

Juliette the Symbol of Woman's Liberation and Emancipation in "Three Suitors One Husband" of Guillaume Oyono MBIA

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Abstract— In this society called M'voutessi village near Sangamelima in Cameroun where a girl could be married off without been consulted. Where a woman could not speak out her mind when men are talking, a woman could not challenge man's authority. In this society where a woman is portrayed in degrading manner, where she is subjected to her husband who is the master and whom she has always to obey. In this village where a woman is oppressed, she is regarded as inferior to man, as a second class human being of less value than a man. She is considered as a slave.

According to the traditions in this village, it is the family which decides and finds a husband for the girl. The girl has no say concerning the choice of her husband to be. In this village, where this father called Atangana wanted to marry off her daughter Juliette to any rich man who would offer a lot of money to the family.

Therefore, this study shows how it took a courageous school girl called Juliette from the young generation to go against their traditions and said that she should be consulted for a married which concerns her and not to be forced into a marriage in which she has no knowledge at all.

Index Terms— traditions, oppressed, obey, suitors, woman, consulted, master, slave.

I. INTRODUCTION

Three Suitors and a husband is a piece of comedy in five acts. In this piece it is about a father who wants to give his daughter in marriage to every rich man materially. This action is part of the social code and tradition because here it is the family that decides and finds a husband to the daughter. The story is based on an authentic fact lived by the author, his cousin had been the victim of a forced marriage. The author is inspired by this story to write his piece. In this play, the playwright denounces forced marriage. He puts the destiny of the woman in her own hands and seems to tell her that her destiny depends on her through these two female characters; Juliette and Matalina.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is so much documentation about the liberation and emancipation of the African women that we cannot mention everything, but we will get substantial information.

In The last of the empire, Ousmane puts the woman in a superior position. He gives the example of Nafissatou, a woman who holds a ministerial position, as minister of women's affairs

in a world dominated by male power (Ousmane 1983: 30). But despite this male domination, the author shows how Djia Umrel Ba was proud of her feminine gender. She did not want to contradict her husband in front of another person. She was modest, docile, submissive, but when things were not going well, she used her voice to denounce social injustice. She had the image of a courageous and better informed woman, perhaps more than any other male character, her husband included. She has a vast knowledge. Ousmane introduced Umrel as the spokesperson of a new society where men and women can freely express themselves and participate in the development of their society.

Ezaboto in his Cruel city shows how a courageous woman did not hesitate to confront a man in a head-to-head discussion. This woman expresses herself freely and without fear. She says what she feels in her heart regardless of the male presence. She sees in man, a human being like any other and never a half god (Boto 1971: 9).

Emecheta Buchi in his work the Second class citizen through his female character Adoh, who fights against poverty, the patriarchal system, marriage and customs that the show sail. She constantly fights to free herself from the yoke of discrimination that disadvantage her. She defies the authority of her husband who wanted her to work in the industry, but she refused and chose to work in a library and this proves that she is entitled to a free choice in her life (Emecheta 1981: 20).

Mariama Ba, in her work So Long a Letter through this female character Aissatou who had not wasted enough time to free herself from this slavery of polygamy. When her husband, Mawdo Ba, the medical doctor had taken a second wife (Nabou), Assaitou never hesitated to divorce her husband. After the divorce, she became an interpreter and went to live in the United States of America with her sons (Mariama Ba 1980).

III. DISCUSSION

In this piece of comedy, the characters are divided into three categories: the generation of grandparents, the parents and the younger generation. The action is part of the social code and the tradition. It is the family that decides and finds a husband to the daughter, the opinion of a girl, as well as that of the women of the family do not count in the choice of a husband. Women do not participate in family decisions, men decide alone.

The work looks at the conflict of generations, that is to say young people against adults or modernity against tradition

because the two generations: the generation of grandparents and that of parents want to impose their decisions according to their tradition on the younger generation, which in turn wants to be consulted. In this piece, it is a question of a father in the name of Atangana who wants to give his daughter in marriage to a very rich man materially without the agreement of the girl. Juliette, a young high school girl from M'voutessi comes home from school to find that her father has decided to give her in marriage without consulting her. Juliette is a contempt of the elder, offended the tradition, offended the established social hierarchy by revolting against the decision of her father and her family whose interest was a financial transaction. Juliette is against the haggling of the woman.

There are two serious suitors in the race, the peasant Ndi, the first suitor from the younger generation and Mbia the senior civil servant, the second suitor from the parents' generation. But Tchetsgen, the trader, the third suitor, is not really in the race.

Atangana the head of the family sent his daughter Juliette to school. The family has just received a sum of one hundred thousand francs from Ndi, a young man wanting to marry Juliette, another suitor is announced, Mbia the senior civil servant. Juliette went home from school the same day to spend her holiday with her family. Upon arrival, Juliette is informed of the situation, her reaction is straight forwards; there is no way I can be sold like a goat. The senior civil servant proclaims himself very important and pays the family two hundred thousand francs as a dowry to the family, who also presents a list of what the family needs. At the announcement of this forced marriage without her consent, Juliette refuses. To the surprise of her family, she took the opportunity to announce her engagement with Oko, a young student. The family does not want the school boy because the latter is unable to solve their problems. On page fifteen (15) of this piece, Abessolo Juliette's grandfather told his son Atangana, Juliette's father: "According to you, it was necessary to wait to consult Juliette herself before accepting the dowry. Consult a woman about her marriage!" But Juliette, the educated girl says: "what! So I am for sale? Why do you have to try to give me to the highest bidder? Can't I be consulted for a marriage that concerns me? But I have not even seen the man you want me to marry! How do you want me to like him?" (p20).

From the courage of this young high school girl, we see that the present opposes the past. And this present marks the freedom of women. But the old society is really nailed to tradition. Bella, the grandmother of Juliette, faithful to the tradition emphasizes it by enflaming it: "a girl does not speak when her father speaks", because in Africa a face to face between young people and old is a taboo.

IV. CONCLUSION

The traditional society puts the girl or woman in a difficult situation where the woman had nothing to say when the man spoke. But Juliette the modern girl, symbol of the liberation and emancipation of the African woman does not agree with this way of living. She fights for her liberation and the emancipation of the African woman in general. Juliette refuses to bow to

traditional bonds, but decides to make a free choice of her own husband instead of a forced one (husband).

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