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Towards a Critique of Cultural Hegemony and Nationalist Resistance: A Reading of Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*

Hussain Ahmed Liton, M.A.



Wole Soyinka

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Abstract

The present study attempts to delve into the cross-cultural hegemonic counter discourses that can be well explored in Wole Soyinka's play *The Lion and the Jewel*. The multiple issues of cultural intersections, colonial ramifications of the indigenous

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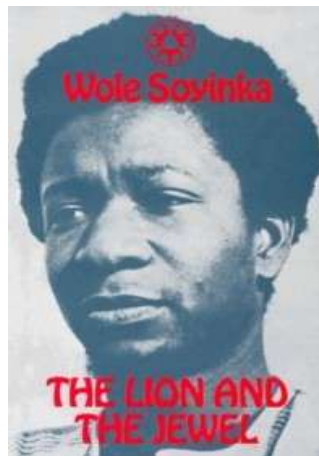
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native culture, tradition, legacies and values; clash between colonizer and colonized, the superior and the inferior; binary oppositions (dominant vs. local resistance, civilized/savage); nationalist resistance and subversion of the alien intrusive culture—all can well lead to a very relevant postcolonial scrutiny of the play.

The paper investigates the hegemony of British cultural paradigms in African context and the peripheralisation of African national history, culture, tradition, and values, and at the same time, focuses on nationalist resistance against cultural hegemony on the praxis of post-colonial cultural analysis. In other words, it explores the cultural encounter between the hegemonic and the inferior, between the east and the west, and vis-a-vis, local counter resistance against the European cultural hegemony and dominance in the context of the play on the praxis and nature of Post-Colonial literary criticism. In addition, it is intended to explore how the exploitation of cultural hegemony comes off cultural displacement, and nationalist resistance regains ethnic cultural heritage and identity. It would, thus, shed new light on the postcolonial and cultural study in general and on Soyinka criticism in particular.

Keywords: Culture, Colonialism, Post-colonialism, hegemony, resistance, binary oppositions.



Cover page of the play

***The Lion and the Jewel* –Post Colonial Writing**

Wole Soyinka, in his *The Lion and the Jewel* tries to project colonial and post-colonial concerns by way of reflecting the dominance of hegemonic culture and local/nationalist resistance in the structural strain of the play through the voice of Sidi, Baroka and Sadiku who represent colonized African natives, and Lakunle who represents the European colonizer and propaganda in the African world.

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The play can be placed on the map of Post-Colonial writing in the global context because it censures the Anglo-African cross-cultural encounter. It further talks about the peoples and cultures of a land, which has emerged from subjugation, and domination of colonial rule.

The conflict between Sidi and Lakunle is a conflict between colonial and post-colonial consciousness, a clash between European and African culture; the conflict between Lakunle and Baroka is a conflict between the colonizer and the colonized, and between the white and the black. The final victory of Sidi and Baroka over Lakunle is the victory of African tradition and the defeat of European imperialism.

The Value of a Culture

Actually, the value of culture as an element of resistance to foreign domination lies in the fact that culture is the vigorous manifestation of opposition to white supremacy and politico-cultural hegemony. This is the vagaries of post-colonial literatures to challenge and to illegitimize establishing Eurocentric power, legacy, hegemony and authority through conquest and invasion, underling their differences “from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial (Ashcroft, Bill, et al, 1989, p. 2)”. It is necessary to define some related terms like ‘Post-Colonialism’, ‘Imperialism’, ‘Colonialism’ and ‘Post-Coloniality’ before evaluating Soyinka’s *The Lion and the Jewel* in the frame of Post-Colonial study.

Imperialism, Colonialism and Post-Colonialism

Imperialism denotes “the fact of a powerful country increasing its influence over other countries through business, culture, etc” or “a system in which one country controls other countries, often after defeating them in a war” (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 2000, p. 649). In other words, this term refers to “the dominance of one state over another territory for political subjugation and economic exploitation (Das, 2001, p. 88).”

Imperialism is a tool for both political and cultural imposition on the conquered territory. On the other hand, “**Colonialism** involves the consolidation of imperial power, and is manifested in the settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands, (Boehmer, 1995, p. 2).”

