

Language and Power: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*

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Abstract- *The play, The Lion and the Jewel by Soyinka has been projected variously as a triumph of African culture over the Western culture. This is because it is a post-colonial write-up that came almost after the end of the struggles that got Nigeria its independence. There have been different approaches to the study of this text with respect to the struggles between the two traditions as represented by Lakunle (the Western tradition) and Baroka (the African tradition). However, this paper takes a different dimension. Its concern is to investigate, using Fairclough's tools of Critical Discourse Analysis, some of the ideologies and power relations embedded in some discourses in the text which reveal, in the same context, that Yoruba (African) traditional marriage ideology of bride price oppresses and marginalizes women whereas Western marriage ideology empowers and helps women to discover their self-worth. In addition too, the play reveals that chauvinism in African man cannot be completely eroded no matter the level of Western education acquired. In other words, there were still other levels of imperialism within the so called "independent world" of the traditional Yoruba and at large, Africa.*

Key words- *Language; Power; Ideology; Critical Discourse Analysis; Discourse; Soyinka; Superiority; Dominance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, studies have continued to x-ray through literature, components of the structures of human societies. One outstanding outcome of these studies lie in the fact that language has remained the most singular medium to structure the society and to retain these structures. Wole Soyinka in *The Lion and The Jewel* recreated the African society in a way that showcases that domination, subjugation and dehumanization did not stop in Nigeria even when the British had left and the song of independence or freedom was on the lips of the Nigerians. The second phase of domination and subjugation centered mostly on women, as buttressed by the language elements employed by Soyinka in the text.

1.1 Discourse

Every discourse makes use of language elements which are not detached from the ideological undertones of the language user or the society that uses the language. Language is used as a means to control people and influence what they think and do (Bolinger, 1990). In addition to being a tool for control and influence, it is also an avenue to express surrender or submission. Bourdieu (1991) posits that the choice of words, sentence structure, register or discourse structure can radically alter people's perceptions toward a method, a belief, or an ideology. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a type of research which attempts to reveal the connections in language use that embody power and ideology. In other words, the concern of a CD analysts should be to expose how language can be used to satisfy a secondary or hidden agenda. Thus, CDA enables one to understand issues

regarding power and control as well as the role language plays in these issues.

Fairclough known as the father of CDA developed a framework for CDA by studying human interactions in society using the science of social ontology. Social ontology prescribes that what can exist in a society is referred to as abstract social structures. He posits that what is, or what already exists in a society, is concrete, labeled as social events. According to him, social structures are a set of potentials that include some possibilities and exclude others, such as: sets of beliefs, norms and values of a group. Social relationships are not only established by discourses, but discourses are one powerful element that can be used to make or change relationships (Fairclough: 1992).

Discourse is an instrument of social construction of reality as perceived by the discourse participants. In other words, language use shows language user's perception of a society. It has a dialectical relationship with social identities, social relationships and systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough: 1992). Embedded in language are social practices, defined as rules and structures that limit human actions and interaction within a context. Critical Discourse Analysis projects language and discourse as a form of social practice hence a deeper and critical analysis or evaluation of *The Lion and The Jewel* will highlight unequal social relations, ideologies and powers behind the production of certain utterances within the text. Hence the paper adopts Schegloff, (2002:107) approach which states that:

*The target of critical inquiry
stands where talk amounts to action,
where action projects consequences in a*

structure and texture of interaction which the talk itself is progressively embodying and realizing, and where the particulars of the talk inform what actions are being done and what sort of social scene is being constituted.

1.2 Language

“Language is a tool, we use it to do things” Bates (1976)

It is obvious that language is a tool in every society which has inter-relationship with various aspects of human life and can be studied from different contexts of its use.

Emezue (1998: 2), commenting on what language means states that:

What language means is better discussed from the point of view of what it is used for. Of all the purposes language serves, the most prominent is its use as an instrument for dissemination of ideas, instructions and feelings either through the spoken or the written one.

Language as a complex system mirrors the mind of its user(s) in a deep and significant ways that reveals operations of man’s intelligence and activities that lie far beyond the reach of the will or consciousness. Emezue (1998) cites Uba who posits that “language is the total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared tradition which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group”. Newton (1977:23) also puts it that “language as a product of the society that uses it, is always in the process of recreation and must reflect the culture, the folkway and characteristic psychology of the people who use it. It then behooves that individual or peoples utterances be studied or analysed for what they stand for in the context of use as peoples utterances can never be detached from the people’s way of life, attitude and world view.

