

The Stage as a Canvas: A Postcolonial Analysis of Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and The Jewel*

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Abstract: Postcolonialism applies to cultures that have been affected by imperial processes. It is a theoretical approach propounded by experts such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha for the exploration of the consequences of colonial interventionism. The theory attempts to deconstruct the impact of imperialistic ideas that emerge from expansionism. This study qualitatively analyses Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and Jewel* [1959] from a postcolonial viewpoint. Through textual analysis of dramatic techniques, the study explores how Soyinka takes advantage of the stage as a metaphorical canvas to skillfully present his thoughts about imperialism and African traditions by way of counter-discourse. It also uncovers how the dramatist uses setting, plot, characterization, and linguistic aesthetics to establish that every so often, theoretically obtrusive cultures tend to unearth aspects of cultures that need reform. However, the study shows that there could be adverse consequences associated with adopting a culture that is entirely foreign and then abandoning one's own. Additionally, it demonstrates that it is simply impossible to pull up an existing culture and plant in its place another. The study, therefore, concludes that the dramatist effectively deploys the stage as a canvas to prove that cultures need not be dogmatic, nor should they be too pliable to be easily uprooted. Instead, he advocates that cultures can co-exist such that each one complements the other. Soyinka thus manipulates counter-discourse to propose cultural coexistence as a path to cultural harmony as opposed to cultural imperialism.

Keywords: Postcolonial Theory, Imperialism, Deconstruction, Soyinka, Counter-Discourse, African Drama

1. Introduction

The effects of colonialism in Africa are undeniable. While, for centuries, colonial discourses have not relented in casting Africa[ns] in pejorative terms, postcolonial African discourses, on the other hand, continue to offer the platform for African counter-discourse. Textuality has become the canvas for the prognosis of “binaries: the colonizer and the colonized [21]. Wole Soyinka, a revered and iconic African dramatist, maximizes textuality in the project of giving Africans a voice on the counter-discourse stage [21]. This study, therefore, contributes to research by conducting a content analysis that delves into how Soyinka presents this binary contestation in *The Lion and The Jewel* from a postcolonial viewpoint. The discourse in this study is carried out from the lens of postcolonialism as propounded by postcolonial experts such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha. The “term postcolonial”

is deliberately unhyphenated in this paper. The reason for this is the postulation that postcolonialism does “not glibly mean ‘after colonialism’ as implied by the misleading axis of the hyphen in ‘post-colonial’ [24]. Rather, it is a term that describes, evaluates, and helps to configure a relationship between reality and its representation’ [24]. The study finds this explanation laudable and therefore adopts postcolonialism to mean the relationship between the reality of African cultures and how they are represented and post-colonialism to mean after-colonialism.

An understanding of the sources and nature of the conflicting binaries of the colonized and the colonizer in postcolonial African texts is a leap toward introspection by the postcolony. It is also a means of finding harmonious resolutions that foster the development of the post-colonial nation-state. The interrogation of indigenous culture in this discourse is not a pedestal for the vilification of Western cultural intrusions into indigenous spaces. It is rather an

effort to draw attention to the need for cultural introspection and mutual respect for both indigenous and Western cultures in postcolonial terms. This study is thus inspired by readings from critics such as Kehinde who writes from the postcolonial view with a focus on re-writing Africa's history to oppose the European view that Africa was uncivilized until contact with the Western world [21]. He does this by juxtaposing Coetzee's *Foe* "(1986)" and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* "(1719)". By highlighting the central theme of Coetzee's work, he debunks the Western notion about Africa[ns] not having a history nor a culture. He proves how false and destructive the Western narrative has been to Africa and the Africans in the texts. According to Kehinde, rather than being the beginning, the post-colonial period signaled the end of the beauty, commonality, and reciprocity which were characteristics of the African past [21]. He concludes by declaring that as much as such counter-narratives are important, there is also the need not to always focus on textual battles. Rather, writing should foster peace and harmony to fight global challenges [17]. Kehinde's call for harmony underpins the aim of this study as a discourse that depicts Soyinka's call for cultural harmony in *The Lion and the Jewel*. Also, Kanalemang writes about *Things Fall Apart* with his focus on the fictional Igbo culture, before and after encountering the Western world [22]. He speaks of the rich, beautiful, and well-structured culture of the Igbo people before they met the Western world. According to him, this contact eventually leads to a cultural clash between the colonizer and the colonized. With the colonizer winning this battle, the conclusion of Kanalemang suggests that it is the negative aspects of the Igbo culture that eventually led to its fall in the text [22]. This conclusion is a call for cultural introspection that is also resonated in Soyinka's stage work. It is a conclusion that draws attention to the need for some interrogation into the essentialisation of African cultures as a potential for neo-othering. Perhaps, the caution from Kanalemang's call for introspection is for African enthusiasts to avoid the simplistic acceptance of all glorification of African cultures as reiterated by Couch [2004: 154]:

