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Presentation of gender and sexuality in Wole Soyinka`s The Lion and Jewel and Sutherland The Marriage of Anansewa

Gender is a social and cultural construct of what constitute being a “man” or a “woman”. Based on the characteristics that a society or culture perceives to be “masculine” or “feminine”. While Sexuality on the other hand is a central feature of being human that is deeply individualized. It includes sexual feelings, thoughts, attractions, preferences and sometimes behaviour.

The aim of this article is to discuss what Soyinka in the lion and the jewel and Sutherland in the marriage of Anansewa present the female folks unlike their male counterpart.

In Soyinka’s the lion and the jewel, the female folks are seen as weak and brainless or with smaller than their female counterparts. They take woman not to have the kind of brain or the same level of understanding as men do, taking that women cannot or do not understand some certain things as men. According to Lakunle takes Sidi is a fool because she refuse to marry him without bride price “...ignorant girl” (pg. 3), can you not understand?,... Lakunle taking Sidi to be weak and brainless tries all he could to get her to marry him without the bride price. But if ever the female folks shows any sign of strength and knowledge there will be trouble “it’s never any use, bush girl you are, bush girl you always be, uncivilized and primitive bush girl” (pg. 11). But at the end will see the weaker sex being place on top the stronger sex or fate gave them more valve than men, “ if that is true then I am more esteemed than Bale Baroka, the lion of Ilujinle. This means that I am greater than the fox of the undergrowth, the living god among men...(pg. 11).

Women are also seen as trophy in Soyinka’s the lion and the jewel. After have seeing the image of Sidi that the white man brought and how Sidi is now the take of town Baroka wants to add her to his floors of wives. Women are seen as something that men can have whenever they want, to get this trophy just as in every game of win or loss we see Baroka and Lakunle contesting for the trophy which is this case is Sidi. Men in this text are threaten by women’s success and try to keep them under control in the name of marriage. They (women) are also seen as sex object, just for pleasure, women as seen as object that men use to satisfy their sexual needs, as seen in the later part of the work where Baroka pretends to be old and weak just to come and have sex with Sidi.

Also in Sutherland's the marriage of Anansewa, we have a similar issue of a cunning father (Ananse) using his beautiful daughter (Anansewa) as a source of making wealth. It good to know that Ananse is a picaro. A picaro is a literary character that uses trickery to change his cost of living be it financially, social or both. Though we can say he have no choice because they needed the money but had it be that Anansewa is the boy that wouldn't have been possible since they are the one to pay the bride price. Ananse desire "...a better, leak-proof roof over our heads, let alone some comfortable chairs to sit in, a fridge in the kitchen, a car in the garage, my name on invitation for state functions"...(pg.12) he decide to sell his daughter to four different chiefs , "how exasperating! Oh, my father is selling me, he is selling me! (pg.19). Women are also seen as mere object to be traded for money "and he asks us to place this money in your hands, he says, he is placing it in your hands so that if the OBJECT of his interest...(pg.32) and at the end Ananse succeed in selling the daughter.

In conclusion these two texts Soyinka's the lion and the jewel and Sutherland's the marriage of Anansewa present the female folks unlike their male counterpart as weak, sex object as well as source of making wealth.