

Tribhuvan University

Representation of the Post-Colonial Nigerian Women in Wole Soyinka's

The Lion and the Jewel

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Letter of Recommendation

I certify that Narayan Prasad Dhakal conducted his thesis entitled
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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Representation of the Post-Colonial Nigerian Women in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Narayan Prasad Dhakal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The present research project tries to analyze the women's role assigned by the African society after the decolonization in Wole Soyinka's play *The Lion and The Jewel* as it is characterized by the culture conflict, male ideology and remnants of colonial mind sets. The old culture represented by the uneducated people in Ilunjunle, led by Baroka, Sidi and the rest, clashes with the new culture led by Lakunle, who is educated, school teacher by profession is influenced by the western ways. In those both extremes, the females have been like the objects in the hand of males. Neither the so-called modernization respects the women, nor the attempt of revival of traditional Nigerian culture takes the women as equal participants for the anti-colonial mission. The women have to surrender before the power of male supremacy though they were successful to resist the colonizing mission of the imperial power of the West.

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I: Male Supremacy in Wole Soyinka's Play *The Lion and the Jewel*

AkivandeOluwole Soyinka was born on the 13th July 1934 in Abekuta in the western section of Nigeria. He is a well-known literary writer and the first Nigerian Noble Prize winner for literature in 1986. He was born to a well-educated family when the country was still a British colony. Soyinka has strong feelings and roots in Yoruba culture, an element of life that has inspired most of his works. Soyinka can be considered as a victim of colonialism, as he witnessed Europeans trying to change his Yoruba culture to fit their own. Thus, he acknowledged the dangers and evils of colonialism concerning every person that has been hurt from it. In spite of having an anti-colonial sentiment and celebration of Yoruba culture, Wole Soyinka disregards the female issues. In the current context of social change in which men and women's social roles are being changed and women are now taking up positions in public space, politics, administration, workplace, etc., Wole Soyinka presents the female characters as the peripheral figures in his literary works.

The Lion and the Jewel is a play by Wole Soyinka published in 1963. It is about a young beautiful girl, Sidi, over whom two men are fighting in order to win her heart. The first one, Lakunle, symbolizes modern or the western culture. The second, Baroka, the village chief, symbolizes traditional or Yoruba's culture. Both the characters play all tricks to convince Sidi to accept their project of marriage but it is Baroka who wins and marries her at the end. It is in fact a three-act comedy: morning, noon, and night, punctuated with dances, songs and mimes. The play opens with Sidi and Lakunle where Lakunle, in his attempt to confess his love to Sidi, resorts to a terrible mouth playing game. Lakunle is pleased with his education and academic achievement and actively uses this advantage to corner Sidi to his side. But Sidi, strongly rooted in the tradition, asserts that he must pay the dowry before any

marriage could be possible. Lakunle rejects this idea and qualifies it as barbaric, uncivilized and outdated. Baroka on the other side, with the help of his elder wife, Sadikou, uses all sorts of flatteries, sweet words, and the lie that he has lost his manhood to get Sidi in his trap.

Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* deals with the theme of male domination upon the female in double ways in the formerly colonized country through colonial mindset and indigenous patriarchy. Moreover, the idea that a work of art, consciously or not, reveals and is determined by both the writer's view and the socio-historical development of its time. Through the depth of his imagination, Wole Soyinka has made the language of drama metaphorical, and has evolved his own unique set of images. These images portray his personal world, and reflect his individual outlook of life. Casting the light on the same issue David Cook states that:

Soyinka's metaphorical words and images are tier of meaning which is not just a matter of the structures of separate sentences and speeches; it has more to do with the eddying movement of the human mind circling round its private pre-occupation, while it is carried forward publicly by the continuous stream of situation. (114)

Wole Soyinka is a writer who has personalized dramatic art to his advantage though the social realities are highly dominant in the text. Wole Soyinka not only writes about the Nigerian background in a sociological sense, but about human beings, who happen to exist in this particular time and place. He uses his background to add originality to his art. Soyinka's play *The Lion and the Jewel* makes contact with the Nigerian society in a meaningful manner from the inside, by means of symbols and images. But Soyinka is also obviously in the stream of international movements in twentieth century drama. As David Cook further puts it "No artist is an island, however, hard

critics may try to build coral reefs around him, or think they have scored a point by `discovering what influences connect him to the mainland of humanity"(117). Soyinka uses images in his play to convey his inquisitiveness, frustration and sense of wonder. For him, language and reality are intimately related. With the same view, Terence Hawkes further adds, "Imageries provide the means by which words are elevated into living things, because for a word to live it needs to be uttered, or at least to feel utterable; to have the impress of real men upon it" (33).

Soyinka's play *The Lion and the Jewel* fuses diverse elements from quite different traditions of thought and methods of presentation. The product of this fusion is often striking and original, having transformed the original particularities from which it sprang. Though Wole Soyinka's plays are set in Africa, one does not get the impression that he merely sets out to explain the traditions of his people. On the contrary, the sentiments expressed usually have significance far and wide. That might be the cause Soyinka is considered as the renowned figure of post-colonial writing. In order to present the socio-politico-cultural situation, Wole Soyinka satirizes typical characters and perpetually they are the architects of their own misfortunes and the causes of their downfall. For example, the school teacher Lakunle in the play *The Lion and the Jewel* typifies all Africans who after receiving foreign education, here colonial education, start considering their own way of life primitive and the English way of living as progressive and advanced. Lakunle like westernized persons have been the object of 'mimicry'. Wole Soyinka ridicules these types of characters but at the same time he does not want the people of his country to live primitively, stuck to their redundant customs and rituals. There should be a harmonious blend between the old and the new, so that people can progress in keeping with their environment.

Soyinka's satire and parody are directed against society itself and its power structures. His criticism is bound up with his metaphysics, and, in his terms, goes well beyond an attack on a particular system. Instead, it reaches towards an understanding of the fundamental basis of human existence. While talking about social issues, Wole Soyinka does not leave to expose the condition of female in a colonized country. Being a male, his exposition of female condition also does not go beyond the traditional patriarchal view too. Focusing on the same theme Sara Zargar states that:

In *The Lion and the Jewel*, women are really considered the second sex, essentially created for serving men. On the other hand, when women appear in Soyinka's works they appear in a dramatized womanhood, because they are manifestations of the Yoruba goddesses Oya, Yemoja, and Oshun, which represent beauty, love, sensual power, etc. (85)

Zargar traces the Afrocentricity in the play as well as women representations too. We take this remark for granted and posit that *The Lion and the Jewel* cannot only be considered about representation of African customs and traditions in some of their aspects and the influence of the modern world on Africans, but also about male domination upon the females too.

In his well acclaimed play *The Lion and the Jewel*, Soyinka portrays a post-colonial Africa in which modernity and tradition are in constant rivalry, where females have to face dire consequences in comparison to males. In doing so, he creates characters who challenge themselves in an atmosphere punctuated with dances, songs, with defenders of modernity in one camp represented by Lakunle and those who are strongly rooted in traditions and customs on the other side represented by Sidi. The

play has become a contesting ground of westernization and traditionalism. But still, Soyinka has represented women as male dominated to whom things are done.