1.3 Power

Power is seen as the ability of an individual to intentionally control or dominate other individuals. According to The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thoughts, power is the “ability of its holders to exact compliance or obedience of other individuals to their will” (Bullock and Trombley: 1999). Rousseau (2004) asserts that “the strongest is never strong enough always to be master unless he transforms his power into right and obedience into duty”. In other words, language plays a major role in the creation of power, (values in social life) and can transform such power into right, and then obedience becomes a duty. Thus social values and beliefs are created and shared through language, and language use corresponds to views of social status of language user, thereby providing simple stereotyped labels which go far beyond language itself.

Furthermore, Wareing (2004:9) states that the affective function of language is concerned with who is allowed to say what to whom, which is “deeply tied up

with power and social status”. Wareing buttresses further that words can also have a strong influence on our attitudes; which word is chosen affects people’s perception of others and of themselves. Just as Deborah Cameron (2001) observes, “words can be powerful: the institutional authority to categorize people is frequently inseparable from the authority to do things to them”.

In this wise, we see power as a manipulation of mental ability through illegitimate influence by means of discourse which can be seen as natural. Thus, the manipulators make others believe or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator and against the best interests of the manipulated. In most societies, the activities of these manipulators have become ideologically linked to the structure of the society that the manipulated are normally unaware that there is domination or exercise of power. This is evident in African societies where the women see eating the crumbs from their husbands as a thing of honour when in the right sense of it, it came to be on the platform of the ideology of inequality as portrayed by Soyinka in the text for this study.

1.4 Ideology

Fairclough (2003:218) defines ideology as “representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation.” Van Dijk (1998: 8) posits that it is an entire system of ideas, beliefs and values, which provide a restricted view of the world, that helps conceal social contradictions that lend legitimacy to those in power. Van Dijk (1995:17) remarks that “ideologies are typically, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages such as pictures, photographs and movies.” Wodak & Meyer (2004) are of the opinion that the ideas endorsed by dominant ideologies are rarely questioned and typically perceived as “common sense”. Thus, ideology is a framework which helps people organize their attitudes, knowledge and values in relation to other elements of the society, thus, providing the rational foundation upon which various groups in societies advance their goals and interests. In other words, ideologies are acquired and expressed through discourses/texts and they are mental representation of the basic social characteristics of a group, such as their identity, tasks, goals, norms, values, position and resources. These ideologies can shape and be shaped both in linguistic and non-linguistic operations.

2. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis is an approach to analysis of discourse that projects the interplay among language, ideology and power using linguistic methods and non-linguistic tools. Thus, it sees language or discourse as a site where ideology resides and, invariably, a grassland of struggles for power. And since there is no

discourse without language, it therefore follows that discourses are beds of ideologies and power displays.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been described as “a type of discourse analytic research that studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” Van Dijk (2001: 352). It also involves a search for aspects or dimensions of reality that are obscured by an apparently natural and transparent use of language. Fairclough (1995) is of the opinion that a CDA researcher should be alert to power relations being exercised through discourse and aim to unravel the mistiness of social practices. The investigation of the enactment, exploitation and abuse of power is the basis of CDA investigation because “for CDA language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use powerful people make of it” (Wodak, 2002:10).

Furthermore, Fairclough & Wodak (1997) see language as social practice, which draws from Halliday’s (1994) Systemic Functional Grammar of ideational, interpersonal and textual functions of language in its account of language use. In other words, discourse as a social practice is a product of a society; it sustains a society, as well as reproduces a society. Hence, the need to critically study social interactions to show how discourses are constructed and shaped by various social forces of which some have been naturalized as part of everyday discourse as opposed to critical discussions of them.

2.1 Discourse

Gee (1999) sees discourse as;

talk and text; the knowledge being produced and circulating in talk; ... the general ways of viewing and behaving in the world; ... the systems of thoughts, assumptions and talk patterns that dominate a particular area; and ...the beliefs and actions that make up social practices.

In other words, verbal as well as written expressions are structural representations of the beliefs and thought patterns of language users which, invariably, reveals what actions they take on the subjects of their talk. Hence, every utterance has a function.