Post-Colonialism is the expression/confession of experience of the exploitation of a colonial rule of the indigenous people through achieving independence and overcoming political and cultural marginalization of imperial rule. “The Post-Colonial discourse refers to the writing and reading habits rooted in colonial psyche as a consequences of European expansion and exploitation of ‘other’ worlds.

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Post-Colonial Literature

The 'Post-Colonial Literature' is a term of collectivity for the literatures emanating from the Third World Countries, which share certain formal and discursive feature. They demonstrate 'resistance' and 'subversion' of the imperial 'centre' (the 'colonizer', the 'dominant' or the 'hegemonic' power) (Pandey, 1999, p. VII)". In other words, Post-Colonialism is the attempt of "rising high above the worn-out shell of Europe (Spender, 1974, p. 4)", and the emergence of new self-awareness, self-assertion, critique and national identity from the yoke of colonial suppression and subjugation. Soyinka terms this as "self-apprehension".

The term 'Post-Colonial' semantically indicates an involvement with national culture after the departure of the imperial power. The period independence is called 'Colonial period' and the period after is called 'Post-Colonial' period. But, with the progress of post-colonial consciousness, this demarcation line has been relaxed. Regarding this Georg M. Gugelberger asserts that 'Post-Colonialism'

"... is not a discipline but a distinctive problematic that can be described as an abstract combination of all the problems inherent in such newly emergent fields as minority discourse, Latin American Studies, Third World Studies, ... and so on, ... "minority" cultures are actually "majority" cultures and that hegemonized Western (Euro-American) Studies have been unduly privileged for political reasons" (Hawthorn, 2000, p.269).

Therefore, the term seems to be virtually an all-embracing and bears no fixed ideological baggage. Bill Ashcroft et al., uses the term 'post-colonial' "to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft, Bill, et al, 1989, p. 2). In the same manner, John Peck and Coyle have agreed: "(It) is used to refer to all those literatures and cultures affected by the experience of colonization" (Peck, John, & Coyle, Martin, 1993, p. 8). In Jeremy Hawthorn's words:

... the term (Post-Colonialism) can be used in a relatively neutral descriptive sense to refer to literature emanating from or dealing with the peoples and CULTURES of lands which have emerged from colonial rule ... (2000, p. 269).

This is exactly why Bill Ashcroft et al., call "*... the literatures of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka are all post-colonial literatures*" (Ashcroft, Bill, et al, 1989, p. 2). Actually, "*what makes them distinctively post-colonial is that they have emerged in their present form out of the colonial experience and asserted themselves by emphasizing the hostility with the*

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imperial power and by underlining their difference from the imperial centre” (Askari, 2003, p. 24).

Post-Colonial Literature means the literature written after the departure of the imperial power in a formerly colonized territory regarding indigenous people, culture, values and tastes censuring the uncensored paws of the colonizing ticklish offshoot. Elleke Boehmer offers an arresting view of this literature in the following manner:

“...post-colonial literature is that which critically scrutinizes the colonial relationship. It is writing ... to resist colonialist perspectives. As well as a change in power, decolonization demanded symbolic overhaul, a reshaping of dominant meanings. Post-Colonial literature formed part of that process of overhaul..., post-colonial writers sought to undercut thematically and formally the discourses, which supported Colonization- the myths of power, the race classifications, the imagery of subordination. Post-Colonial literature, therefore, is deeply marked by experiences of cultural exclusion and division under empire. Especially in its early stages, it can also be a nationalist writing... Postcoloniality is defined as that condition in which colonized peoples seek to take their place, forcibly or otherwise, as historical subjects” (Boehmer, 1995, p.3).

In fact, Post-Colonial literature is an enterprise writing back to contest the sovereignty and the superiority of British tastes and values. Obviously, it nurtures the interest of the margin relegating the centre, the dominant, or the hegemonic. The work of Edward Said, Salman Rushdie, Homi Bhabha, Bill Ashcroft, Helen Tiffin, Gareth Griffiths, Spivak, Chinua Achebe, N.C. Chaudhuri, V.S. Naipual, Patric Williams, Laura Chrisman, Ajaz Ahmad, Franz Fanon, Ngugi wa Thing’o, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, and Ania Loomba, among other post-colonial critics from all directions of the world, demonstrates such a consciousness that goes beyond the textual parameter and colonial hallucination. They also attempt to generate a more comprehensive perception of the colonial tricks and treatments underlining the post-colonial urgency to revert to the cultural past and glory. Similarly, the works of Wole Soyinka re-evaluated within the texts own culture, history, politics and religion overtly manifest the importance of his writings especially *The Lion and the Jewel* as a pioneering effort to set up post-colonial perspective through the nationalist resistance against hegemonic culture in the field of African literary arena.