Post-colonial literature is an enterprise writing back to challenge the sovereignty and the superiority of British tastes and values. Obviously, it nurtures the interest of the margin relegating the centre, the dominant, and the hegemonic. The work of Edward Said, Salman Rushdie, Homi K. Bhabha, Gareth Griffiths, Spivak, Ajaz Ahmad and R.K. Narayan among other post-colonial critics demonstrate such a consciousness that goes beyond the textual limitation and colonial illusion. That might be the cause Lois Tyson synthesizes post-colonial theorists who describes "the colonial subject as having a double consciousness or double vision, in other words, a consciousness or a way of perceiving the world that is divided between two antagonistic cultures: that of the colonizer and that of the indigenous community" (421). They also attempt to produce 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 are re-evaluated within the background of own culture, history, politics and religion. Cultural aspects are overtly manifested in 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 Nigeria. While presenting post-colonial issues Soyinka undermines the females of his culture as feministic issues are vibrant and emerging in Third World countries. Though his resistance against colonialism and colonial mindset is praiseworthy in the African setting, his marginalizations of the female issues are often denounced.

The female subjugation can be seen in the whole play from the opening to the end by focusing on some dialogues between Lakunle, Sidi, Baroka, and Sadikou.

Each move of the dialogues is selected for the processes they contain and for the contribution they bring to portray realities concerning gender issues. Patriarchal domination at the deeper level is reflected in the processes, as the participants involved in their realization, and the circumstances of their occurrences. While analyzing the issue of gender, we can consider the participants' roles played by Lakunle, Baroka, Sidi and Sadikou in which the first two are represented as actors, doing something substantial and Sidi and Sadikou, most of the time as characters who are the goals or the beneficiaries of those actions performed by the male characters. So in the play the females are taken as passive agents and males as active role player. The play presents "passivity is equivalent to femininity and activity with masculinity" (Irigary 645). To prove this point let's consider the following dialogues:

Lakunle: Sidi, a man must prepare to fight alone.

Lakunle: Sidi, my love will open your mind.

Lakunle: Do you call it nonsense that I poured the waters of my soul to wash your feet. (6)

Lakunle, as it can be seen, is the actor of most of the actions expressed by the material processes and Sidi is the goal and/or the beneficiary. Lakunle, like other males, tries to tempt her through love. Most of the material processes are strict actions directed towards Sidi. All in all, though Lakunle in this opening scene is dealing with love affairs in his attempt to conquer the heart of Sidi, he still uses processes totally detached from feeling and exposition of male superiority. On the other hand, the actions taken by Sidi are not the straight and direct ones which can bring about changes. They are rather actions designated to avoid men's tricks and behaviour, a kind of escape and self-protection against men's domination. Casting the light on the same theme Gwendolyn Mikell in her essay "African Feminism: Towards a New

Politics of Representation” opines that “African women have felt towards what they perceived as attempts by Western academics and activists [...] patriarchy and ultimately by hostility to males” (18). Let’s consider the following response of Sidi to Lakunle’s mouth playing games:

Sidi: I’ve done the fold so high and so tight, I can hardly breathe.

Sidi: I have to leave my arms so I can use them.

Sidi: Give me the pail.

Sidi: Shall I take the pail? (5)

In this opening scene entitled "Morning", it is seen how each character Lakunle and Sidi, has used material processes, processes of tangible actions to express their representation of the world. It can be said that men are presented as more active and dynamic than women. All men’s actions are directed to women who are the goals and the beneficiaries. Because females in the post-colonial societies are considered as the contingent beings. Casting the light on the same issue Lois Tyson further states that, “Men can act upon the world, change it, give it meaning, while women have meaning only in relation to men. Thus, women are defined not just in terms of their difference from men, but in terms of their inadequacy in comparison to men” (96). Female in the Third World also face the same situation. The female are objectified. In the same vein, Baroka’s choices of processes in his exchanges with Sidi, Sadikou and his other wives portray a man of authority and action most directed towards Sidi, Sadikou, and other characters. This is exemplified in the following utterances in which Baroka appears:

Sadikou: Baroka swears to take no other wife after you.

Sidi: Baroka merely seeks to raise his manhood above my beauty

Baroka: Did I not at the festival of rain, defeat the men in the log-tossing match?(21)

All the material process identified in the above utterances can be read as presenting Baroka in a dominating position, the beneficiaries of his actions, swear to take, and raise his manhood being with Sidi and Sadikou. Females are presented only as objects of possession. He even boasted professing his invincibility in the objective that both women will be influenced which is, to some extent, a selfish attitude. This kind of language, he contends, is used in the public domain and that this encounter between professor and students is asymmetrical and helps to keep and build power relation. In the following examples, Lakunle and Baroka are the professors and Sidi and Sadikou the students:

Lakunle: I will teach you the Waltz.

Lakunle: I must show you the grandeur of towns.

Sidi: The school-man here has taught me certain things. (21)

The transitivity analysis of the clauses above shows processes of teaching: teach, show, improve, and being in existential process, in which Lakunle and Baroka appear as the actors and the professionals on the one hand and Sidi, Sadikou, and the Favorite on the other hand. The question of the Favorite to Baroka by using the process improves can be read as a typical question of a student who wants to learn more.

The use of the above-mentioned material processes along others (make, do) is a symbol of men's occupation of the public space where men are positioned as professional, and women as learners. Here also Lois Tyson is worthy to quote as she says "men are considered essential subjects while women are considered contingent being" (96). A quick analysis of how the processes 'make', and 'do' are used in the play reveals important findings. Wherever these processes are used and Lakunle and

Baroka are actors, those processes express a kind of control, transformation, and domination over the female gender according to their projects. But whenever women are actors, it is to express the sexual influence they have over the male. There is an example of how the process 'make' is used:

Sidi: will you make me a laughing-stock? (7)

Baroka: But remember, I only make a pleading for this prey of women's malice. (45)

The process do is translated into processes like killed, ate up, consume, spin, stand, etc. as it is found in the following monologue:

Sadikou: I did for him, I, the youngest and freshest of the wives. I killed him with all my strength. I called him and he came at me, but no, for him, this was not like other times. I, Sadikou was I not the flame itself and he the flax on old women's spindle? I ate him up! Race of mighty lions, we always consume you, at our pleasure we spin you, at our whim we make you dance. (32)

The play characterizes women as object of male character's attention is evident. All in all, women in *The Lion and the Jewel* do not take initiative, they undergo it. Men take it. They are the doers of the actions. Most of their actions are designed to occupy the public space eg. teacher and chief. They act overtly. Most of the time, whenever men are actors, the female are the goal and/ or the beneficiary. But when it comes that women take action, it is the negative aspects of it that are shown like in this reply of Lakunle to Sadiku, "Lakunle: And now because you've sucked him dry" (38). This very negative portrayal of female signifies the socio-political culture of the society.

