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Adab Al-Rafidayn Journal

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Editor-in-chief

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*A Postcolonial Reading of Wole Soyinka's The
Lion and the Jewel*

*Sanaa Lazim Al Gharib **

*Talal Saleh Al Dhiab **

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The old must flow into the new.

—Wole Soyinka, *The Lion and the Jewel*

Abstract

The study attempts to apply Postcolonialism on Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* (1959). It aims to find out the reason behind how and why the characters behaved in Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*, from a Postcolonial perspective. The study depends on the main concepts of the postcolonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak. It focuses on the clash of generations in the play, depicting a struggle between the new generation represented by Lakunle, and the old generation represented by Baroka. It depicts Lakunle as a harmless false leader of modernism, touching upon the themes of modernity vs. traditions, and education vs. ignorance.

Keywords: Binary Oppositions, The Occident, The Other, Stereotypes.

Analysis

Postcolonial Nigerian governments formed a great disappointment to their people, characterized by dictatorships. The homeland became a big prison, paving the way for new African thinkers and writers to shed light on social, economic, cultural, and political dilemmas of Nigeria specifically, and the black continent generally. Literature in postcolonial Africa is an expression of the dreams and hopes that were frustrated by the failure of the African regimes after independence. It is used as a tool of change to preach political and social issues. Many of the writers have been exiled,

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prisoned, tortured, and assassinated. Those writers used many literary forms to deliver their message. In "Literature in Postcolonial Africa, Repression, Resistance, and Reconfiguration", Biodun Jeyifo states:

Certainly, the politics of literary expression in Africa includes forms like protest, agitprop, satirical sketches in street theater performances, prison notes and journals (often smuggled out while the writer is still incarcerated), pamphlets and manifestoes, all of which have been used to defy post-independence African dictatorial regimes. (353)

In other words, identity politics¹, segregation, religious tyranny, and frustration are but few results of the colonization that followed WWII. Political regimes in the Middle East and Africa, which replaced the colonial governments were characterized by dictatorial practices. Such issues were strongly reflected in African literature; especially in the works of Wole Soyinka² who began to portray postcolonial Africa as a way of protest against tyranny and a call for change. Many talked about the effects of colonialism around the globe. In this study, the main concern is the British colonies in Africa, more specifically in Nigeria.

¹ Identity politics refers to "politics in which groups of people having a particular racial, religious, ethnic, social, or cultural identity tend to promote their own specific interests or concerns without regard to the interests or concerns of any larger political group". In the second half of the 20th century, identity politics became a significant modern term which aims to liberate the oppressed people both psychologically and politically, including blacks, women, American Indians, etc. (Patterson).

² Soyinka (1934-) is a Nigerian playwright, poet, novelist, and political activist. He began his literary career in a traditional Nigerian city, called Abeokuta, where he was born. Soyinka completed his studies in English literature at the University of Leeds in 1957. Thus, he gained British citizenship. Soyinka is the first African writer who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1986 (Gibbs 1-3).

One of the first influential plays, *The Lion and the Jewel* introduced Soyinka to the map of world literature. The play was written in Britain and was first performed in Nigeria in 1959 and published in 1962. *The Lion and the Jewel* is a triangular love comedy that tells a story of the main three characters Sidi, the village belle, Lakunle, a school teacher, and Baroka, the Bale of Ilujinle. The events of *The Lion and the Jewel* take place in the fictional village, Ilujinle (Gibbs 45).

The settings of the play have a significant role which Soyinka is highly aware of using it as his main tool to deliver his message. In his book, *Modern Dramatists, Wole Soyinka* (1986), James Gibbs takes the opening lines of the stage direction to analyze the importance of the setting. It starts with “*A clearing on the edge of the market, dominated by an immense odan tree. It is the village centre. The wall of the bush school flanks the stage on the right...*” (Soyinka 3). Gibbs argues that the market represents the core of the society due to its diversity. Therefore, the audience will be in front of a panoramic portrait of an African traditional village. The school is the tool of progress in which the village is going to be changed. The primary school is the field of creating the new generation that Lakunle seeks. At last, the odan tree is an old African tree, known by its big size and shadow. It symbolizes the past and the shadow of traditions. In other words, it represents the traditional authority in which the village was built around. Thus, it is a gathering figure (46-47). The play is divided into three parts, including morning, noon, and night. Each part of them represents an act in the play. In this way, the unity of time is achieved.

The school teacher, Lakunle, is a man who preaches change and progress; he hopes to transform the villagers into a new way of life. *The Lion and the Jewel* starts with Lakunle taking the pail from his beloved, Sidi. The first lines of the play show his role of transforming women into a new way of life when he asked Sidi to stop carrying heavy things as spiders. In other words, women should not do such works:

LAKUNLE: No. I have told you not to carry loads
On your head. But you are as stubborn
As an illiterate goat. It is bad for the spine.
And it shortens your neck, so that very soon

You will have no neck at all. Do you wish to look
Squashed like my pupils' drawings? (Soyinka 4)

In postcolonial studies, "illiterate" is taken under the concept of stereotypes. Thus, the Occident views the Orient through negative images. These images are shaped through a systematic process through ages as stated by Edward Said (Bressler 240). In this case, Lakunle is unaware of adapting another identity. Though Lakunle states that he loves Sidi in all states, he believes that carrying loads will affect her beauty, leading Sidi to question his previous words, as shown in the play:

SIDI: Why should that worry me? Haven't you sworn
That my looks do not affect your love? (Soyinka 4)

The previous lines indicate that Lakunle has already talked with Sidi before the actions of the play had taken place. Soyinka tries to introduce Lakunle to the audience as a man who insists on his new thoughts and ideas. In other words, spectators understand this character through his speeches as a person who has an aim and awareness of when he states, "Yes, and I will stand by every word I spoke" (4). Remarkably, Lakunle's concept of love has a European origin.

