the complementary roles each play to the other.

It also projects that violence in any form does not benefit anybody, but in most times creates more problems in the polity, as it could be seen in the women bring home infections that may end up taking the lives of some of the men.

Though, nature appears to assign women with the role of home-keeping and other not too tasking duties, the society, rural or urban will get no better if the women are not well cared for. Also, it is a call for the womenfolk to cooperate with their husbands, seeing them as not just their head, but as partners they need to work together for the progress of the family and advancement of the society.