The attempt in the following is to illustrate how male ideology has been realized by the actors of the play in their use of relational processes. In fact, there is a sort of patriarchal ideology as it will be demonstrated thereafter in Lakunle and Baroka's choices of relational processes to describe female characters and therefore the picture of how male and female are represented by Soyinka in the play. So, a relational process according to the system can be qualified to be attributive or identifying and only one choice between intensive, circumstantial, and possessive will be made in addition. Let's consider the following excerpts from the play:

Third girl: Yes, yes, he did, But the Bale is still feasting his eyes on the images. Oh Sidi, he was right. You are beautiful.

Sidi: If that is true, then I am more esteemed than Bale Baroka the lion of Ilujinle. This means that I am greater than the fox of the undergrowth. (11)

The first aspect of the characters' use of relational processes is how each constructs meaning to describe himself/herself in relation to others. Indeed, Lakunle is one of the major actors in the play. In his attempt to win the heart of Sidi, the Ilujinle's most celebrated beauty, he resorts to all sorts of rhetorical strategies to convince her. A close analysis of how he uses language shows that he is more privileged than Sidi and Sadikou, his female counterparts in the play. He is described as intelligent, modern, and wise. Lakunle, while positioning himself as an illuminated man, takes a terrible stance towards Sidi and Sadikou and the villagers. Evidence of this can be seen through the attributes he uses to describe them.

Lakunle: A natural feeling, arising out of envy; For, as a woman you have a smaller brain than mine.

The scientists have proved it. It is in my books. Women have a smaller brain than men.

That's why they are called the weaker sex.

A savage custom, barbaric, out dated, rejected, denounced, accused, excommunicated, archaic, degrading, humiliating, unspeakable, redundant. Regressive, remarkable, unpalatable.

(7)

As it can be seen, Lakunle uses some possessive attributes a smaller brain than his, a smaller brain than men, intensive attributes ignorant girl, bush-girl, uncivilized and primitive-bush girl to describe Sidi and how he conceives women in general. It is evident that Lakunle derides women. Sidi is not the only one character to undergo Lakunle's degradation. Sadikou is also one of his victims. This instance of dialogue is quite telling, "Lakunle: For though you are nearly seventy, your mind is simple and unformed" (37). In the same vein, Baroka does not consider women otherwise. Let's consider these two utterances:

Baroka: Not even Ailatou, my favourite? Was she not at her usual place, beside my door?

Baroka: Sidi is the eye's delight, but she is vain, and her head is feather-light, and always giddy with a trival thought. (49)

That Baroka derides women and considers them as his subordinate is an open secret in the play but this can go beyond human understanding. In his view, the intensive relational process 'is' with the attributes eye's delight, vain, feather-light, giddy with tribal thought in which Sidi is the carrier shows at length how far he could go to describe women by playing on their intelligence and by considering them as an

exoteric object as an eye's delight and unable to think for better. In, the Favourite (Baroka's latest wife) is the token and the circumstance at her usual place.

This can be read as an expression of Baroka's authority and dominating power over his wife since the later should be present whenever the Chief is there at a prescribed place, beside his door. How Baroka and Lakunle treat their female counterparts is quite telling of how they perceive themselves: intelligent, powerful and incarnation of authority. But while male characters are interested in how they are, it is what they look like that seems to interest the female characters. Nobody can deny the fact that Sidi is presented as a girl gifted with beauty in the play. That is what Lakunle resorts to when he refers her to the jewel: "For that, what is a jewel to pigs?" (3). It is upon this metaphorical attribute of which Sidi is the shipper that Lakunle and Baroka have fought all along till the end of the play.

Sidi is conscious of this attribute ascribed to her. She is the jewel of the village. She is the beautiful. But what is quite intriguing is the fact that she considers this as something that confers her all the necessary notoriety due to her regard as it is shown below:

Third girl: Yes, yes, he did./ But the Bale is still feasting his eyes on the images. Oh Sidi, he was right. You are beautiful.

Sidi: If that is true, then I am more esteemed than Bale Baroka the lion of Ilujinle. This means that I am greater than the fox of the undergrowth. (11)

To the attribute beautiful used by Third girl (a minor character) to describe her, Sidi does not complain. She simply draws the conclusion that if it is so, then she is more esteemed and greater than the fox of the undergrowth. As can be seen, it shows how women in the play are more preoccupied by what they look like than by how they are.

The second aspect on which subjugating processes can contribute to demonstrate how gender is perceived in *The Lion and the Jewel* is "that the male and the female characters may be viewed as stereotypes of two different worlds where man and woman do not get in agreement concerning their opinions. Therefore, they live in constant conflict for not accepting each other's views" (Gallardo 176).

Indeed Soyinka has created his characters to embody the coloniser and the colonized even after the decolonization. Lakunle, the school teacher, embodies the western tradition in his beliefs, his thinking, and the way he apprehends the world as he overtly goes against African tradition. Baroka, Sidi, and Sakikou, on the other hand, are typical Africans born and educated in a Yoruba tradition. It is by analyzing each character's way of presentation, the language they use to exchange their world view acquired from experiences that it tries to show a kind of patriarchal ideology behind the play. Male characters concentrate the power and dominate the public space while female ones are confined in the private space (home, marriage). In fact, Soyinka designs his characters in *The Lion and the Jewel* through a direct confrontation between two cultures. He makes them feel, think, act, and express some views which are pertained to his own idiolect and his vision of the African post-colonial society.

On the other hand, in the background of this clash of cultures lies what can be seen as an ideological positioning towards genders' representation? Lois Tyson strongly advises to make, a connection between "the psychological, ideological, social, political, intellectual, and aesthetic" in a critical work (418). To place *The Lion and the Jewel* in that context, we see that all characters are of Yoruba origin, that the setting, Ilujinle, is a village in Ibadan Nigeria that Soyinka is from Yoruba ethnic group. Also, actions, feelings, utterances of the characters are organized to describe womenfolk as it is in Yoruba traditions. Therefore, it can be considered that the play is

a recount of womenfolk in Yoruba tradition: a male-dominated power, then a patriarchy ideology. However, the play should not be denied the merit to have posed the question of women's representation in Yoruba/African societies. Despite having the male superiority upon the female the play is praiseworthy for the exposition of post-colonial mission and patriarchal ideologies. However the male position is highlighted in order to undermine the females in the play *The Lion and the Jewel*.

II: Representation of the Females in the Post-Colonial Nigeria in *The Lion and the Jewel*

Male superiority in Nigerian community is evident in the play *The Lion and the Jewel*. Along with male domination, women's position in postcolonial literature is a matter of debate and inquiry. The integration of women into nationalist and anti-colonialist movements has been an important issue for questioning the women's position in most of the post-colonial societies. African feminism is not a clear cut concept that can be precisely defined till the date. This problem of definition does not deny the existence of African feminism, but acknowledges the complexities denoted by being an African and a feminist at once. African feminism can be defined in terms of two things; it is a theoretical paradigm in social theory that seeks to advocate and enhance women emancipation in a predominantly patriarchal world and it is also a movement that mobilizes for women's liberation and equality in regards to gender. Wole Soyinka's women characters played 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 in reality but they are portrayed as confused, powerless and unable to determine for themselves both the changes in their lives and means to construct these changes in the literary texts. The same case is seen in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* too.