Indigenous people being represented as inherently democratic; as noble (virtually nonviolent) warriors, and as passive victims who have been grossly neglected and abused by their government. This type of romanticization or stereotyping of the other is understood by many to be simply another form of colonization. Fanon calls it the 'final liquidation...the digestion of natives'; an identity appropriation or the repackaging and promotion of native perspectives to facilitate their incorporation into the dominant culture [14].

Though essentialism extols African cultures, such glorification could be seen as positive stereotyping that may be potentially as insidious as negative stereotyping. Taking a cue from the claims made by critics espoused in this study, the selected text is explored to reveal Soyinka's use of his text as a stage for bringing to bare, the gaps that need to be filled when it comes to examining a fictional Africa with respect to postcolonialism. Awinsong takes a cue from

Kanalemang by further studying the effects of Africans encountering the Western world on the cultures of the various African nations and their sub-cultures [6]. He looks at how this contact undermined the cultural structures and institutions that Africans had in place. He uses chieftaincy, which is the epitome of leadership in many African cultures, to speak of how African institutions have been battered and yet prevailed upon the impact of their contact with the colonial powers. Generally, he shows clearly that the roles and functions of African chiefs have become limited and somewhat relegated to the background in the postcolonial era even as he hints at some of the flaws of chieftaincy as an African institution that should be a voice for Africans on the stage of counter-discourse. This reading lends insight into the examination of Baroka's characterization and the postcolonial implications in Soyinka's *The Lion and The Jewel*.

Counter-discourse has gained roots in many post-colonial treatises. As Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin proffer, "The term 'counter-discourse' has been adopted by postcolonial critics to describe the complex ways in which challenges to a dominant or established discourse [specifically those of the imperial center] might be mounted from the periphery, always recognizing the powerful absorptive capacity of imperial and neo-imperial discourses" [5] (p. 56). The praxis of counter-discourse underscores this study. It borrows from the critical discourse view of language as a social discourse to examine the linguistic techniques used by Soyinka to drive his message home. Also, the term African culture is used in specificity to Soyinka's fictional Nigerian society but not as an all-encompassing term that presents Africa as a monolith. This is irrespective of the universal implications of literary works.

2. The Dramatist

Wole Soyinka was born in 1934 in Abeokuta, Nigeria when Nigeria was still a British colony [1844-1960]. As a Yoruba, Soyinka attended the University of Ibadan, which was affiliated with the University of London. He later moved to England and attended the University of Leeds, where he earned a bachelor's degree in English Literature with Honors. His early works mainly attacked racism and colonial repression in Africa. Soyinka's love and commitment to writing are revealed in the period of his political imprisonment. He was denied reading and writing materials, but he was able to create his ink and began to keep a prison diary. As a substitute for writing paper, he wrote on toilet paper, cigarette packages, and in between the lines of the few books, he secretly obtained. He found a way to smuggle these writings to his supporters on the outside as a reassurance that he still lived.

Soyinka's literary works have won the interest of many critics in the way they serve as a voice for misrepresented people. Drawing from Awinsong's conclusion, stated earlier, this study examines how Soyinka uses counter-discourse to Western misrepresentation of Africa to position chieftaincy

as an epitome of the relationship between an African traditional culture against a Western-influenced modernity in the social fabric of his fictional African society. Also examined, is how the dramatist carefully depiction of themes, plot structure as well as setting as vehicles for presenting his message. Mawad, akin to Awinsong, reveals a clash of cultures in Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*. As opposed to the Western view that Africans had no culture; that they were savages [23]. Mawad proves that the play presents an African culture that exists but is only different from the Western culture. The sudden invasion of Western culture in Soyinka's drama is blamed for a clash with the existing African culture. By deduction, Mawad shows that the study draws attention to the fact that African cultures were already in existence but suffered domination by Western cultures. Habibullah also agrees with Mawad when the former looks at *The Lion and the Jewel* as a symbol of resistance to interventionism [20]. The pair concludes that though the colonized were against imperialism, they still succumbed to certain aspects of the imperialist culture. Mawad's work percusses this study. It establishes the existence of a cultural clash but not how the dramatist works it out. Of interest to this study, therefore, is what Soyinka presents about cultural hybridization in relation to the message of the duo in the drama under study and essentially, how he presents his message through setting, plot, etc.