Decolonizing Mission

Soyinka depicts the decolonizing mission of the Africans in the play through the symbolic representation of the characters like Sidi, Baroka and Sadiku. In the history of European colonization, the Victorian era is a marked zenith of western imperialism in the modern world. At that time, Africa became an important venue for European

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colonization. It was the time when the colonial propagandist (narrative) writings by authors like Kipling, Conrad, E.M. Forster, Rider Haggard, Mary Kingsley and others in great numbers anchored in triumphalism tempering with a sympathetic criticizing look at European imperialist mission of colonialism in the Orient and Africa. They contributed a lot to that mission of occupying and enlightening Africa.

Wole Soyinka, on the contrary, contributed his writings, especially *The Lion and the Jewel* as a sequel to that mission of colonial propagandists. A post-colonial reading of Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* is bound to reflect the discursive mission of decolonization through this text, which questions the inadequacy of white man's supremacy, and attempts to dismantle the colonial subjugation and cultural hegemony, and to re-read the own cultural heritage, religion, history, synchronism, custom and glory.

Moving to Post-Colonial Resistance

The play *The Lion and the Jewel* moves from a colonial domination to a post-colonial resistance. The colonial rule has brought historical, social, political and cultural change or erosion to the indigenous people. The indigenous people like Sidi, Baroka and Sadiku, to maintain their own freedom and cultural identity, relentlessly combat against Eurocentric cultural hegemonizing and hybridizing effort. This attempt can be taken as a form of resistance to the former colonizer. With reference to this, it is important to mention here that

“Early nationalist fiction, and drama by writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong’O and Wole Soyinka, who seek to affirm or validate their own cultures and show that Africans did not hear of civilization for the first time from Europeans,... they locate their fiction and drama in very specific communities- Igbo or Gikuyu, or Yoruba. But the Igbo or Gikuyu, or Yoruba community portrayed is also presented as a metonym for the nation as a whole, for Nigeria or Kenya, and indeed, is often read as a metonym for the peoples of the African continent as a whole (Innes, 2007, p. 161)”.

Lakunle's love for Sidi was infatuated and aggravated in the face of African tradition. To marry an African girl traditionally the groom must pay 'bride-price', which is opposed to Lakunle's western view. Here lies the crux of the problem. Sidi, the Jewel and Belle of African Yoruba society is adamant not to marry without having lawful 'bride-price'. Lakunle thinks this tradition should be replaced by superior western civilized culture and tradition. To him, traditional African custom as

“A savage custom, barbaric, out-dated,

Rejected, denounced, accursed,

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Excommunicated, archaic, degrading,

.....

Retrogressive, remarkable, unpalatable.

[With a sudden shout]

An ignoble custom, infamous, ignominious

Shaming our heritage before the world (Soyinka, 1963, p. 07).”

In addition, to him, paying ‘bride-price’ is equal to buying a *heifer* from market place. This is a serious indignation to indigenous culture and it marks Eurocentric racist look. Lakunle attempts to convince Sidi by his aesthetics of love and poetic sensibility along with the pleasures of modern life: “*Oh Sidi, I want to wed/ Because I love/ ... As one flesh. / An equal partner in my race of life. / ... Together we shall sit at table.... Like civilized beings. ... So choose. Be a modern wife, look me in the eye/ And give me a little kiss-like this. [Kisses her.]* (1963, pp. 8-9)”

His ultimate mission is to implant the Eurocentric culture and values in African world. After Sidi being deflowered by Baroka, Lakunle liberally desires to marry her and implores her: “*Dear Sidi, we shall forget the past/ That we forget the bride-price totally* (1963, p. 60).” This approach subtly underlines cultural displacement, which is the common facet of post-colonial literature.