As feminism is purely a political theory which aims to liberate female from male domination particularly in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* and all sorts of confinements that they are rooted from their ancestral period. African feminist mainly raises the issue of marginalization of women in terms of gender and race. Bell Hooks casts the light of marginalization of women in African continent as per their

race and gender. Supporting the idea of Bell Hooks another theorist Hazel V. Carvy in her book, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* clarifies the theoretical concept of Black Feminism as, "the realization of that the politics of sex as well as the politics of race and class are crucially interlocking factors" (8). In these lines Carvy opines that African women are in double marginalization that is race and sex. In their lives the color has been the agenda of their discrimination and sex is another aspect which has been taken as a stigma in their lives. In post-colonial Nigerian society, they are compelled to do whatever patriarchy says. They are taken as second class citizen in each and every sphere of their lives.

In the history of Africa the African women always remained active in agriculture, trade, and other economic pursuits, but a majority of them are in the informal labour forces at present. African women are guardians of their children's welfare and have explicit responsibility to provide them maternity. They are the household managers, providing food, nutrition, water, health, education, and family management to an extent greater than elsewhere in the developing world. The situation is same in Nigeria too. During pre-colonial era, Nigerian economy was at a subsistence level, yet, Nigerian women participated actively in this economy like the males. Apart from being mothers and wives and taking charge of the domestic region, women contributed vastly in the production and distribution of goods and services. In the agricultural sector, women farmed along side with husband and children. In some areas women also took part in production of palm oil and palm kernel. They also participated in a trade in different parts of Nigeria. They were also involved in food processing, for example, fish drying, garri processing, etc. In the eastern part of Nigeria, women were active in salt production too.

Before the imposition of western form of male ideologies, the condition of Nigerian women was relatively better in the past in comparison to the contemporary scenario. Nigerian women provided health care and religious services also in pre-colonial era. Most traditional religions feature females as earth goddesses. Women were also considered as priestesses, diviners, healers, etc. Under pre-colonial era customary laws were practiced in most Nigerian societies. Women were considered as free adults, at the same time, certain limitations were imposed, which subordinated them to male authority. Education in pre-colonial time was functional. It helped women to learn a skill in order to earn a living. A woman who was without a craft or trade, or who was totally dependent on her husband, was not only rare but was regarded with contempt. In politics, women in pre-colonial period were part of the political set up of their communities. Most often, they had separated functions from men and those functions were fully complementary.

During the colonial period, the colonial economy seriously undermined the prestige of the traditional occupations of Nigerian women. While it placed women at a great disadvantage, it enhanced the economic status of the British, Lebanese, Syrian and a few male Nigerian merchants. Many of the smaller markets that were dominated and controlled by women gradually disintegrated as a result of the emergence of expatriate firms. In agriculture, “cash crop incentives, technology and innovations were restricted to men” (Attoe 1). Colonial policies and statutes were clearly sexist and biased against women. The colonial regime made male as the superior. Even though the educational system was functional during the colonial time, women were only limited to domestic aspect in the curriculum which only enable them learn to be good housewives, while boys were placed to learn religious instructions and clerical skills

Colonialism affected Nigerian women seriously as very few of them were offered any political or administrative appointments. This trend remained the same even after the decolonization too. The status of women in *The Lion and the Jewel* is identical even in the post-colonial era. Despite having immense contributions of women in the development of the nation (Nigeria) they are denied to enjoy their rights at present. They are not given socio-economic and political opportunities. In most of the literary writings, women are also pushed to the background where as males given superior roles. Soyinka also presents women in a degrading picture. Women with little brain to understand simple thing, as in the case of Sidi, a female central character in the play and Lakunle a male central character also in the same play who tags Sidi as a woman with smaller brain than him, since she refuses to marry him unless he pays the bride price, “Lakunle: A natural feeling, arising out of envy; for as a woman, you have smaller brain than mine” (Soyinka 4). And when Lakunle senses that Sidi is not happy with his attitude, instead of consoling her, he worsens the situation by saying, “Lakunle: Please don’t be angry with me. I didn’t mean you in particular. And anyway, it isn’t what I say. The scientists have proved it. It’s in my books. Women have smaller brain than men that’s why they are called the weaker sex” (Soyinka 4). Lakunle degrades Sidi in particular and all women in general because he is male and males are considered as ‘knowing everything’. On the other hand he has been a ‘mimic man’ because neither he can follow the traditional practices of Nigeria nor he can fully implement his western views in his society.

In another instance, Soyinka gives a bad picture of women through the same character Lakunle, who degrades Sidi just because she detests a foreign culture, and considers such act as indecent, “Lakunle: Bush-girl you are, bush-girl you’ll always be; uncivilized and primitive-bush-girl! I kissed you as all educated men- And

Christians- kiss their wives” (Soyinka 9). Again, Soyinka considers women as property that men can possess. It is known that from both Christian and Islamic religions children inherit the property of their father when he dies, but not the wives that the deceased person leaves behind. This is confirmed through Sadiku, who tries her best to convince Sidi to marry her husband Baroka (the Bale) so that Sidi would be the last wife. And when he dies she will be the first wife of the new Bale who inherits the deceased Bale’s property including all his wives:

Sadiku: Sidi, have you consider what a life of bliss awaits you? Do you know what it is to be the Bale’s last wife? I’ll tell you. When he dies- and that should not be long; even the lion has to die sometime- well, when he does, it means that you will have the honour of being the senior wife of the new Bale. And just think, until Baroka dies, you shall be his favourite. (20)

In this statement a woman is used to degrade another woman. Sidi is being convinced for a polygamous husband. Polygamy is highly practiced in Nigerian community. Sidi is being tempted in fact. Sadiku clearly accepts that Bale as the lion, the king of jungle. In the same way Bale also plays the same role as lion of the forest. Soyinka relegates women as marriage match-makers too. Not only marriage match-makers but wives whose husbands are tired of them and their only importance is to find other wives for them, as in the case of Sadiku a wife of the Bale who almost throughout the play keeps ups and downs in order to persuade Sidi for him. Sadiku cannot speak against her husband because “For the ‘figure’ of woman, the relationship between woman and silence can be plotted by women themselves; race and class are subdued under that charge” (Spivak 525). Sadiku really plays a very tremendous role in getting Sidi for the Bale, for instance, “Sadiku: Well, will you be Baroka’s own Jewel? Will

you be his sweetest princess, soothing him on weary nights? What answer shall I give my lord?" (Soyinka 20). Again Sadiku plays such role for Baroka, when she tries to invite Sidi to be a guest to the Bale if she cannot be his wife:

Sadiku: My lord says that if you would not be his wife, would you at least come to supper at his house tonight. There is a small feast in your honour. He wishes to tell you how happy he is that the great capital city has done so much honour to a daughter of Ilujinle. You have brought great fame to your people. (23)

This persuasive statement also shows the superiority of the male upon the females.