Cameron (2001) postulates two types of discourses: linguistic discourse (language in use) and social theorists’ discourses, that is, practice(s) constituting objects. In a similar vein, Van Dijk (1997) also proposes a three dimensional definition of discourse as:

- (a) linguistic, described at the syntactic, semantic, stylistic and rhetorical levels
- (b) cognitive, that which needs to be understood in terms of the interlocutors’ processes of production, reception and understanding; and
- (c) socio-cultural, which he posits as the social dimension of discourse ... a sequence of contextualised, controlled and purposeful acts

accomplished in society... a form of social action taking place in a context.

Here, what is said, how it is said, the choices of words made and the attitude that accompanies that and the environment, is very vital to the understanding of the workings of language.

From Widdowson’s (2004:8) perspective, discourse “is the pragmatic process of meaning negotiation”, and text, its product. Fairclough and Wodak (1997:276) refer to discourse as language use in speech and writing, meaning-making in the social process, and a form of social action that is “socially constitutive” and “socially shaped”. Fairclough (2009:164) stresses that discourses can be appropriated or colonised, and put into practice by enacting, inculcating or materialising them, which in turn makes texts “the semiotic dimension of events”.

In general, discourse is a tool shaped in a way to reflect the social structure of discourse participants in different contexts whether economic, political, religious, educational, historical social or otherwise. In addition too, it is an embodiment of power and ideologies that sustain the power relations as put in place by the powerful. In this wise, the powers and ideologies that are contained in discourses, even as expressed in the text for this study, can only be understood through the lens of critical discourse analysis.

2.2 A brief introduction of the play and the author

The Lion and the Jewel is a drama piece that Soyinka uses to showcase the struggle between traditional society of the Yoruba land in particular and, by extension, African society and the emerging western culture in Africa. The character Lakunle represents the new world order, that is, the western world while Baroka stands for the Yoruba tradition. The two contest for the jewel of the village of Ilujinle, Sidi. Baroka ended up taking the jewel which some people see as a triumph of Yoruba tradition over western culture. The two characters are repositories of different traditions and ideologies; although one has not fully metamorphosed. Soyinka succeeds in showcasing a partial civilized man in Lakunle and retrogressive tradition in Baroka.

Wole Soyinka is a Yoruba from western Nigeria. He is a distinguished playwright, poet, novelist, essayist, social critic, political activist, and literary scholar. He is the first African writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature and this was in 1986. His works are highly satirical in style, which are meant to portray socio-political concerns of absurdity in Nigeria and Africa at large. He has authored so many drama and prose texts as well as poems in this regard out of which *The Lion And the Jewel* is part. He has written extensively on Yoruba mythology. He has held research and teaching appointments in several universities both at home and abroad, including the University of Ibadan, the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) at Ile-Ife, and Cornell University.

3. METHODOLOGY

The data for analysis will be the characters utterances randomly selected to illustrate ideological and power relations as embedded in the play. The analysis will adopt Fairclough's three tools of critical discourse analysis to x-ray domination/subjugation power/powerlessness and dehumanizing activities of the Yoruba (African) traditional marriage ideology on the women. These three tools include the descriptive, the interpretative and the explanation. The descriptive is concerned with the textual properties analysis. The interpretative constitutes examination of discursive practices of textual interaction, while the explanation underscores broader social practices that frame the social interaction. The concern here is with how context of interaction structures the flow of interaction and, simultaneously, how the interaction itself affords understanding of the context in which social interaction occurs. In essence, attention will be paid to the potential strategically intended meanings in the excerpts which are linked with ideology and power as inherent in the Yoruba society. The clues found are interpreted with some explanations about their implications.

3.1 Analysis of Excerpts from Text

From the morning of the play, Soyinka introduces us to Lakunle quarrelling with Sidi over the way she dresses and her habit of carrying things on her head. Lakunle has been wooing Sidi's hand in marriage but because of tradition of bride price, they have not been able to tie the knot. Upon Lakunle's insistence that the way she dresses makes her look indecent and common, Sidi picks offence at him and uses an elicitation tool to remind him of his own habits of speaking which she tags "fine airs and little sense" (p.3) that has made even little children call him a fool. Rather than address the issue raised by Sidi, Lakunle retorts in a way to show that men dominate and subjugate women in the society by the use of socially structured languages that make women feel inferior when in the right sense of it, they know that women are not. The utterances below will illustrate this.

3.2 The battle of Superiority versus inferiority

Soyinka projected Lakunle as man with confusing ideologies about the status of a woman. As a product of African tradition who has gone to acquire Western tradition, although he sees himself as one who has returned to liberate his people from the grip of tradition, he is by his utterances found to be trapped by the two traditions thus:

Lakunle: *for a woman, you have a small brain.*

"you can no longer draw me into arguments above your head.