Some critics have also looked at Soyinka's plays from the Afrocentric slant. Zargar, as a case in point, looks at two of Soyinka's plays, *The Lion and the Jewel* and *The Road*, from the Afrocentric perspective [34]. She argues that the plays preserve and protect the history of Africa. Zargar asserts that Soyinka, in employing African traditions and customs against Western tenets in his plays makes the former triumph in the cultural clash [34]. Irrespective of whom to blame for what, Alabi and Mohammadzadeh [2018], in a study of Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest*, posit that Africa's postcolonial troubles stem from the transmission of colonial mentality into the post-colonial era by former colonial subjects [3]. These presentations make Soyinka's works Afrocentric. Taking a cue from the post-colonial critics espoused thus far, this study explores how Soyinka uses dramatic and linguistic elements in *The Lion and the Jewel* to project colonial impact on his fictional post-colony.

The literature, thus far, points to a cultural clash and the need for cultural harmony as central to postcolonial literary discourse in many of Soyinka's works. The case for *The Lion and the Jewel* has not yet been explored. This study thereby examines how Soyinka uses *The Lion and the Jewel* as a stage to trumpet postcolonial cultural issues in his fictional Africa after colonial rule.

3. Synopsis of the Text

Soyinka's play, *The Lion and the Jewel* focuses on a clash between two fictional cultures: an African traditional culture and a western culture. This cultural clash is represented by two dominant male characters in the play. Lakunle is the

representation of Western culture whiles Baroka symbolizes traditional culture. These two are pitted against each other in that, one, in the end, eventually must marry the Jewel of the village, Sidi. This battle over Sidi is what the playwright uses to symbolize the nucleus of the cultural clash. Lakunle, with his Western ideals, stands a better chance of marrying Sidi but the only way this could happen is that he must pay her bride price, a traditional practice that he abhors. He refuses to pay because he does not support anything that has to do with the traditional culture. Baroka then takes advantage of the situation and lures Sidi into visiting him. He rapes her and Sidi is compelled to marry him.

4. Analysis

The text *The Lion and the Jewel* is regarded as one of Soyinka's ground-breaking works. To the literary world, the philosophy that undergirds Soyinka's work resides in his philological density epitomized, in the case of the selected text, in the imaging of his setting. The play was written in Britain, Nigeria's colonial master between 1844 and 1960, and was first performed in Nigeria in 1959. The play pivots on a clash between two cultures; that is, a fictional African traditional culture (colonized) and Western culture [colonized]. According to Adhikary, the text "is crafted on the problems and impacts of colonialism in the third world countries especially Nigeria" [31]. The play begins with a very significant dramatic element which is the setting. Through the setting, Soyinka foregrounds his intended message. The text opens with: "A clearing on the edge of the market, dominated by an immense 'odan' tree. It is the village center. The wall of the bush school flanks the stage..." [1]. The market is a symbol of a point of convergence for all things essential to life in Africa. Clearing the edges of the market, therefore, epitomizes efforts to remove all the unwanted materials in this imaginary African culture that impedes the thriving of the people. The reference to bushes connotes unwanted growths infiltrating acceptable social norms and by metaphorical extension, unacceptable Western practices such as not paying the bride price. Gibbs expresses similar views with the explanation that the market is figurative of the center of society because it gathers diverse people [15].

It can also be deduced that specifying the edge of the market situates Lakunle, an archetype of the West, on the peripherals of the community outside of where everyone else is. The imagery of an alienated son is painted in the special positioning of the opening of the play on the fringes of the market and not the very center of it. The position at the edges also forecasts the dilemma and confusion that ensues between the cultural binaries later. It also suggests the binaries of individualism as against communalism with the former symbolizing Western culture and the latter symbolizing tradition. The setting is a space described as neither inside the market nor outside, a foreshadowing of lost identities. Putting all these symbolic elements in the center of the village is an emblematic indication that the matter of

confusion at stake is one at the very heart of the village. It concerns the star and the identity of the village, Sidi, and culture respectively. There is the notion that the impact of the confusion may have a monumental impact on the culture and ideology of the entire village.