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," (Soyinka 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. On the contrary, Sidi, tradition-ridden tribal girl apparently dismantles and disorientates the Western attitude to women disdainfully: "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?" (Soyinka 4). Although Sidi resists Western hegemonic trend, she fails to resist her own cultural and patriarchal imposition. Women in Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*, enjoy unfettered operations of national patriarchy too. 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.

Soyinka depicts the decolonizing mission of the Africans in the play through the symbolic representation of the characters like Sidi, Baroka and Sadiku because “Feminism, like Post-Colonialism, has often been concerned with ways and extent to which the representation and language are crucial to identity formation and to the construction of subjectivity” (Ashcroft et al. 102). 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 colonization. It was the time when European imperialists’ mission of colonialism in the Orient and Africa reached in to the peak. 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 resistance 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.

The play *The Lion and the Jewel* moves from a colonial domination to a postcolonial resistance. The colonial rule has brought historical, social, political and cultural change or erosion to the indigenous cultural practices it imposed male ideologies. The indigenous people like Sidi, Baroka and Sadiku, to maintain their own freedom and cultural identity, though marginal, and relentlessly combat against Eurocentric cultural hegemonizing and hybridize and 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 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 resolute 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, Excommunicated, archaic, degrading, Retrogressive, remarkable, unpalatable. [With a sudden shout] An ignoble custom, infamous, ignominious Shaming our heritage before the world" (Soyinka 7). 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, which is no more than male

ideology as he says, “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.] (Soyinka 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” (Soyinka 60). This approach subtly underlines cultural displacement, which is the common facet of post-colonial literature. Lakunle like people have been in “alienation from their own indigenous cultures” (Tyson 419). That might be the cause Lakunle fails in his attempts to impose his ideas.

Lakunle, on the contrary, encounters a rigid resistance from his ladylove. Sidi, a deeprooted 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 brideprice. A cheating way, mean and miserly” (Soyinka 9). 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” (Soyinka 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?” (Soyinka 17). Thus, Soyinka in the play develops a counter discourse against British cultural hegemony in profusion.

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" (Soyinka 20). In addition, she poses question to Sadikum "why did the Lion not bestow his gift. Before my face was lauded to the world? (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 caliber 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" (Soyinka 20).Soyinka again degrades women through his character Lakunle who says women pictures in an indecent manner would be printed in newspapers in order to show the progress of their society, "Lakunle: We'll print newspapers everyday with pictures of seductive girls. The world will judge our progress by the girl that wins beauty contests" (Soyinka37).

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 rejection 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" (Soyinka29).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. Sidi is convinced on her own cost. 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 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?" (Soyinka, 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" (Soyinka 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. At the same time Sidi like beautiful girl has to marry with an old man. She has to be subjugated before the wish of village chief. 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 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.

In most cases the western notion of imperialism/colonialism to 'others' like Asia, Africa is a part of its civilizing mission. 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!" (Soyinka 9). 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" (Soyinka 35) and "Baroka is a creature of the wilds, untutored, mannerless, devoid of grace" (Soyinka 58). In addition, he terms Sadiku as "a woman of the bush" (Soyinka 36) and desires to start by teaching her and advises her to, "attend my school" (Soyinka 37). Lakunle's this appreciation justifies the colonizers' 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. Unfortunately this very 'other' has been women in the play. 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 resistance against Eurocentric cultural hegemony. However, Lakunle's attempts are colonial as well as patriarchal domination upon the natives and specially upon the females.

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" (Soyinka 3). 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. 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" (36-37). 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. 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" (5). Her rejection of westernization of Lakunle is the rejection of patriarchy too. Sidi, here rejects western form of patriarchy. The crucial point here is that she is resisting Lakunle because she is pushed up by Baroka. Here, Gayatri Spivak is noteworthy to quote as she says "there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself: the (so called) intellectual's solution is not to abstain from representation" (532). As Spivak says, Sidi is speaking against the 'progress' of Lakunle because there is support of other behind her.

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? (52)

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" (Soyinka 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 postcolonial 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 393)

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 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 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. Thus, Soyinka in his play establishes Africanness that is 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’ but as the crux of this analysis the female remained subjugated in both kinds of cultural practices.

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 as she is not given significant role. 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 traditional girl Sidi. As a result, she refuses to marry Lakunle, whose aesthetics of love and romantic sensibility have no significance in the traditional society. Moreover, Lakunle's belief in monogamy is contrasted with polygamy-the African custom. All over again, Lakunle does not believe 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. 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.

The play focuses on the failure of an elementary school teacher to apprehend the sense of culture, advancement or civilization. The word 'progress' needs to be under strict scrutinization interpreting varied features connected with it and also the aspects unrelated to it. The play *The Lion and the Jewel* evolves a subject almost classical in its worth with the juxtaposition of the values that forms a required dramatic confrontation. Casting the light on this issue Kronenfeld writes, "the comedy clearly operates in terms of the characters adjusting ideology [tradition or modern], or selecting convenient aspect of it, in accordance with their situation and their psychological needs" (307). The major characters create the phenomena of jollity mainly due to the ordeals they encounter with and the consequent indecisiveness. The dark forces are inevitable in essence. They assume serious and heinous proportions.

The dramatic environment that Soyinka creates has been enriched with variegated realistic scenes portraying African life very exactly and fashions and characters holding a mirror up to nature and presenting life as it is. The characters are very real to life. His object of representing something to express something else exemplifies more than what the surface meaning offers. This play is combined with a real flavour of African rural life in the context at which idea of development requires a transformation of consciousness. The sense of progress undergoes necessary transition. The custom of polygamy and bride barter are challenged. Lakunle is endowed with the glimpses of the comedy of manners carrying a stigma of the exaggerated, caricature like portrayal. But the crafty, unscrupulous aged fox, the Bale Baroka is quite satisfactory in his cunning warfare waged against modernism and in the strong method of winding stairs for adopting polygamy. Lakunle, who stands to represent 'progress' and cultured romance fails Sidi at the crucial hours, captivated by

her own charm, keeps her head against Lakunle but loses it while encountering the old lion.

Despite male domination, Sidi presents a full spectrum of the panorama of the heart of an African village as against Lagos, which stands for advancement in accordance with definition of Lakunle. Oyin Ogunba remarks the major theme of the play is the “choice between the rival worlds of tradition and modernism” (32). The locale of the play is Ilujinle, a typical Nigerian village. Soyinka’s dramatic creation the Bale Baroka, the old lion of the village, metaphorically expresses the traditional good and bad. Having experienced the amassing opulence and power, the Bale has a harem full of the most beautiful ladies in the area, new commodities annexed frequently. The dramatist exhibits his skill through the depiction of the Bale’s hard headed conservation gaining, when Lakunle’s sloganeering defeats to compromise. Lakunle treats himself to be the representative of the modern revolution against men like Bale and asserts what he considers a moral war. Lakunle develops an association with Sidi, the village beauty, ascends upon the steps of modernisation means of civilising the bush girl. Here Lakunle subjugates both traditional culture and female.