...I didn't mean you in particular"....

The women have a smaller brain than men.

That's why they are called weaker vessel. (p. 3, 4)

Sidi: *is it a weaker sex that pounds yam or bends all day to plant millet with a child strapped to her back?*

The same Lakunle turn to speak to Sidi in page 8 thus:

... Sidi I need to wed because I love, I seek a companion....

And the man shall take the woman, and the two shall be

together as one flesh. Sidi I seek a friend in need, an equal

partner in my race of life. (p.8)

From Lakunle's utterances above, one would wonder how civilized such a man is who sees women as having no thinking abilities, thereby, contradicting the ideas about women by the western world which he represents in the play. His remark portrays superiority of men over women which is a reflection of the patriarchal ideology in his head. Ideologically, it is a hard nut to crack for an African man to believe that a woman can make a meaningful contribution in the society, where the power of tradition has bent her over. On the other hand, Sidi's reaction depicts a challenge to the social order. To her, the woman's place is very obvious and significant to the survival of the society.

The man who identifies Sidi as having a smaller brain, turns to woo her with the phrase, "equal partner". It is obvious that Lakunle has some part of him liberated and some still dominated by some of the ideologies of Yoruba tradition. This in effect, reveals the attitude of most African men with western education, towards women.

3.3 Traditional Dominance and subjugation

Western education opens Lakunle's eyes to certain dominating and subjugating realities of his tradition which results in his fight against it. One step he took was to bring a photographer who took the image of Sidi and placed it in a book to depict prominence. In other words, he was interested in making Sidi realize her worth through the inscribing of her picture in a book which is a change in status that comes from imbibing Western ideology. But Baroka, who represents tradition understands clearly that Lakunle will liberate the people from the life of savagery and decides to confront him at every instance. Baroka stands for domination and subjugation in the play which invariably, portrays the Yoruba traditional marriage (Africa at large) on the negative. The following excerpts will illustrate this further:

First Girl: The Bale is jealous, but he pretends to be proud of you (p.11).

This statement follows the return of the stranger to Ilejunle's kingdom who took Sidi's pictures and put them in a book. As he returns the book that contains Sidi's images to the village, Baroka becomes jealous of her fame as announced by the first girl and starts plotting her downfall. He knows that the image will make the woman who does not know her worth because of tradition to begin to see a future for herself, through the revelation of the images and their position of prominence in the book.

He sends for Sidi's hand in marriage as a way of darkening the bright future that is ahead of her through his first wife. Sidi response thus:

Why did Baroka not request my hand

*Before the stranger brought the
images?..
You can see, because he sees my worth
Increased and multiplied above his
own....
He seeks to have me as his property
Where I must fade beneath his jealous
hold. (p.21)*

By interpretation, the tradition does not rejoice when the young grows but rejoices when the brighter sun of their lives fades beneath his "jealous holds". Thus, Baroka, the tradition, dominates and subjugates women under the dark holds of his power until they fade.

Baroka succeeded in blowing off the bright future of Sidi as contained in the discourse involving Sadiku, Lakunle and Sidi below:

Sadiku: Are you a maid or not?

(Sidi shakes her head violently and bursts afresh in tears)

Lakunle: The Lord forbid

Sadiku: Too late for prayers. Cheer up. It happens to the best of us. (p.59)

Baroka invited Sidi to his house and took advantage of that opportunity to rape and deflower her. This means that tradition has no respect or regard for the value of the woman. Sadiku's second utterance above shows utter powerlessness of the women in the hands of the savage traditions. Her choice of words gives a clearer understanding to the fact that this is a continuous or habitual experience with the present tense "happens"; not just to any woman but the superlative "best", and not only to one but to a plural personal pronoun (object case) "us". At the point of this discourse, Sidi has lost her virginity and her pride to Baroka the tradition without a bride price which she repeatedly told Lakunle was as a shameful thing to the woman in the society, if it was not paid. Baroka used rape to subjugate her. In her helplessness, and in order to cover her shame, she resolves to succumb to fade beneath the jealous hold of tradition.