Another setting of interest in Soyinka's *The Lion and The Jewel* is the primary school. It is a representation of the change that is yet to come, the representational beginning of a new era of Western norms. The wall around the primary school typifies the isolation of Lakunle in his Western thoughts, beliefs, and practices. Since the primary school trains young and innocent pupils, Lakunle's quest to transform society is in motion but restricted by the wall of traditional culture. The restraint is monitored by the big *odan* tree which denotes Baroka, the chief and commander-in-chief of the village. The *odan* tree is also a significant part of the setting because of its mammoth mass, and the fact that it provides shade [shelter and protection from intruding cultures], it is perhaps also used by Soyinka as a symbol of authority and resistance (protection) that Soyinka's African culture offers to guard against meddlesome cultures [2].

The structure of the text [Morning, Afternoon, Evening] is also used to reiterate the impact of the setting and therefore the message of the poet. Thus, rather than make use of the Western style of 'Act' that is used in dividing drama texts, Soyinka chooses to use Morning, Noon, and Night. The 'Act' signifies a beginning of an action and the end of it. The use of morning, noon, and night presages the fluidity of real life rather than the use of 'Act'. Possibly, he differs from the Western style to enforce his message that African cultures may differ from Western cultures, but they are not in any way, inferior to them.

Just after the setting, Soyinka, reveals the subject of the text, which is a cultural clash. Akin to *Kongi's Harvest*, one of Soyinka's seminal plays that bespeak the clash of cultures, *The Lion and the Jewel* centralizes a similar clash. Banham et al. describe Danlola's ability to resist Kongi in Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* as a display of the understanding of the complexities of the cultural politics at play in the text. In the play in question, *The Lion and The Jewel*, the clash is between imaginary African traditional and Western cultures. These two cultures are represented by two main characters in the play: Lankunle is a schoolteacher and an agent of the Western culture, whereas Baroka is a traditional chief of Ilujinle who serves as an embodiment of the African culture in the text. These two characters are skillfully rutted against each other as a depiction of contesting of binaries; Lakunle is exhibited as *Us* whereas Baroka [and all who share in his traditional ideals] as *Them*. Soyinka inserts a young female character, by the name of Sidi, between the two parallel characters. As such, Sidi becomes an object of contestation- a 'trophy' to be won by either of the two combatants. This way, the main conflict -a clash of cultures, in the work is established and the problematic *otherness* of women is hinted. Bovill and Robin argue that many West African kingdoms had rulers with enormous wealth, organized judicial systems, and large armies long before colonization [10]. As a result,

whilst Baroka may be a wealthy powerful chief who believes that by tradition he gets to have whom he chooses by the power of his wealth, Lankunle believes that wealth is transient, and Sidi must marry him out of love and nothing else. Thus, like Danlola as indicated earlier, Baroka seem to have understood the complexities of cultural politics and he played it to his advantage. Baroka's wit and win insinuate the inability of the Western culture to erase the traditional African culture as presented by Soyinka.

The interplay of counter-discourse is another technique used by the dramatist to demonstrate cultural resistance and activism as key features of postcolonialism. Lakunle's love for Sidi is parodied in how he demonstrates a lack of imbibing in the Western culture he aligns with. The latter ludicrously and constantly showers Sidi with admiration and baroque language as a show of learnedness but to her antipathy. He believes Sidi is going to be enthralled with this action. However, she is not, and his love is unrequited. She keeps to the African ideals that she has been brought up with. Therefore, a form of binary is established between Sidi and Lakunle in the play.

