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INTRODUCTION

Gender is simply a social and cultural construct in the division of roles while sexuality depicts in particular those qualities that prove one a male or a female, for instance the sexual organs. Sex simply refers to the biological differences between males and females, such of as genital and genetic differences. Sex and gender role distinction is not universal; sometimes they are often used interchangeably. The **aim** of this **study** is to **pinpoint** the way female and male are represented through analysis of these plays ‘**The Lion and the Jewel**’ By Wole Soyinka and ‘**Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again**’ By **Ola Rotimi**’. In the study, we comprehend that male characters are presented as **strong, powerful, metaphorically a lion and also irresistible power**, although there comes a reversal of fortunes as in the case of ‘Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again’. In these works, women are considered the second sex essentially created for serving men, simply put, male-dominated creatures.

As regards the play, women are not appreciably recognised in these plays. Meanwhile **Magahael (2005)** has argued that women should have their own social place and voice in public domain which has prestige and power. Women are seen in the plays as having the traditional identities as mother or housewives

while men relax and command their wives authoritatively. Men marry many wives for their own selfish interest and while women remain a subservient. We shall now examine this presentation with these two plays mentioned above.

THE PRESENTATION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN WOLE SOYINKA'S 'THE LION AND THE JEWEL' AND OLA ROTIMI'S 'OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN'

The polygamous nature of marriage in these plays is for men's selfishness and desire not really for the meat of love, all in the detriment of women. For men, women are **properties** which prove one's wealth and position in the society as in case of Baroka. This marriage issue portrayed in these plays shows how women are neglected and marginalized in the play. The issue here owing to the fact that men only marry many wives to achieve one aim or the other. It simply shows gender inequality. In Soyinka's 'The Lion and the Jewel', we encounter the egocentric Bale of the village who already has many wives but still intend marrying an unexploited lady whom her beauty pervades the whole village of **Ilujinle**. He married Sidi (the Jewel of Ilujinle) for his selfish interest of having the most beautiful lady of fallacy Ilujinle in his house. We deduced this from the natter between Sadiku and Sidi. When Sadiku came to deliver Baroka's message to Sidi, Sidi affirms that he could have made the request before then not now that her name is already in the village magazine. Meanwhile, Baroka never requested for her hand in marriage before until he

notices how famous she has become in the village. Baroka is also interested in Sidi owing to the fact that she is still a virgin as mentioned above. He decides to test the delicious meal first. Baroka already knows his wife will use his canard of eunuch to intimidate him goes ahead to tell her he is impotent so as to test her. Sidi never conceals that, she revealed that to Sidi. With her sardonic feelings, she contemptuously entered to mock Baroka. The reverse becomes the case later as Baroka ended up copulating with her and so Sidi has to marry him willy-nilly. This selfish polygamous marriage also features in '**Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again**'. We encounter also the *authoritative politician, Rahma Taslim Lejoka Brown* who married three wives just for his own selfish reasons of political ambition. In his banter with Okonkwo, his friend, he affirms that **Mama Rashida's** vote will not fetch him many votes so he married Sikira to get more women votes as her mother; Madam Bambina Alanaku is the head of the National Union of Nigeria Market Women. Lejoka commands his wives at any rate; he does not even have any regard for them. The worst thing being that he decides alone without even telling his **Liza(his White wife)** that he has other wives at home until she comes to Nigeria. Lejoka could not contest for prime minister anymore as women brought out Sikira to represent them, this leads to women emancipation in the play as well. This polygamous marriage really proves inequality of sex, due to that men rough handle their wives as the play continues. Wives turn to servants to men. In my estimation, the representation of

women in this plays cannot be applauded, it is quite appalling indeed. For men, all domestic chores are now reserve for women, said who?

Women are expected to cook, clean, nurture the children and attend to the needs and wishes of their husbands. It appears to us in the play that **domestic chore** and **child bearing** are reserve totally to women, women are not allowed to go **school**, work do **otherwise** while men takes part in **high positions** and **political parastatals**. In soyinka's '**The Lion and the Jewel**', In the beginning of the play we see Sidi coming onto the stage with a pail of water on her head which indicates preparation for house work. Here as females are not allowed to go to school where as the males are assigned to go to school to get an education. In Illunjinle, Lakunle is the village teacher, who speaks to sidi and how women are the **child bearers, they are to pound the yams, to fetch and carry and scrub**; as he sees Sidi carrying a pale of water in the village. They are required to cook, clean, take care of the children, satisfy their husband etc..... **Women** are **seen** as **inferior oppose** to the men. Likewise, in **Rotimi's 'Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again'**, this domestic roles of women also featured. we Lejoka's at the beginning of the play attending to their husband's needs and keeping the house in a good condition while the man of the does nothing but only bothers of his political ambition. They cook, sweep the house and take care of what their husband eats as well. They are not to take part in politics but to help other women vote to their husband. When Liza comes back