Lakunle, on the contrary, encounters a rigid resistance from his ladylove. Sidi, a deep-rooted tradition ridden African girl is unmoved by the superficial wind of Europeanization or modernity, and tells him to ‘pay the price’ if he wants to marry. She rejects his westernized idea of love-marriage and kissing a ‘way of civilized romance’, and exactly utters: “*A way you mean, to avoid / Payment of lawful bride-price/ A cheating way, mean and miserly* (1963, p. 09).” Even Sadiku-head wife of Baroka tauntingly advises Lakunle in case of his failure to manage ‘bride price’: “*Take a farm for a season, one harvest will be enough to pay the price...* (1963, p. 36).”

Further, Baroka –the Bale and lion of Ilujinle, a village of Lagos-the capital of Nigeria resists whiteman’s attempt of modernization scheme. He suspects and resists Lakunle’s feasible courtship with Sidi and attacks him polemically: “*You tried to steal our village maidenhead/ Have you forgotten?* (1963, p. 17).” Thus, Soyinka in the play develops a counter discourse against British cultural hegemony in profusion.

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Meanwhile, Sidi develops self-bloated egoism and narcissistic pride of her own beauty because her photograph appears in the Lagos magazine. Now, her beauty and fame goes beyond Lagos city. Man like Baroka-the Bale of the village, desires her hand in marriage. She rejects Sadiku's wife of Baroka's proposal and utters: "***You'll make no prey of Sidi with your wooing tongue/ Not this Sidi whose fame has spread to Lagos/ And beyond the seas*** (1963, p. 20)." In addition, she poses question to Sadiku: "***why did the Lion not bestow his gift/ Before my face was lauded to the world?*** (1963, p. 21)". Sidi's pride and confidence in her own charm and beauty makes her totally careless about men who seek her hand in marriage. For instance, she has no regard to Lakunle's intellectual calibre and white identity, and therefore, nick names him as a 'bookworm'. Similarly, she shows contrast her own superiority with Baroka's inferiority, and boastfully says to Lakunle:

"My name is Sidi, and I am beautiful.

The stranger took my beauty

And placed it in my hands.

Tell me of my fame.

Loveliness beyond the jewels of a throne- (1963, p. 20)"

Indeed, Sidi's self-conscious appraisal of her individual potency marks subjective identities of indigenous people and shapes a metaphor for all "marginalized" voices and specificity in deconstructions of "racism" in colonialism.

Baroka, on the other hand, feels insulted in Sidi's rejection of matrimonial proposal and designs diabolic trick to sup with her at his bed-chamber. He pretends that he has lost his manhood and he explains why he wants to marry Sidi, "***My manhood / Ended near a week ago. / ... I wanted Sidi because I still hoped-/ My failing strength would rise and save my pride*** (1963, p. 29)."

Sadiku, now, employs new technique to push Sidi into Baroka's bed. She reports that it is time for woman to rejoice and mock at Baroka's loss of virility and invites Sidi to attend ritual party where only women are allowed. Thus, she arouses Sidi's intense curiosity and she is convinced to torment Baroka over his loss of sexual potency. Lakunle advises her not to meet Baroka in privacy but she does not pay heed to his precautionary words. She, therefore, meets Baroka in privacy but is finally deflowered by the virile man of sixty. Lakunle feels hurt to see his beloved being deflowered by his rival. His liberal outlook enables him to forgive her for loss of virginity and offers

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to marry her. But, Sidi who has drunk the nectar of sexual pleasure with Baroka to whom she has surrendered her maidenhood refuses to marry Lakunle: “*Why did you think after him, / I could endure the touch of another man? ... And would I choose ... / A beardless version of an unripened man?* (1963, p.63).” She, who, further, eulogizes Baroka’s sexual strength in comparison to Lakunle, engages to national culture: “*For a man of sixty, / ... But you, at sixty, you’ll be ten years dead! / In fact, you’ll not survive your honeymoon... / Come to my wedding if you will* (1963, pp.63-64).”

The play ends with the marriage of Sidi, the Jewel and Baroka, the Lion. Thus, the surrender of Sidi to Baroka is the testimony to the victory of traditional African values, and the defeat of westernized cultural imperialism and colonization at Ilujinle, a deep-rooted traditional African Yoruba village. Actually, Soyinka portrays Ilujinle village “as a metonym for the nation as a whole, for Nigeria..., and indeed, is often read as a metonym for the peoples of the African continent as a whole (Innes, 2007, p.161).” Finally, the conflict between modern European and African values is resolved in favour of the latter. Lakunle, despite his European ways of life, is looked down upon and ultimately rejected by Sidi who conforms to African tradition by marrying Baroka.