Lakunle, representative of male superiority and the semi-European, wants to make some revolutionary changes in the village. He appeared in the English suit of an ancient kind. At first, he imposes his ideas on his love, Sidi. To her, all his ideas are new and unlikely. Yet she has soft corner for him more as a jocular character narrating comic and mysterious tales to her as a reformer. When he proposes his love and talks of marriage to her, she demands the bride-price to marry him. Bride-price is money or property given by the bridegroom to the family of his bride. Such a system is still followed by the native Africans and Muslims in their religion. Even in India, the same system followed in present days too. However, the primitive African societies

follow the footsteps of tradition and culture, demanding the bride-price to the bridegroom. It is honour to the bride who receives a good price. If a girl marries without the price, it is assumed that she is not a virgin or she is not worth to marry. Sidi the traditional African girl, who is untouched by the foreign ideas and culture, insists on the bride-price and its honour to Lakunle;

I have told you, and I say it again I shall marry you today, next week Or any day you name. But my bride-price must first be paid [. . .]. But I tell you, Lakunle, I must have The full bride-price. Will you make me A laughing-stock? Well, do as you please. But Sidi will not make herself A cheap bowl for the village spit. . . . They will say I was no virgin That I was forced to sell my shame And marry you without a price. (Soyinka 8)

According to the custom of Africa, a girl marrying without the bride-price is a disgrace to the bride. Sidi, the beauty of the village, expects Lakunle to pay more bride-price for her beauty and virginity. Even though Sidi demands bride price, she forgets that she has been like a commodity of the market, which can be sold and purchased with in the certain amount. But Lakunle, who has European sensibilities, is an iconoclast of the African traditional manner. He attacks the traditional African customs of marriage. He calls the system of bride-price, “A savage custom, barbaric, out-dated [. . .] unpalatable” (Soyinka 8). Here, Lakunle seems respectful towards female but he sounds flawed when he uses that respect for his own benefit. As the teacher educated by west, he objects it due to his influence on the western concept of gender equality or his empty pocket. He believes that the custom is a disgrace and humiliation to women, “to pay the price would be. To buy a heifer off the market stall” (Soyinka 9). Soyinka again degrades women through his character Lakunle who

says women pictures in an indecent manner would be printed in newspapers in order to show the progress of their society, “Lakunle: We’ll print newspapers everyday with pictures of seductive girls. The world will judge our progress by the girl that wins beauty contests” (Soyinka 37). Lakunle thinks that the progress lies in making the girl as the show piece of the market. His ideal notion against bride price turns out to be ironic with this view.

Getting child, after one’s marriage, is one of the most vital purposes of marriage. That is the only way to make the world exist. But the iconoclast and lover of western values, Lakunle does not consider the child bearing is a must. He says that he does not seek wife, “To fetch and carry, To cook and scrub, To bring forth children by the gross” (Soyinka 9). But Sidi could not make a grasp his modernism means even child bearing as an issue of contempt in the wife. Out of fear, immediately she utters, “Heaven forgive you!” (Soyinka 9) to save him from the punishment of Gods. The custom treats child bearing is not only the part of life, but also it qualifies the married couple’s life meaningful. Lauretta Ngcobo writes more about this, “As elsewhere, marriage amongst Africans is mainly an institution for the control of procreation. Every woman is encouraged to marry and get children in order to express her womanhood to the full. The basis of marriage among Africans implies the transfer of a woman’s fertility to the husband’s family group” (141). In the play, the playwright until the end does not show that the bride-price is paid to Sidi by her spouse. After Sidi is seduced by Baroka, Lakunle readily accepts to marry her, there he says, “it is only fair. That we forget the bride-price totally, since you no longer can be called a maid” (Soyinka 54). But she chooses the seducer as her husband than the semi-witted, Lakunle. Her decision is due to the concept of chastity as taught by the society.

Through Sidi, Soyinka brings out the culture of the tradition based rigid society. She would have chosen young Lakunle to marry, but her loss of virginity makes her to marry the old Baroka, “Marry who ...? You thought ... Did you really think that you, and I ... Why, did you think that after him, I could endure the touch of another man?” (57). Chastity is the only reason that prevents her to accept the proposal of Lakunle. It is not the manliness of Baroka impresses her and she decides to marry him, but the age old tradition of marrying and living with only one man ceases her to take any other decisions. Even though she is portrayed as not fully matured girl, but she is the one of the strong representatives of the tradition in the play. R. Sethuraman comments on her decision at end, “Sidi in *The Lion and the Jewel* is fleetingly metamorphosed into the glittering girl of the magazine by the Western photographer, although common sense prevails on her in the end” (224). So, Sidi herself has been the victim of the tradition, which she wanted to preserve in order to resist the westernization.

In the play, Soyinka portrays the African polygamous society. The marrying of multiple wives is legal in Nigeria and it is a prominent feature of traditional life. Lofts and wives are the criteria of wealth of a person. It is accepted that the old man marrying the young girls. Toyin Falola in his book *Culture and Customs of Nigeria*, states regarding polygamy, “the function of the family as an economic unit of production. Especially for those in agrarian production, a large family provides the labour necessary for the maintenance and growth of the business” (56). And he adds more, that “the tradition allows widow inheritance, in which a man marries the widow of a deceased brother. This practice ensures that the woman and her children remain under the economic and social care of the family” (58). Sometimes the successor of dead Bale or chief of the area marries the last and favourite wife of the dead Bale, as

his first wife. According to the custom, the first wife of the Bale becomes the senior and receives all honours in the family.

Another example of male superiority is seen in Bale's situation too. According to the tradition, a Bale can have as much as wives he can, but he has to "follow some conditions like, treating all equally, distributing resources equally to all wives and children, avoid discrimination among wives and children" (Falola 59). Baroka, the Bale of the village, has many wives. His harem is already full with his number of wives from Sadiku to latest favourite wife, Ailatu. The desire for more girls has not left him even at the age of sixty two. Una Maclean calls the play a "Nigerian bedroom farce" (51) for its convention of polygamy. After seeing Sidi's beautiful pictures in a glossy magazine, he desires to have her on that night and he expresses his wish to his first wife, Sadiku to woo that young girl for him. It is the custom of the village that the first wife has to persuade and makes the girls to marry her husband. It is a part of her duty to ensure his happiness. By this act, the society emphasizes that the wives have to obey and do furnish all sorts of his desire. It is settled in the minds of the women in the society too. They have to be submissive because those subalterns cannot "speak and know their condition" (Spivak 522).