from America, they prepared something for her to eat and chilled up till their master comes back. All these prove that women's work in the play is majorly a house keeping work while men take part in positions and politics. In this two plays, women are meant to serve men and whatever their men tells them to do without mutinous altitude. This also proves the poor representation in these plays. Well, some authors still have the notion of women's education ending in the kitchen; I call it a **sentimental archaism. This becomes the agitation of the feminism as some women are not comfortable the way women are represented in society today. My questions are, why should not women take part in the business of the family accept something that pertains kitchen? Is there any physiological quality that makes women the only cook or washer in the house? If the answer is no, then why should women be browbeaten by men in the play and even in the world today. The authors of the plays really presented women to be weaker sexes as they continue to take order from men.**

The work of men in the play is to give orders while women obey the order and act upon what has been said. They are not meant to talk while men are talking and even their advices are not meant to be taken. It also **concurs to Moliere's 'Tartuffe'** Orgon's wife, Elmire tries to convince his husband of Tartuffe's advance to her but Orgon never believe her until he hears it by himself. In disagreement to that, **William Congreve's 'The Way of the World'**

where women's voice are heard and respected. In 'The Lion and The Jewel', Baroka gives order to his wives and they obey him, they do anything Baroka ask them to do. When he tells his favourite wife to come and pluck the hair in his armpit. She obeyed him and when he tells her to leave, she left. Baroka also sends Sadiku to tell Sidi of his ambition to marry her, she obeyed quietly and leave for that. These women are ever ready to do whatever that the master says. In the case of Rotimi's 'Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again', it is still the same thing. Sikiru is ever ready to attain to their husbands needs. At the beginning of the play, she brings towel for Lejoka, brings food and other things and still comes around immediate she is being called to answer her master and Lord. When he told her about his desire of getting women for his vote, Sikiru never hesitated. **The women are not allowed to eat until their husbands were done eating. They are not allowed to be independent individuals** Men can whatever that pleases them in the expense of the women but command women on what to do. This is seen in the Lejoka commands Liza to stop smoking cigarette and to be modest in dressing too. In page 64, he commands Liza to enter her room. This also manifested in the conversation between Liza and Sikira, Liza told her that women are not meant to leave their husband's place. When Sikiru wears the cloth she feels to wear, Lejoka commanded her to remove it. When Lejoka goes to pick Liza in the airport, he commanded them to keep the house clean as his oyibo wife will be coming back. All these prove the authoritative nature of men in these plays. I believe women should receive order

from men more especially their husband but it should be a symbiotic existence and not a command. Women should also be allowed to air their view in family matters not just taking orders from men. Their ideas should be considered if found worthy of consideration not jettisoned for no tangible reasons. Forgive my pedantry, but what is good for the **driver** is also good for the **conductor**.

As we proceed, we understand that the author presents male as having more **sense and educated** than women. **Baroka proves that he is educated by the way he seduced Sidi into intercourse.** He used his **wits** and **wisdom** to catch Sidi's attention and in the end his intelligence allowed him to successfully conquer the Jewel. Already, he knows that telling his wife that he is impotent will fasten his conspiracy as his wife will use that against him. It happened the way he planned and finally he wins Sidi. Also, the attitude of Sidi proves that women have little or no sense. Having told that Baroka is a eunuch, she entered contemptuously without imaging the implication. A wise person thinks twice before he or she does something or take a decision. Sadiku's attitude lacks wit and wisdom, she never think twice, she it never occur to her mind that her husband could use that to trick her into doing something and so she reveals the secret to Sidi. The action Lakunle also proves men's wit in the play. When Baroka has deflowered Side, he want to use the opportunity to marry Sidi without paying her pride price since she is no longer a virgin but unknown to him that Sidi is already preparing her marriage with Baroka. In the **case of 'Our**

Husband Has Gone Mad Again', Lejoka knows that if he tells his Liza of other wives in the village, she may not agree to come home and so because of that, he hides it from her until she comes home. This action depicts his wisdom as he succeeded.

The way Baroka copulates with Sidi is quite abnormal because it is not a normal thing for a married man to have sex with another person apart from his own wives. This also proves woman incapability as Sidi gives in to marriage since she has been deflowered.

I vehemently agree that these authors never have women's feeling in mind when writing these plays. This totally depicts women as the weakest sex and a servant to the male folk. The presentation gender and sexuality in these two modern comic plays is very poor and should not be encouraged in literature.

References

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