LeBaron and Bruce avow that "culture is inextricable from conflict, though it does not cause it. When differences surface... culture is always present, shaping perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes" [19] (p. 1). In *The Lion and the Jewel*, the conflict of the plot is evident in Lakunle's dispute with Sidi over the payment of the bride price before marriage. Soyinka sets the stage for the conflict when Lakunle reveals his stand against the traditions and customs of the people of Ilujinle. The latter's first drawback is with the issue of Sidi carrying things on her head, an African practice which he undermines by saying: "...you are as stubborn as an illiterate goat. It is bad for the spine. And it shortens your neck, so that very soon You will have no neck at all..." [2]. This is what he presumably learns from his Western books, but they certainly don't apply to the traditional culture. Women are known for carrying heavy loads on their heads in Africa for ages and this is even a mark of strength. No wonder Sidi responds, "Well, it is my neck..." [2]. Here Soyinka deploys culture to guide Sidi as to which way to turn. In postcolonial terms, 'illiterate' is considered a stereotype. Bressler [2007] posits that the occident views the orient through negative images. These images are shaped through a systematic process over time [31]. In addition, "the knowledge about the 'orient' produced and circulated in Europe was an ideological accompaniment of colonial power" [4]. Given this, Lakunle asserts that "Yes, and I will stand by every word I spoke" [2]. He is certainly bent on transforming the village with his Western principles. However, post-colonialism dismisses all forms of Eurocentrism that projects the colonizer as superior, and the colonized 'other' as inferior. Consequently, Soyinka characterizes Sidi as a counter-discoursal agent of resistance and activism that leads to her marriage to Baroka instead. Through the scorning of Lakunle as a travesty, Soyinka, as wa'Thiongo [2000] advocates, cautions the youth about sitting on the edge; not imbibed in either the traditional culture or the foreign culture.

In the text, Lakunle's advances go as far as to rebuke Sidi for wrapping herself in 'cloth' which is a traditional outfit for women. To Lakunle, a "... grown-up girl must cover up her... shoulders..." and "... not run about naked in the streets..." [2]. Concerning this dressing, Lankunle demonstrates Said's view that the oriental woman is perceived to be naked and an object of sexual satisfaction. With Lakunle's constant persistence, Sidi gradually yields to his recommendations but later suffers from this. She argues that "... I have done the fold so high and so tight; I can hardly breathe" [3]. In this scene, Soyinka metaphorically compares a move away from one's culture to losing one's inner self [soul]. He also advocates the need to compromise if an aspect of a culture does not sit right because it is so restrictive as to choke those who practice it.

In terms of appearance as an aspect of characterization, Soyinka's description of Lakunle as one who feels superior and more enlightened makes Lakunle look like an accident. "He is dressed in an old-style English suit... a size or two too small ... His tie is done in a very small knot... wears twenty-inch-bottom trousers... and tennis shoes" [1]. Through the characterization of Lankunle, Soyinka reiterates the view of Bressler that to think that all races apart from the white race are inferior is a colonial ideology [11]. Lakunle thus epitomizes Said's assertion that colonial ideology interferes with the definitions of subjects of a post-colony. He carries along on his back, as a non-white person who is blinded by imitation of the white man, what Kipling in his poem "The White Man's Burden" written in 1899 refers to as the white man's burden to bring salvation to non-Westerners whom he compared to as wild beasts [18]. How Lakunle is presented associates him with what Bhabha calls mimicry [8, 9]. The latter states that all modes of imposition including the demand on the colonized to be like the colonizer results in mimicry. This parody, which he also terms *in-betweens* is Bhabha's postcolonial view of a situation where the "Other" seeks to be accepted by the colonizer and consequently loses his own identity [8]. This is evident at the end of the play in that, Lakunle still wants to marry Sidi even though she has now lost her virginity to Baroka. It becomes evident that he gives up on the convictions that identify him only when reality dawns on him. With Baroka's win, Soyinka uses the stage for rectifying concerns related to education and mis-education within and regarding Africa [13]. Kehinde echoes the concerns of Frantz Fanon who indicates that:

Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all forms of content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today [15, p. 168].

As a post-colonial writer, Quayson posits that Soyinka also uses the stage to perpetuate African cultural and political affirmation as a counter-discourse to the devaluation of Africa's pre-colonial history [27]. Though Lakunle fails in his attempt to imbibe his Western ideals in Sidi, he still wants to marry her. In postcolonial discourse, Bhabha calls