Sadiku is the veteran representative of the tradition as she is taught in this way. She is proud of her role as the chief wife of a family in a polygamous society. While she is wooing Sidi for Baroka, states another tradition in the society that last wife of the Bale becomes chief wife to the next Bale. Women's situation seems quite pathetic. She tries to tempt Sidi. The surprising fact is the successor, most probably the dead Bale's son, becoming husband to his step-mother. It is not a serious matter in the society that a woman became wife to both father and son. Sadiku is an instance of such a practice prevails in the society. She reveals that she is the bare

witness of Okiki's, father of Baroka, impotency, "I was there when it happened to your father, the great Okiki. I did for him, I, the youngest and freshest of the wives" (Soyinka 30). These words state that she was the youngest wife of Okiki and now according to the custom, she has become the senior wife to Baroka, i.e. she married father and after his death she became wife to her step-son. Yoruba calls it is the responsibility of the king to take care of the youngest wife and children of the previous sovereign though the woman is treated as an object.

Another male dominating tradition mentioned in the play is wedding. There are no much details of the wedding and its related functions, yet some descriptions and words of Sadiku and Lakunle state the culture of wedding in Yoruba. Before the marriage, the bride packs her clothes and trinkets and oils herself as a bride. And she is accompanied by her relatives to bridegroom's house with a group of musicians and dancers of the village. The marriage has many ceremonies, Lakunle verbalises it "I have to hire a praise-singer, and such a number of ceremonies / must firstly be performed" (Soyinka 56). Soyinka narrates the decoration of the bride, "Sidi now enters. [...] she hold a bundle, done up in a richly embroidered cloth. She is radiant, jewelled, lightly clothed, and wears light leather-thong sandals, Festive air, fully pervasive" (Soyinka 57-58). These words show that the ceremony of marriage is very colourful and mirthful ambiance with songs and dance. As well as, Soyinka has included some religious tradition like making oaths on Yoruba pantheon of Gods like Ogun and Sango. These two gods are usually invoked in oaths. Ogun is the god of oaths and justice. In Yoruba courts, devotees of the faith swear to tell the truth by kissing a machete sacred to Ogun. The Yoruba consider Ogun fearsome and terrible in his revenge; they believe that if one breaks a pact made in his name, swift retribution will follow. In the play, when a girl gives the news to Sidi about her photograph

published in a western magazine, at first she could not believe and asks, “Sidi: Is that the truth? Swear! Ask Ogun to Strike you dead. Girl: Ogun strike me dead if I lie” (Soyinka 12). In the scene of Sadiku woos Sidi for her husband, Sidi’s acts make her to pray to the God Sango to restore her sanity, “May Sango restore your wits. For most surely some angry god has taken possession of you” (Soyinka 22). Sango is considered as god of thunder and lightning. His anger is sudden and terrible. He strikes his enemies down with lightning. And Yoruba believe that only Sango can relive the people who behave abnormal or possess by any angry god or evil spirit.

Soyinka brings out the adoration exercised to the head of the village by the commoners. The head of village is called, Bale. He is respected as demigod. In the first section of the play, “Morning” when the villagers enact the dance of the lost traveller, Baroka enters. Immediately all stop the play, all go down prostrate and kneeling with the greetings of ‘Kabiyesi’ and ‘Baba’. Although the people mock him in the dance, they pay respect to the post he holds. In another scene, before entering the room of Baroka, his senior wife, Sadiku goes down on her knees at once and bows her head into her lap. It shows that even in home also, his people show their respect to him. In the seduction scene, Sidi the young and mischievous girl, on seeing him in his house, she greets him, “Good day to the head” (Soyinka 36).

According to the tradition of the society, the people consider him next to god, so they give much respect him at least for the post he holds, the Bale of the Village. After Sidi rejected Baroka’s invitation, he spreads a rumour that he became impotence. But Sidi is caught in his trap by going to his house to mock him for his impotency, leads her to seduce by him. Such a mode of seduction is very common among the anecdote-makers in Yoruba. Bale selection is another dominating ideology upon the women. The important point here is that the Bale is always male and he

exercises patriarchy. That's why Tyson claims that, "That is, patriarchy treats women, whatever their role, like the objects: like objects, women exist, according to patriarchy, to be used without consideration of their own perspectives, feelings or opinions" (91). The Bale treats the women as the object of his desires.

The polygamous society gives importance to the Bale, it allows him to marry as many girls he can, he uses the girls only for his pleasure, and after a new arrival of favourite he sends the last favourite to an outhouse. It shows the society never give respect to women, and they are used to, as Lakunle tells, "pounds the yam or bends all the day to plant the millet [. . .] to fetch and carry, to cook and scrub, to bring forth children by the gross"(Soyinka 7). The custom of dead Bale's last wife becomes the senior wife to the successor, i.e. son. The custom is very awkward and surprise to almost all the readers, particularly to the non-African readers. However, the playwright does not make any condemn, dislike or rejection of it. Instead, by ending the play with the marriage ceremony of the Bale and the girl seems to show that Soyinka nods approval to this custom. By the marriage of the cunning Bale and ignorant and pride Sidi, the author emphasizes that chastity is only for female. All these show that the female society is highly marginalized by the males.

The female characters like Sidi and Sadiku are the representation of the doubly oppressed in the society. They are the symbol of self-marginality, particularly Sidi:

she never allows any rational idea into her mind, which is advised by Lakunle [...] greatly supports and argues for her society and its tradition. She does not want to come out of the conventional ideologies. She does not know that she is marginalizing herself for the ideologies of the society. (46)

In the play, Lakunle like a champion of feminism, voices for the females, who are fastened with the traditions of the society. But he is portrayed as a foolish and stupid teacher, who never gets any respect from anyone, Sidi chides his state in the village, “You and your ragged books dragging your feet to every threshold and rushing them out aging as cruses greet you instead of welcome. [. . .] The village says you’re mad, and I begin to understand” (Soyinka 5). Even after so much humiliation he tells his dream of new, improved and modern society to her. But his expectation of development is a mirage.

Through the character of Baroka, playwright expresses that the society is not ready to accept the changes, even if it is necessary. By portraying Lakunle as a hallow-modernist, Soyinka presents the stubbornness of society. C.N. Ramachandran concludes, “Lakunle represents not western culture but only hallow Westernization, not real but only the image. The play abundantly establishes that Lakunle is a modern version of Don Quixote, a book nourished shrimp” (201). Eldred Jones calls Lakunle “the half-baked Westernized African” (24) rather Florence Stratton posits, “he is a caricature of the alienated African – a ridiculous figure in any case, but not in the latter an object of pity” (539). Onwueme in his article states that Soyinka made “a mild satire against Baroka’s ruthless leadership and brutal force in society” (64). Even the mild satire also made only through the weak character Lakunle.