The Civilizing Mission

In most cases the western notion of imperialism/colonialism to ‘others’ like Asia, Africa is a part of its *la mission civilisatrice or the civilizing mission*. Kipling terms it as ‘Whiteman’s burden’ to civilize the ‘other’ world. In the *Lion and the Jewel*, Soyinka deconstructs and dislodges this notion of Eurocentric white racist supremacy and hegemonic persistence of their civilizing mission with post-colonial re-visioning inquiry. Lakunle-the representative of white European encounters in his mission only people of inferior races, namely Sidi, Baroka and Sadiku. He repeatedly uses the term ‘savage’ for them, considering them devoid of human qualities and put them against his civilized white identity which is enlightened by qualities such as, rationality, loyalty, goodness, intelligence and power of judgement. He addresses Sidi as ‘ignorant-girl’, ‘illiterate goat’, ‘bush-girl’, and ‘a race of savages’: “*Bush-girl you are, bush-girl you’ll always be; / Uncivilized and primitive- bush-girl!* (1963, p.09)”

Again, he considers Baroka-the Lion and Bale of Ilujinle as inferior uncivilized race: “*He (Baroka) is a savage thing, degenerate/ He would beat a helpless woman if he could... (1963, p.35)*” and “*Baroka is a creature of the wilds, / Untutored, mannerless, devoid of grace (1963, p.58)*.” In addition, he terms Sadiku as “... a woman of the bush (1963, p.36),” and desires to start by teaching her and advises her to: “*attend my (his) school (1963, p.37)*.” Lakunle’s this appreciation justifies the colonizers’

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civilizing mission to the indigenous people as a means of hegemonic cultural exploitation and imperialism.

Thus, Lakunle demonstrates his Eurocentric assumption that 'other' world is uncivilized and savage race. Here lies the necessity of civilizing those Calibans. The need, therefore, to "civilize" these inferior peoples was often advanced as one of the major justifications for European control of Africa. But, Lakunle's white supremacy encounters resistance from the natives like Baroka and Sidi who refuse to conform to the new culture. Here Soyinka is successful in portraying nationalist resistance against Eurocentric cultural hegemony.

The Binary Oppositions

The binary opposition (civilized/savage, black/white, east/west) that Soyinka's Lakunle constructs a line of difference between himself and Sidi and Baroka resembles the one through which the West saw the rest of the world over centuries. In the true sense of the term, Lakunle typifies the imperial hubris relentlessly trying to assert his Eurocentric sense of hegemony over Sidi, Baroka and Sadiku: "If now I am misunderstood by you/ And your race of savages, I rise above taunts/ And remain unruffled (1963, p.03)". He feels that these people are seriously in need of receiving western civilizing light. To this end, in Ilujinle, Lakunle is a school teacher symbolizing his civilizing mission to enlighten savage cannibals of Africa as Defoe's Crusoe's treatment to Friday in Robinson Crusoe. Under the array of such Civilizing light, the colonizers control education and therefore, they control thoughts and ideas absorbed by the youths who receive new cultures and ideas at a young age. Because of this, original culture is lost in new generations, a way of cultural displacement. Lakunle's belief in successful diffusion of this light can make life more and more comfortable that finds its expression in his idea of 'progress' in Africa:

"Within a year or two, I swear,

This town shall see a transformation

Bride-price will be a thing forgotten

And wives shall take their place by men.

.....

We must reject the palm wine habit.

And take tea, with milk and sugar." (1963, pp.36-37)

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Lakunle's above-stated idea of 'progress' determines the process of establishment of European norms and values. Here an obvious sharp contrast is revealed between the traditional African culture and the modern or Europeanized way of life. It causes cultural erosion and displacement. Actually, cross-cultural or ethnic intersection of the colonizer and the colonized shapes the impact of the culture of the colonizers on the culture of the colonized. The play, *The Lion and the Jewel* interrogates assumptions underpinning postcolonial native cultural identity and its liberationist rhetoric by focusing upon the discursive anti-colonialist practices and the impact of the global, the regional, and the local upon each other. The concern of this paper is to reflect the conditions under which a resistant 'global imagination' comes into being. Lakunle, a homegrown version of the African as anglophile encounters resistance in the traditional African community with regard to plan of modern 'progresses'. Sidi rejects his fashionable western cultural lifestyle as absurd to traditional society: "*O- oh. You really mean to turn/ The whole world upside down* (1963, p.05)".