Lakunle's unrelenting desire ambivalence. This, according to Burney, is simply a symbiotic relationship of love/hate, attraction/repulsion, and admiration/derogation, between the colonizer and the colonized. Sidi does not mind marrying Lakunle but she is only going to do that on one condition; that Lakunle pays her bride price, a key symbol of the African marriage institution. Lakunle's refusal to pay the bride price is consequential because a woman's bride price is so important, and it is the traditionally accepted way of getting married. Mawad avers that without payment of the bride price the traditional view in many parts of Africa is that the woman wasn't a virgin or there has been some sleeping around and that the nuptial was only a concealment of that indignity. However, to Lakunle who has received Western education, this traditional view is absurd. In his words they are "savage..., barbaric, outdated, Rejected, denounced, accursed..." [7]. His use of verbose speech is to emphasize his immeasurable abhorrence for the traditions and customs that Sidi held valuable. He utterly looks down upon the traditional culture. Lakunle, with his western ideals, believes that it is pointless to pay the bride price and that; it only meant a man had bought a woman making her a fragment of his chattels and *Other* to the man. In Lakunle's words, "I do not seek a wife to fetch and carry, to cook and scrub..." [7]. This further enforces his abhorrence: "An ignoble custom, infamous, ignominious..." [7]. Soyinka, through Sidi however engages in a counter-discourse as a rebuttal to Lakunle and the culture he resents by insisting that the latter pays the bride price first. In postcolonial discourse, resistance is the main concept, in the view of Frantz Fanon to defeat the Western negative impacts and to support the national and traditional identity [16]. Lakunle's attack on the native tradition is a representation of Eurocentric views of the colonized *Other* that characterizes the negative impact of colonialism [32].

Said sees stereotypes as reverberated by Lakunle as subjective and suggests an objective solution [29]. He believes that each culture must take on the mantle to present itself, whether in the political, social, or cultural sphere. This is what Soyinka communicates with his stage through his characterization. As a case in point, Lakunle is emphatic about his quest to transform Ilujinle within the shortest possible time. He positions Lakunle to believe that he is the sole commission as an enlightened [educated] man to draw others into the 'light'. From Lakunle: "...we shall sit at the table _Not on the floor_ and eat, not with fingers, but with knives and forks, and breakable plates like civilized beings" [9]. This statement fails to convince Sidi into believing that the culture Lakunle proffers is better than what she knows. Sidi takes on the mantle to present her native culture as a counter to Lakunle's presentation.

In addition, Soyinka presents Lakunle as a vessel for the enforcement of the idea that the *Occident* is superior to the *Orient*. Through Lakunle, Soyinka demonstrates on stage how the *Occident* positions themselves as the civilized trying to enlighten the *Orient*, the savage, and how this stereotyping of the *Orient* erupts into a clash. In Said's view, such fixes

should be replaced by fair representations to ensure justice. According to Burney [2012], Franz Fanon calls this cultural stereotyping *Psychic Warring* which refers to the psychological distortions of a people's culture in a way that grounds ego deficits and erosion of self-pride that eventually leads to a loss of identity [12]. Spivak chooses the term 'worlding' to refer to a similar process whereby a local population is coaxed into accepting a European version of reality for understanding their social world [30]. Soyinka's counter-discourse techniques reverberate through Baroka's chicanery, Sadiku's jocularly, and Sidi's assertiveness and particularity in words. The latter's thoughts are wittingly expressed in her response to Lakunle's civilization agenda saying, "You mean to turn the whole world upside down" [5]. Her rhetoric hints at a clatter between her views and that of the carrier of the *white man's burden*- Lakunle.

Thematically, Soyinka's stage also presents a cultural clash through characterization when Lakunle tries to kiss Sidi who backs away because the act looks foreign and disgusting to her. Sidi's withdrawal becomes an avenue for the dramatist to show another instance of cultural hegemony through Lakunle who takes another shot at Sidi calling her "Uncivilized and primitive –bush girl! I kiss you as all educated men and Christians kiss their wives. It is the way of civilized romance" [9].

The stage is also used by the dramatist to interrogate good old Christianity and its subtle use as a foil in colonizing Africans. In this text, religion [Christianity] and education are revealed as important tools for civilization [33]. Lakunle demonstrates his role as an apostle of the colonial master who believes that African cultures lack civilization. This belief undergirds why Lakunle deems Sidi's traditional culture savagery. Whereas the traditional culture promotes polygamy, Christianity frowns upon it and gives Lakunle a reason to detest Baroka so much. Soyinka critiques colonial manipulation by mirroring the colonial game of using religion and education to perpetuate colonialism, slavery, and the raiding of colonies [10]. Lakunle, like the colonial master, has his interest hidden behind what he calls love for Sidi and a desire to make her civilized by subtly cloaking her in his exotic orientalism.