Lakunle has been wooing Sidi but will not take her to bed nor caress her until she accepts to wed him, but Sidi will not consent because of what tradition has put in her head which she puts thus:

*They will say I was no virgin
That I was forced to sell my shame
And marry you without a price.
.... Just pay the price. (p.7)*

At last, she is not wedded according to Lakunle's Christian ideology nor is any bride price paid on her head according to tradition, but she has lost her virginity, (to as depicted in the utterance) "the Fox ... that dines on new-hatched chickens" (p.46), and the society seems to be happy with that. She is forced to sell her shame by becoming a wife to the same tradition that has no respect for her, rather than being a wedded wife to Lakunle, the western ideology which has respect for her. Such act by Baroka is condoned and does not constitute any offence to the society.

3.4 Dehumanization

This is buttressed in the bride price ideology and the savagery tradition that handles women as property, transferable from one man to another; as well as fit to be dumped when not needed.

Lakunle introduces us to the bride price ideology, describing it with the following adjectives: "savage custom, barbaric, archaic, degrading, humiliating, retrogressive, ignoble custom, infamous, ignominious, shaming their heritage. These expressions were a follow-up to Sidi's insistence that he must pay her bride price if she must marry him as he requested. From the adjectives, women's experiences, in a society that has just fought and got its independence, is ironical of the situation.

The discourses below will make clearer the marriage tradition in Yoruba culture which is the central theme of the text. Lakunle goes further in his argument against bride price with Sidi thus:

*Ignorant girl, can you not understand?
To pay a bride price would be to buy a
heifer off the market stall. You'd be my
chattel, my mere property.
No, Sidi! When we are wed,
you shall not walk or sit tethered, as it
were, to my dirtied heels. Together we
shall sit at the table-
not on the floor- and eat. Not with
fingers, but with knives.... I will not have
you wait on me till I have dined my fill.
No wife of mine, no lawful wedded
wife of mine shall eat the leavings off my
plate....
I want to walk beside you in the street,
side by side, arm in arm just like the
Lagos couples I have seen. (p.8)*

From the above, the idea of paying bride price means "to buy" and this act of buying is paralleled with the act of buying "a heifer of the market stall" or a chattel. A heifer is an animal and a chattel, a movable property. By inference, paying a woman's bride price means acquiring a woman as a property. Since she is an equivalent of the man's animals that he has acquired, she is to eat ... "the leavings off my plate...", that is, the crumbs of the man's food. She cannot walk "side by side", "arm in arm" with the man. Thus the man sees the woman as unequal even to eat with him, rather, she would wait to eat whatever the man remains. This is precisely the way animals are treated in homes. Therefore, the woman is like any of the animals the man has acquired with his money. To the traditional man, to walk side by side, arm in arm with his wife in the streets is tantamount to degrading himself as opposed to what Lakunle has seen in the civilized world. This dehumanizing act has become naturalized that so many women today, take pleasure in eating the crumbs off the plates that their husbands used to eat.

The savage tradition that sees women as equivalent to an animal or property is further buttressed in

Sadiku's words to Sidi as she brings the message of the Lion to her:

*Sidi, have you considered what a life of
bliss awaits you?
When he dies... it means you will have
the honour of being
the senior wife of the new Bale.... First
as the latest wife,
and afterwards, as the head of the new
harem. Sidi, I
know. I have been in that position for
forty-one years. (pp.20-21)*

Sidi in her response to Sadiku brings the idea clearer thus,
“...he seeks to have me as his property”.... (p.21)

The Yoruba tradition sees a woman as a property and transfers her from one man to another without giving her a choice or consulting with her, because, she has been bought. Sadiku was transferred as a property from the first Bale to the Lion, and she sees nothing wrong with that life of hostage and slavery. She sees it as one of the natural things that happens around. This is a chauvinistic savagery ideology built on the premise that a woman is acquired, and when that is done, she has no power to resist the decision of the society.

3.5 Power/ Powerlessness

Sidi stands in direct contradiction to Sadiku's position of what marriage in their tradition means, which is as a result of her association with Lakunle the man of western ideology. She challenged Lakunle's allusion to all women having little brain. Again, she rejects Sadiku's goodwill message, realizing that Baroka -the tradition, seeks her hand in marriage not because he loves her but to have her “as his property”. At her first meeting with Baroka, he understood that there is a kind of knowledge in her that can liberate her which he alludes to in response to Sidi's stand thus:

Oh. Oh. I see you dip your hand
Into the pockets of the teacher
And retrieve it bulging with knowledge

(p. 50)

Sadiku is of the powerless class as a result of where the tradition has kept her. She cannot see beyond her nose in what is happening to her, instead she sees it as a thing of honour- being transferred from one man to another and from staying in the bedroom of the man to being transferred to the storehouse.