Basavaraj Naiker writes that “Lakunle’s protestation against the payment of bride price, instead of cunning ways of drawing Sidi into bed, his rational method of convincing her to marry her, and his aesthetics of love and poetic sensibility have no significance in the tradition-ridden society” (112). The society is out of its sensibility, which never heeds to words of educated. Along with that, the playwright satirizes the educational system in his land through the character Lakunle. Through him, the

dramatist brings out the African tendency to imitate the life of the white man. He presents an ironical situation through the depiction of the character. Lakunle is an embodiment of the qualities found in the foreign educated African student. He must be an intelligent herald of the revolution against old customs and blind faith. But he is stuffed with empty bombastic words, and unclear vision to change his society. The sphere of education requires a complete sense of devotion. But pretensions, affection, hypocrisy, lack of depth, have clouded the atmosphere. It is so disheartening to note that in the context of newly evolving nation like, Africa, where the universities do not promote the custodians to upgrade the sphere of education, instead they breed bugs as in any other fields.

The antithesis to Lakunle, Baroka is a very impressive character in the play. He does not sound like Lakunle, the chatterbox, rather through his actions, he proves himself as a man of action. Physically he is very strong and vigorous. His worldly wisdom keeps him as a head of the village for a long time. He keeps control of the village under his rule; he isolates the commoners as far as possible from modern ideas, even modern transportation, like railways. He combines courage with cunning to pursue pleasures from the women. He enjoys the privileges and power with zest, with care and caution. At the outset, he represents tradition, but the study of his character brings out that he represents neither tradition nor modern but the patriarchy. He utilizes both the ideologies for his personal satisfaction. The play exemplifies a voracity that amidst the search for requirements, conflicts and confrontation, man must channelize the stream of his mental faculty unfettered by the tyranny of customs and beliefs, as worthless as desert, preserving the mental resources for the functioning modes of national mechanism with the knowledge unhampered by the constraints of ideologies of the west. On the other hand the male patriarchy is highly operated in the text.

Though the western hegemonic tendency is successfully rejected but the women are discriminated in both colonial and Post- Colonial regimes. That's why Wole Soyinka's world acclaimed novel *The Lion and the Jewel* is about the operation of male patriarchy and female suppression in the Post-Colonial Nigeria.

III: Failure of Women's Resistance

The interest in using African, specifically Yoruba customs, traditions, and value system, in his work incorporates Soyinka as a post-colonial writer as he details with Yoruba traditions and rituals in his work and thus gives them a taste of originality, hence a vibrant African authenticity wherein customs like singing, dancing, rites of passage and ritual becomes alive. Soyinka positions himself as an Afrocentric writer, since he writes about Africa and African people's victorious way. For example, in *The Lion and the Jewel* it is the African traditional worldview that wins at last which suggests that tradition and ritual rule in African society, and if a person wants to live prosperously and lively in Africa, he or she needs to follow the instructions and rules of the society though these rules are biased and laden with patriarchal ideologies. In the play Soyinka shows that one who obeys these rules can reach his or her goal as in play *Baroka*, the traditionalist character, defeats Lakunle who seems to be a modernist and tries to marry the beautiful Sidi.

Soyinka has created his characters to embody the colonizer and the colonized. Lakunle, the school teacher, embodies the western tradition in his beliefs, his thinking, and the way he apprehends the world as he overtly goes against African tradition. Baroka, Sidi, and Sakikou, on the other hand, are typical Africans born and educated in a Yoruba tradition. It is by analyzing each character's exercise of power in the name of modernization and tradition, the language they use to exchange experiences that we have come to see a kind of patriarchal ideology behind the play. Male characters concentrate the power and dominate the public sphere while females are confined within the private space like home, marriage, tradition etc. In fact, Soyinka designs his characters in *The Lion and the Jewel* through a direct confrontation between two cultures.

Soyinka makes them feel, think, act, and express some views which are pertained to his own idiolect and his vision of the African post-colonial society. But in the background of this clash of cultures lies what can be seen as an ideological positioning towards genders' representation. In *The Lion and the Jewel*, we see that all characters are of Yoruba origin, that the setting, Ilujinle, is a village in Ibadan Nigeria that Soyinka is from Yoruba ethnic group. Also, actions, feelings, utterances of the characters are organized to describe womenfolk as it is in Yoruba traditions. Therefore, we can consider it as a recount of womenfolk in Yoruba tradition: A male-dominated power, then a patriarchy ideology. However, the play should not be denied the merit to have posed the question of women's representation in Yoruba/African societies.

It has been proved that men are represented as dominators of the society but the women are shown as the goals and the beneficiaries of male's actions. Both men and women use mental processes, yet women resort to use it more than men. This can lead to qualify women as emotional beings. The patriarchal assertiveness indicates that men always view women as an object that they must possess at all cost like the jewel. How they describe others are closely linked to how they describe themselves: intelligent, powerful, and self-confident. While male characters are preoccupied with how they are, female characters insist on what they look like in their use of attributes. Further, analyzed issues indicate a construction of an ideology laden power in social institutions such as family, marriage, chieftaincy in which male are the dominators and women the dominated.

Tradition, custom and ritual will survive in the modern world provided that they are being used to advance the people, a process that can happen through their writings. Hence, Soyinka used this paradigm in his works to remind the African

community that if we want the world to know about our heritage, history and culture, we must first admire and practice it so we can proudly represent our heritage, history and culture to the world. Forthrightly, Soyinka was among those writers, who used Western forms and language in order to dramatize and introduce Yoruba and African heritage to the West. Soyinka therefore tried to free the art and culture of his people from the Eurocentric paradigm by writing about the tradition, chiefdom and beliefs of African people, as he writes about several deities of the Yoruba including Ogun, well-known among African deities because of its rebellious spirit. Also, he uses folklore in a modern way to warn his people about the dangers of turning to modernity, especially the youth who are more charmed by the shining of the Western world.

By all the description of traditions and hindrances to modernism, and the portrayal of Lakunle as hallowmodernist, the playwright leads the reader to the assumption that he does not support the tradition or modernity instead he merely records and pictures the tradition and people's life in the African society. But a deep reading of the play clearly depicts that Soyinka's support to indigenous tradition. In last part of the play, Sidi rejects the modernism through act of handing over the magazine to Lakunle and the rejection of western way of life is mentioned by rejecting Lakunle. This seems to be the issue of Baroka's triumph, i.e. triumph of tradition. The play is very mirthful to read, and makes the reader to enjoy the play more without any other difficult departure of philosophies and ideologies. Ultimately, the play is on the surface plane portraying the tribal life and its confrontation with the culture of the West. And playwright reiterates upon the idea that the West has not made any deep impact on African culture and the tradition in the society is typical with all its merits and demerits. The traditional practices have their own values though these are full of patriarchal ideologies.

On the whole, what emerged 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 determined 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 of Wole Soyinka's philosophy, which recognizes the postcolonial need for nativization, and rediscovery of cultural past, glory, grandeur and heritage though it always subjugated the women. This is how, the play makes an attempt at establishing Africanness relegating and resisting Eurocentric hegemonic power, culture and values, which remained dominating upon the females forever. Though the women became successful to resist the Western hegemonic power, as Sidi rejects Lakunle, they have failed to resist the patriarchal ideology in Wole Soyinka's play *The Lion and the Jewel*.

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