Amid the cultural clashes, Soyinka resorts to counter-discourse that rebukes the misrepresentation of indigenous cultures by Western agents via staging the scuffle around the magazine. The overt purpose of the magazine as a colonial import is to export the culture of the people of Ilujinle to the outside world. However, just like any other thing that is not an accurate representation of the tradition of a people, it poses a lot of problems with its implications. Sidi's image is put on the cover page while Baroka's is almost omitted from the magazine. As the head of the village, Baroka's traditional role is supposed to be recognized: he should be seen at the fore, but his image is relegated to a small corner in the magazine. This arrangement has connotations that undermine the role of the traditional chief, Baroka. Soyinka highlights the incident as a subtle colonial practice used to disintegrate the very

center of African culture as Achebe epitomized in his seminal novel, *Things Fall Apart*. Thus, Soyinka uses the stage to counter the replay of the colonial trick. He sets up a counter-plot that breaks the power of the very tool that the colonial protegee intends to use to undermine Baroka. As a result, instead of Lakunle having Sidi, Baroka wins the bout and becomes the lord of the jewel to assert his authority regardless of what the white man's magazine shows.

As much as Soyinka extols African culture on stage, he does not mince calling for cultural introspection. He uses characterization to draw attention to the avenues in his African culture for neo-colonial exploitation. Consequently, Baroka and Lakunle are juxtaposed to expose the dodges in the fictional native culture. Baroka, who is on the traditional side of the contention over Sidi, is presented as an utterly traditional man. As the head of the village, he represents Ilujinle and everything that has to do with the custody of traditional culture. Being a foil to Baroka, Lakunle is convinced that Baroka is a die-hard rogue who is sworn against progress. In collocation, we see the age difference between Baroka and Lakunle; Lakunle is twenty-three and youthful while Baroka is old in his sixties. Soyinka uses the stage to caution the African youth who are easily influenced by new developments whereas the old are also cautioned about conservatism and dogmatism that retard community development. The age gap further symbolizes the long-existing African culture which is suddenly threatened by a new and unfamiliar Western culture. Baroka, in Lakunle's view, is a clog in the quest to modernize Ilujinle village. Whereas Baroka does everything in his might to safeguard the traditions and customs of the African culture, Lakunle, with his youthful exuberance, is parodied and staged as only seeking to destroy it in the name of civilization and modernity.

Soyinka's technique of pseudo-choruses in the character of Sadiku and Lakunle's father sucks out information about Baroka's past and hidden deeds to justify his call for introspection. The two become Soyinka's agents for pacing the plot and manipulating time and motion. It is Sadiku who initiates and motions Sidi's entrapment by Baroka with her deception that the lion has lost his bite in bed. This lie bates Sidi into fearlessly going into Baroka's arms and thus his ability to subdue her. On the other hand, we have Lakunle revealing a long-hidden secret about Baroka to Sidi and Sadiku. The secret is that his father had told him about how Baroka bribes a surveyor whose job is to construct a railway through Ilujinle village. Baroka is said to have done this so that the surveyors would change the railway line route. The rerouting was to avoid the supposed "civilization" from coming to Ilujinle. Though bribery is an act that is not praiseworthy, in the view of Baroka, it is done for a positive reason; to simply preserve the culture of the village from any external influence. Even though both Baroka and Sadiku think they are being responsible here, Soyinka uses Lakunle as a counter-discourse to criticize the actions of African leaders and citizens who retard national development. Soyinka seems to identify with Msiska who

associates with the postcolonial concept of instrumental hybridity where the positive aspects of one culture are adopted to augment another [25, 26]. Instrumental hybridity becomes Soyinka's bases for rebuking Broka's behavior in this case. Baroka and Sadiku [his accomplice] act to serve private interests in the name of the masses to the detriment of a wider community. They become an emblem of the kind of African leadership that Soyinka disapproves of with his call for introspection.