Soyinka further portrays the powerlessness of the woman in the hand of the tradition with the discourse between Baroka and his latest wife, while she is caressing him in bed:

Baroka: You are still somewhat over-gentle with this pull.... (p.26)

Favourite: I'll learn, my lord.

Baroka: You have no time, my dear.

Tonight I hope to take another wife.
And the honour of this task, you know belongs
By right to my latest choice....(p.27)

When a man detects a fault with his property, he has every right to throw it out at will and pick another to replace it. If a woman is not considered a property by the barbaric tradition, there would be some level of respect for Favourite's emotions in such a situation as they were. Here, the tradition announces to the woman the end of her role in bed and introduces her to a new place in the “store” (20). What's more, just as a man removes unwanted property and keeps such in an outhouse or his store, so are women when they are considered no more relevant.

Sadiku, the head of the harem, whom Baroka sent to Sidi, announces to her that her place is in the palace not in the “outhouse” (20). The outhouse is Baroka's storehouse for the women or wives whom he informs Sidi thus,

“I change my wives when I have learnt to tire them”. (43)

Powerlessness is further buttressed in the utterance by Sadiku in the exchange below.

Sadiku: Are you a maid or not?

*(Sidi shakes her head violently
and bursts afresh in tears)*

Lakunle: The Lord forbid

Sadiku: Too late for prayers. Cheer up. It happens to the best of us. (p.59)

Sadiku, a senior wife to Bale, a mother of children by status, sees a girl of about 18 years of age crying as a result of her husband's beastly act, a sexual assault, on her and all she could say is, “Cheer up. It happens to the best of us.” This shows the degree of wretchedness to which the structure of the society has subjected women in this society. The marriage tradition of the Yoruba/ Africa at this time of post independence period, was clearly degrading, dehumanizing, an ignoble custom and shaming tradition.

4. DISCUSSION

The Yoruba traditional marriage concept of bride price can be interpreted to be chauvinistic, humiliating and oppressive since it has no respect nor regard for women, holds people down in dark and eats up the new-hatched chickens” so that there is no future for them. The women are made powerless by the powerful traditions of men which see them as property that can be acquired and handled any how. Unfortunately, this tradition has made the women powerless to the point that they are not able to think. They submit to the traditional ideology without question or resistance because they cannot think as is the case with Sadiku. The western culture embodies a contrary view about women which Lakunle imbibed and brought home to salvage the women of the land starting from Sidi the jewel of Ilujinle village.

Soyinka projects the traditional Yoruba marriage in consonance with Lakunle's description of the tradition as: a savage custom, barbaric, archaic, degrading, humiliating, retrogressive, ignoble custom, infamous, ignominious, shaming their heritage. By his descriptions,

this tradition is evil. Baroka who is the traditional ruler and, by implication, the repository of the people's customs, ideas, and values, rejoices in retrogression rather than in the progress of the society. Out of jealousy, he seduces Sidi, deflowers her and accepts her as a wife without paying her bride price thereby flouting the tradition. This act is not based on the love he has for her but on the platform of destroying her future (the new hatched chicken); a future which the image from the book has just brought to her awareness, which Baroka has seen was going to be greater and brighter than his.

Lakunle, the western culture, on the other hand, has so much in store for Sidi after they must have wedded which could have improved her worth and raised her status, but she lost that to tradition which in turn, becomes the point of her downfall. This explains why Lakunle's fight to erode the Yoruba traditional marriage customs, which renders the promising young woman powerless and besets them with ill, is a fight on the right course. By extension, most African traditions are like Baroka and need to be eroded if the young women will see the brighter sun of their life.

5. CONCLUSION

Soyinka portrays in this play the notion held by most men that women are unequal in every wise to the man and therefore stands as a second class citizen in every aspect of life. Most African men today, whether educated or uneducated, hardly believe in their women for positive impacts or contributions to the society. Just as Lakunle, they are still tied down by some aspects of the same traditions they claim to have divorced. In essence, no amount of Western education can completely erode most African chauvinistic traditions from the heads of the so called "civilized men". On the other hand, Sidi's foresight and effort to challenge the patriarchal ills were upturned and dampened by tradition. This goes a long way to show the level of peril and helplessness an African woman faces in an attempt to stand her ground in the chauvinistic society where finds herself.

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