Progress as Mechanical Uniformity

In Baroka's view, so-called progress contributes nothing but the mechanical uniformity of things and violation of virgin vitality and beauty of Nature. He foils the surveyor's laying of railway track, a means of avoiding the entry of Eurocentric modern civilization into the heart of traditional Africa. For this activity, Lakunle calls him old-fashioned 'rogue', a sworn enemy against his scheme of progress. But, the paradox is that old-fashioned Bale is enough powerful to resist and decline cultural imperialist approach in order to restore and revert to national culture forgotten once. In the play, a particular focus is on the reshaping of inner maps of the metropolis through the ethnic voices and the alternative and interstitial modes of approach associated with the margins, the Africans. It gets its true reflection in the voice of Baroka-the Bale of Ilujinle:

"Among the bridges and the murderous roads,

Below the humming birds which

Smoke the face of Sango, dispenser of

... lightning; ...But the skin of progress

Masks, unknown, the spotted wolf of sameness...

Does sameness not revolt your being,

My daughter? (1963, p.52)

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In post-colonial ambience, the colonizer encounters outright resistance from the indigenous inhabitants and so, nothing exceptional happens to Lakunle. His European ideas of progress expressed in the establishment of roads, railways, industries and technology in various aspect of life. This progress will shorten the distance between people of different nations by bridging them into the web of communication and transportation. But, the traditional African view point expressed through Baroka's opinions, does not agree with the modern point of view. He dismantles and subverts Eurocentric views: *"I do not hate progress, only its nature / Which makes all the roofs and faces look the same (1963, p.52)."*

Baroka's views, obviously, demonstrate that modernity is not always desirable and that native, rural, traditional culture has its own virgin vitality and beauty, which needs to be re-discovered by the indigenous people. Baroka's respect for his own culture does not allow him to recognize the so-called superiority of Western culture. Indeed, quest for own 'cultural identity' is a powerful and creative force as emergent forms in the psyche of marginalized peoples. Such a conception of 'cultural identity' played a critical role in all post-colonial struggles in reshaping the world. *"In post-colonial societies, the rediscovery of this national identity is often the object of what Frantz Fanon once called a -passionate research... directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self -contempt, resignation and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us"* (Williams, 1994, p. 393).

To Restore and Rediscover

The colonized peoples always attempt to restore and rediscover their pre-colonial cultural identity because Colonialism is not simply content with imposing its rule upon the present and the future of the dominated country but it also distorts and disfigures the past history, culture and power of the colonized territory what Fanon (1963, p. 170) avowedly calls :

"Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (as cited in Williams, 1994, p. 403).

This is the reason why, Soyinka's Baroka subverts and disregards the entry of Lakunle's idea of 'progress' in the African traditional village though modern progress more or less can render pleasures and comforts in the sphere of social life. Therefore, the struggle of Baroka and Sidi against Colonialism's cultural hegemony is to revert to their past cultural heritage and glory which is analogous to Okonko's attempt in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Thus, Soyinka in his play establishes Africanness that is

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articulated in direct opposition to dominant Eurocentric discourses. This approach makes the play, *The Lion and the Jewel*- anti-colonial nationalist writing what a postcolonial literature attempts to “*write back to centre*”.

Intellectual Potholes and Myopic Cultural Roadblocks

Ostensibly, the text heavily hinges upon the cultural intersection reflecting intellectual potholes and myopic cultural roadblocks, that determine the trajectory of socio-cultural change but at last, there is Afrocentric “counter-hegemonic moves” focusing Yoruba culture and tradition. In the play, the active and genuine exercise of African culture as determined by symbols, motifs, rituals, musics, drums, scripts, proverbs, and ceremonies conceptualize identity in ways that promote and modify national perceptions of ‘Africanism’, relegating from the colonial and neocolonial logic of cultural denigration in a manner that fully acknowledges the cosmopolitan and global contexts of African postcolonial formation.