The parody of Lakunle on Soyinka's stage is also a stern caution of the dangers of neglecting one's culture and adopting the other, especially where the individual ends up not fully imbibed in any. Soyinka captures this peril in the metaphor of the school on the edge of the village center at the opening of the play. The imagery is reinforced by Sidi marrying Baroka. Once Baroka is successful in tricking and raping Sidi, the latter has no other choice than to marry him. She no longer wishes to have anything to do with Lakunle. In Sidi's words, she is unable to endure the touch of another man after Baroka. She seems to have lost her voice and her assertiveness. This loss is a reference to what Spivak terms *subaltern*. In her analysis, Spivak looks at the 'Third world' woman as one without a voice [30]. Sidi does not have a choice as she must marry the very man who has raped her. Soyinka stages Sidi's helplessness as a counter-discourse to Lakunle's plea for requited love. This plot also advances the humor of ignorance and the dramatic irony of Lakunle's folly. Lakunle's absurdity emanates from his lack of saturation in either culture. As such, he finally thinks that even though Sidi has lost her virginity, he can still marry her without paying any bride price. This scene acts as the height of Soyinka's mockery of the ignorance of those who end up half-baked in a borrowed culture as Kobina Sekye presents in his seminal *Blinkards*. Lakunle himself seems to be tentative about the values he has been preaching all this while. He confesses, his wish to have led Baroka's traditional life. In this, there is a sort of double consciousness on Lakunle's path. His remorseful tone is Soyinka's testament to the fact that those who choose Lakunle's path may someday regret a wrong choice. Lakunle becomes an authorial voice of a dramatist who uses his stage to prove that an African cannot be fully imbibed in Western culture, regardless. In addition, he echoes that no one culture can wipe out another and replace it. The best, he supposes, is that both sit alongside each other in a form of cultural hybridity.

Another issue that Soyinka seeks to highlight with his stage is the viability of some of the key elements of African culture that makes it susceptible to exploitation. Sidi's indecision and gullibility, whether fully accepting the Western or traditional culture, eventually lands her in Baroka's house. She knows about how Baroka usually tricks young women to have supper with him and eventually has his way with them. However, she agrees with Sadiku to go and make a mockery of Baroka's impotence. This, later, is revealed as a trick that Baroka devised just to get Sidi. Paradoxically, Soyinka seems to be saying that the African

culture might look weak, but in its weakness, there is a lot of strength. He ends the play by making Baroka triumph over Lakunle to lampoon the Western culture and all that is associated with it. *The Lion and The Jewel* also advocate the strengthening of the grey areas in the native culture by considering the positives of both cultures, especially, in leadership [decision-making and practices] as explicated earlier. The text suggests that culture must not be dogmatic. It must evolve by reshaping itself in the accommodation of novel and worthy practices.

It is evident by the end of the play that Soyinka advocates hybridity as championed by Bhabha. This is echoed when Baroka states that the old must stream into the new, perhaps with caution. With this, Soyinka calls for a hybrid of cultures, a balance between Western and African cultures. Soyinka agrees with Hegel's concept of gathering opposing things. According to Stone, in Hegel's view, when a thesis is followed by an antithesis it leads to a new form, called the synthesis to create "a new social order" [31]. Soyinka's suggestion to the cultural bedlam is that there must be an understanding between both cultures; that both cultures must learn to accommodate each other.

5. Conclusion

It is relevant to consider Soyinka's *Lion and the Jewel* as a postcolonial counter-discourse that hinges on the plot, setting, characters, and dramatic techniques such as pseudo-chorus and humor to debunk the denigration of African culture and the dogmatism of the same. The dramatist's use of African customs, traditions, and value systems as a form of resistance to Western dominance juxtaposed with his criticism of African cultural resistance to positive change lends his work a postcolonial touch. He affirms that African societies had always had their cultures before colonization. Unlike colonial discourses that have presented Africa [ns] as primitive and savage as posited by wa' Thiongo, Soyinka tells the story of Africa from a rather different perspective [32]. This viewpoint is expressed by staging African cultures as embedded with strong values but very conservative. Thus, he calls for a circumspective opening to change. Through the stage, Soyinka calls for introspection. He also cautions African youth and leaders to be circumspect in embracing change. Through plot structure, characterization, themes, setting, and linguistic manipulation, Soyinka proposes tightening the cords that bind the African people while making room for modernity and development on the continent [28].

In projecting the African culture, Soyinka raises pertinent issues about its weaknesses in it. These, he suggests, need to be changed. Just as Baroka puts it, the old must be willing to learn from the young and the young must also do likewise. This suggestion makes change possible, but it should be pragmatic. There is a need for a framework for the hybridity of cultures to ensure dignity, harmony, and inclusion.

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