

## **An Oikopoetic Reading in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and The Jewel***

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Oikopoetics is poetics of the Oikos which to the Greek meant habitant comprising the spirits, humans and culture peculiar to it. The 'Oikos' in a work of literature is namely, a poem, play or novel that revolves around the chief character or the protagonist of the work. A typical oikos is a sequence in which the humans, natural and cultural phenomena stand in an integrated relation. Speaking historically, three types of oikos have been shaped in all poetry: Integrative, Hierarchic and Anarchic.

### **Integrative Oikos**

This type integrates the nature, culture, sacred and the humans in complex kinship as a family of kith and kin. This kin-like oikos of primal societies allows freedom with responsibility. The duties, obligations and rights tie up the people, spirits and nature together quite complicated. The relationship power of the familial oikos is both horizontal and vertical; both the love and authority are normative. Black Elk, the chieftain of an American Indian Tribe summed up this complicated bond as, "The two-legged and four-legged lived like kith and kin".

This integrative oikos affirms its kin relation in ritual. In fact, there was hardly any distinction between ritual and art. If so it goes without saying that poetry was also ritual or part of ritual. Being ritual, poetry shared such features of ritual as society, repetition, identification and transformation.

### **Hierarchic Oikos**

If a kin relationship disassociates both horizontally and vertically, political relationship is configured only vertically in hierarchical manner. In this political or hierarchical oikos the members stand by hierarchic relation, with sacred at the top, humans at the middle and nature at the bottom. By attributing supremacy to the sacred, distance between the humans and the sacred was adopted, confining the later to a special space deemed by holy.

Similarly, the human world is also imagined as hierarchically ordered one with the superior is the ruler and the inferior is ruled. The distance between these two is very clearly determined that when the ruler was confined to a special space, namely, the court or palace and the ruled one is at the space outside of it.

### **Anarchic Oikos**

The anarchic oikos begins while the hierarchic oikos began to break up when the supremacy of the sacred became doubtful with an increased emphasis on rational systems and materialistic ideologies instead of religious doctrines. Rational scrutiny was necessary to determine the utilitarian value of the members of the oikos. In theistic society, the sacred was considered useful for certain purposes and invoked in ceremonies and customary practices. Nature on the other hand, was more easily usable. Humans were also looked upon as resources and assets.

In short, the new oikos was anarchic in spirit but economic in practice. It was rather a market with a shift from the political hierarchy to an economic negotiation. It was the reason that controlled the negotiation of the market. It helped to gather more knowledge about the sacred, nature and man and also in making out of strategies to exploit these to human advantage.

There is no single oikos in a work. Various oikoses can be drawn around the protagonist. The chief character is a man, for example, the hero of the story under study, and then the first oikos that would merit consideration could be hero himself, his family, his dwellings, the deity he worships and the spirits of his ancestors. If the hero is considered as a representative of his family, then he is the unit of that oikos which includes their family, streets, lands and their ancestors.

In *The Lion and The Jewel*, Soyinka presents us like satirically and examines the impact of modernism. The story was set in the village of Ilujinle. In this, the central character is Baroka, is the Bale or Chief of Yoruba. He is called as the lion and fox of the village, it is said by Sidi:

“I am more esteemed / Than Bale Baroka, / The Lion of Ilujinle.”

Baroka is considered as the only person who prevents to protect the culture Yoruba.

Because while Lakunle is trying to take Sidi with him by marrying her, Baroka says that, through this there will be stopped of continuation of their culture. A generation will be spoiled of not following Yoruba, as she follows the English system. She will follow the dress the customs of western culture. Baroka is mentioned as fox by Lakunle: “Is it for nothing he is called Fox?”

Lakunle, the English man and he is the teacher in the school and also who has the hobby of photography who took Sidi, the beauty of the village. The photo was published in the magazine. While Baroka saw the photo, he made a severe enquiry about the girl. As he heard about her and her relationship with the Englishman, he plans to stop their marriage. Baroka planned of preventing Sidi by marrying her. Though he is already married many his first wife Sadiku helped more in marrying her. Sidi was refused to marry, but she was made comfort by Sadiku. Then she accepted the proposal of Sadiku and married Baroka. Though he is sixty-two, he wanted Sidi because to prevent the culture. He is mentioned as womanizer in the village. But he didn't take care of it, because the culture he lives has polygamy and it's the identity and showing the power of a man in the culture.

In this the oikos of integrative is examined, as Baroka stood against the western implementation through Lakunle. Though he is old he didn't give his courage to leave Sidi to an

English man. As in the first oikos, he is the hero of the play who stood strong to protect his culture.

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### Work Cited

[www.angelfire.com/oikos](http://www.angelfire.com/oikos)

Soyinka, Wole, *The Lion and The Jewel*, Oxford University Press, 1962.