Soyinka subtly portrays counter-hegemonic discourses through nationalist resistance against Colonialism’s cultural hybridity and hegemony. He juxtaposes two value systems as counter discourses through the lens of Post-Colonial criticizing look. The play draws a subtle line of contrast between Western and African viewpoints in case of conventions of love and marriage like the payment of ‘bride-price’ and other social matters as well. The sharp contrast between the African and European cultural values with regard to ‘progress’ claims to convey a postcolonial message only by understanding and embracing the idea of cultural hybridity while attempting to explore the concept of national identity emerging from the shell of cultural imperialism. Lakunle and kindred souls believe in the European ideas of ‘progresses’ expressed in terms of their belief in the establishment of roads, rails, bridges and international web of communications, whereas Baroka- the embodiment of African tradition does not believe in the artificial modern ‘progress’. In addition, Sidi’s approach to life is complimentary to Baroka’s. Being deeply rooted in African tradition, she is not attracted by Lakunle’s Europeanized and sophisticated approach to life. Her philosophy perfectly matches Baroka’s animalistic and vitalistic one. This is the reason why she is magnetically attached to him after tasting his sexual vitality in bed.

By contrast, Lakunle’s rational way of convincing a young girl in accepting marriage proposal is not appreciated by the tradition-ridden girl Sidi. As a result, she refuses to marry Lakunle whose aesthetics of love and romantic sensibility have no significance in the tradition-ridden society. Moreover, Lakunle’s belief in monogamy is contrasted with polygamy-the African custom. All over again, Lakunle does not believe

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childbearing in marriage, whereas tradition-ridden society firmly believes in functional marriage.

This phenomenon testifies to the deep-rooted strength of traditional native culture unshaken by the superficial wind of Europeanization or modernity. Lakunle's modernity and Europeanization are appropriate to the process of his own acculturation and consequently, he encounters nationalist resistance. Thus, in *The Lion and the Jewel*, cultural repression vis-a-vis nationalist resistance under colonial rule underscores greater value of counter discourses as counter hegemonic practices.

Women's Position

Women's position in postcolonial societies and literatures is a matter of debate and inquiry. The integration of women into nationalist and anti-colonialist movements has been an important issue for questioning women's position in most post-colonial societies. Soyinka's women play a surprising role in anti-colonial movement. Their active participation and gender interests within the parameters of cultural nationalism valorize a resistance against colonizers' process of subordination and material feminism. Lakunle, a westernized educated fellow considers women as timid, fragile, subordinate, weaker sex, inactive, ignorant but paradoxically, at the same time terms women as "equal partner in life". He treats Sidi as his supporting element in white imperial mission, in his voice- "*Just the one woman for me... Alone I stand/ For progress, with Sidi my chosen soul-mate,*" (1963, p.26).

This is essentially Western materialistic approach to women and a trick of patriarchal control over the indigenous women. Furthermore, Lakunle's condemnation of the bride price is an insult to womanhood, especially to African women. His Eurocentric outlook to women is exposed in his address to Sidi: "*It's in my book. / Women have a smaller brain than men/ That's why they are called weaker sex*" (1963, p. 04). On the contrary, Sidi, tradition-ridden tribal girl apparently dismantles and disorients the Western attitude to women patronizingly: "*The weaker sex, is it? / Is it the weaker breed who pounds the yam/ Or bends all day to plant the millet/ With a child strapped to her back?*" (1963, p. 4).

Women in Soyinka's *the Lion and the Jewel*, enjoy unfettered operations of national patriarchy. Interestingly, there is no white woman in the play. The lack of white women may function as a potential escape, by allowing within the parameter of the text, the unspoken displacement of the condemnation of women from women in general and to African women in particular. Similarly, Rudyard Kipling in his novel, *Kim* liberates Indian women from the nuisance of white women by discarding white women characters within the textual portrait gallery.

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To Conclude

On the whole, what emerges from the present study is the conviction that in Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*, it is the consequences of European colonization and cultural domination and perversion in Africa that determine the trajectory of change and thereby the nature of colonized cultures, national cultural consciousness and anti-colonial resistance. Culture, in reality, is the expression of the heart of national consciousness. The final triumph of African cultural tradition over Westernization is obviously an objective correlative of Wole Soyinka's philosophy, which recognizes the postcolonial need for nativization, and rediscovery of cultural past, glory, grandeur and heritage. This is how, the play makes an attempt at establishing Africanness relegating and resisting Eurocentric hegemonic power, culture and values.

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