
It is not true that Sidi refuses Lakunle as if she were in love with Baroka from the very beginning. Sidi initially refuses Baroka's offer to marry him and this offer arrives when she is under the influence of the magazine brought to the village by the white photographer. We notice Sidi's excitement demonstrated by her reactions to this magazine and the photographs in it:
Have you seen these?

Have you seen these images of me Wrought by the man from the capital city
Have you felt the gloss?
Smoother by far than the parrot's breast.

Assumed Self-Importance

The fact that her photograph covers three pages and the Bale's only the corner of a page seems to her to prove that she is far more important than he is. Her confusion in choosing between Baroka and Lakunle as her husband indicates the young generation's wavering to choose between the old values and the new allurements of Western culture.

Conflict between Tradition and Modernity

Baroka is the leader of the village holds to his Yoruba traditional beliefs, but his power is coming under threat from the Western influence. The issue that troubles him throughout the beginning of the play, we learn, is his apparent impotence, a secret he reveals to his head wife. We later learn, however, that this feigned impotence was only a clever stratagem in order to lure Sidi into coming to his palace. In the course of the story, Baroka's qualities of cunning, discrimination and strength are shown to advantage; Lakunle is provided with a number of opportunities to display his talents but he fails recurrently. Finally Sidi's decision to marry Baroka reflects the playwright's opinion that in the context provided by the play, Baroka is the better man and his attitudes are the more substantial as well as worthy.

Winning Qualities

On Baroka's part, we see that certain qualities of slyness in him make him win Sidi which are not manifested in Lakunle. From the very beginning she cannot tolerate Lakunle and till the end she is consistent in expressing her hatred to this callous chap. On the other hand, when she is seduced by Baroka, she decides to choose one single man whom she would let herself touch in future and that single man should be Baroka who has already touched her enough. The Bale impresses her with his skill at wrestling; he pretends not to know about the offer of marriage and implies that Sadiku is always trying to make matches for him. Moreover, he cunningly appeals to her loyalty to the old village ways and he praises her depth and wisdom, too. He flatters her with his talk of having her portrait on the stamps and all the time he talks to Sidi in a soothing tone with the most flattering seriousness as well as stressing the responsibilities of the village head. Lakunle obviously lacks

this foresightedness and therefore Sidi cannot get reliability as well as practicality in him.

Polygamous Society -A Prominent Feature of Traditional Life

In the play, Soyinka portrays the African polygamous society. The marrying of multiple wives is legal in Nigeria and it is a prominent feature of traditional life. Lofts and wives are the criteria of wealth of a person. It is accepted that the old man marrying the young girls. Polygamy is the function of the family as an economic unit of production. Especially for those in agrarian production, a large family provides the labour necessary for the maintenance and growth of the business. The tradition allows widow inheritance, in which a man marries the widow of a deceased brother. This practice ensures that the woman and her children remain under the economic and social care of the family. Sometimes the successor of dead Bale or chief of the area marries the last and favourite 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 honours in the family.

According to the tradition, a Bale can have as many as wives as he can, but he has to follow some conditions like treating all equally, distributing resources equally to all wives and children, avoid discrimination among wives and children. Baroka, the Bale of the village, has many wives. His harem is already full with his number of wives from Sadiku to latest favourite wife, Ailatu. The desire for more girls has not left him even at the age of sixty two. The play is a Nigerian bedroom farce, for its convention of polygamy. After seeing Sidi's beautiful pictures in a glossy magazine, 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.

Adding Wives through the Good Offices of the First Wife- Complex Kinship Relations

Sadiku is the veteran representative of the tradition. She is proud of her role as the chief wife of a family in a polygamous society. While she is wooing Sidi for Baroka, states another tradition in the society that last wife of the Bale becomes chief wife to the next Bale.

The surprising fact is that the successor, most probably the dead Bale's son, could become the husband to his step-mother. It is not a serious matter in the society that a woman became wife to both father and son. Sadiku is an instance of such a practice prevails in the society. She reveals that she is the bare witness of Okiki's, father of Baroka, impotency "I was there when it happened to your father, the great Okiki. I did for him, I, the youngest and freshest of the wives".

These words state that she was the youngest wife of Okiki and now according to the custom, she has become the senior wife to Baroka, i.e. she married father and after his death she became wife to her step-son. Yoruba calls it is the responsibility of the king to take care of the youngest wife and children of the previous sovereign. This custom is called "isupo" among the Yoruba.

Victory of Old African Culture over Modernization

The Lion and the Jewel shows the triumph Baroka over Lakunle and many readers and critics regard this as a victory of old Africa over foreign-educated parvenu or upstarts. It is true that the vitality of Africa has been demonstrated and the established rulers have been shown as dignified, arrogant and powerful. But the way Soyinka presents Baroka is not acceptable to those who want to romanticize traditional African leaders. Baroka is not a straight forward conservative; he has made many a significant innovations and his language shows his familiarity with alien idioms and ideas. Several small African nations make a large part of the international income by selling beautiful stamps to collectors abroad. It is not then too surprising that the Bale should view stamp sales as a major source of revenue.

Soyinka's Baroka and Lakunle

Soyinka has portrayed Baroka and Lakunle-these two men to complement one-another, and his argument in the play is worked out through the juxtaposition of them. Baroka is presented in a much more favourable light than Lakunle, but Soyinka is dealing in relative rather than in absolute terms. He has taken us into a grey area and he forces us to look closely and distinguish different shades of grey. He does not allow us to "sitback and separate the black from the white at a quick glance".

We may, therefore, say that this play is not in favour of reckless progress and false imitation of so-called western practices; simultaneously it is not in favour of simply standing still. Like all good fictions, it gives us something to think and argue about. Some critics accused Wole Soyinka of giving in *The Lion and the Jewel* a reactionary (that is, a backward looking) answer to these problems. Soyinka is not a writer who believes that "progress" is always a good thing. As a small example, he shares Baroka's view that modern roads are "murderous". On the other hand, like Baroka he has stated his belief that "the old must flow into the new". One critic replied to the charge that *The Lion and the Jewel* is a reactionary play by arguing that "one of the first duties of the comedian is the exploding of cliché. In other words, it had become a mechanical thing -a cliché -to say that the new must be preferable to the old. In *The Lion and the Jewel*, Wole Soyinka had simply refused to reproduce that cliché.

Conclusion

Thus the most prominent theme of this story is the rapid modernization of Africa, coupled with the rapid evangelization of the population. This has driven a wedge between the traditionalists, who seek to nullify the changes done in the name

of progress due to vested interests or simply not liking the result of progress, and the modernists, who want to see the last of outdated traditional beliefs at all cost. There is also the conflict between education and traditional beliefs. The educated people seek to spread their knowledge to the tribal people in an attempt to make them more modern. This in turn is resisted by the tribal people who see no point in obtaining an education as it served them no use in their daily lives. Another core theme is the marginalisation of women as property. Traditionally, they were seen as properties that could be bought, sold or accumulated. Even the modern Lakunleals of all are victim to this, by looking down on Sidi for having a smaller brain and later by wanting to marry her after she lost her virginity since no dowry was required in such a situation.