Postcolonialism resists such deeds which could be taken under the Eurocentric influence in which the colonized believes in the superiority of the West and the inferiority of the Other. Lakunle expresses his romantic emotions through the form of "courtly love", without paying attention to the African traditions which do not allow him to talk directly to his beloved. Doing this, Lakunle neglects his native heritage by his "mechanical" use of the Western love traditions (Msiska, *Postcolonial* 50), as described:

LAKUNLE: Sidi, my love will open your mind
Like the chaste leaf in the morning, when
The sun first touches it. (Soyinka 7)

Moreover, Soyinka describes Sidi as "*A true village belle. She balances the pail on her head with accustomed ease. Around her is wrapped the familiar broad cloth which is folded just above her breasts, leaving the shoulders bare*" (3). Lakunle asked Sidi to wear humbler clothes than what she does "You could wear something. Most modest women do. But you, no" (4). Also, he

asked Sidi to put red lipsticks, wear High-heeled shoes, and release her hair. She should be like a girl in “a magazine photo” (9). He directly told her to “Be a modern wife” to attend the “night clubs at Ibadan” but Sidi rejected this new way of life when she answered “No, don’t! I tell you I dislike”. Rejecting such transformation is an expression of her respect for her African identity and traditions that will be confirmed at the end of the play when Sidi is not going to marry the modern school teacher. She argues that changing the way of life and the heritage is “madness”, leading to corrupt people. Sidi told him that “You and your talk. You’ll ruin your pupils too” (10). Before that time, Lakunle prepares himself to deal with such attack as the following:

LAKUNLE: A prophet has an honour except
 In his own home. Wise men have been called mad
 Before me and after, many more shall be
 So abused... (6)

As always, prophets and even philosophers are subject to abusive language. Lakunle depends on such ideas to reply to Sidi when she described him as “mad” (6). He goes far in comparing himself with Jesus Christ in being abused; he is ready to face Martyrdom if this will lead his fellow men to progress and shift their ideas to modernity. The playwright tries to shed the light on the fact which is that the process of development in the “secular” colonial period was masked by religious values. Also, Soyinka aims to present the school teacher with some knowledge of Christianity (Msiska, *Postcolonial* 49-50).

Sadiku, the other female character in *The Lion and the Jewel*, wears traditional clothes and a shawl over her head (Soyinka 19), which is an old Yoruba dress:

In precolonial times, Yoruba females had fewer options in dress than males. Their dress comprised mainly of *Iro* (a wraparound cloth), *Buba* (a blouse), *Gele* (head-tie/scarf), and *Yeri* (earrings) or *Tobi* (skirt). The unmarried female could use two *Iro*, a bigger and a smaller one. The bigger one was wrapped tightly around the waist, while the smaller was wrapped tightly above the breasts. In additions to these was *Ipele* or *Iborun*, a

shawl, which was either wrapped around the neck and shoulder or used to cover the head. (Oyeniya 14)

Known as "*Pipa Aso ni Kaja*" or "*Kaja*", Yoruba's rural male clothes consist of a simple cloth that is put around the body and under the arm. *Kaja* could be worn by men, though it is mainly used by married men. They also wear "gowns", "vests" and wide "trousers". The single males may wear the same thing, but in a different "style". Finally, the hat is a basic element in traditional Yoruba clothes (Oyeniya 14). In his stage directions, Wole Soyinka gives a detailed description of the school teacher, Lakunle who looks like the Occident. This image suits the postcolonial term "mimicry" which means the colonized try to imitate the colonizers, leading to Homi Bhabha's idea of "in-between". In other words, it is a matter of performance in which the Other seeks acceptance of the colonizers which means that there is no identity. It also reflects that the colonized people feel a kind of humiliation with regard to their traditions because they are already shaped as "inferior" due to the impact of the colonial subjects (Tyson 421). Thus, Lakunle is a typical sample of such claim as shown in the following words;

He is dressed in an old-style English suit, threadbare but not ragged, clean but not ironed, obviously a size or two too small. His tie is done in a very small knot, disappearing beneath a shiny black waistcoat. He wears twenty-inch-bottom trousers, and blanco-white tennis shoes. (Soyinka 3)

One may conclude that Lakunle revolted against both the traditional Yoruba female by asking Sidi to change her look, and male clothes by wearing clothes according to the English style. Sidi is not ready yet to understand these new perspectives, showing her first protest when Lakunle attacked the villagers and their customs by describing them as "race of savages" (5). In Postcolonialism, resistance is the main concept used by Frantz Fanon to defeat the western negative impacts and to support the national and traditional identity (Habib 741-42). Thus, Lakunle's heavy attack on traditions may stand for the European "stereotypes" of the "Other". According to these "stereotypes", the west negatively represents the "Other". This concept was used by Edward Said and adopted by Homi

Bhabha. Said refuses the Western stereotypes because they are subjective. Said suggests a solution that is based on objectivity. It focuses on that each culture is responsible for presenting itself, whether politically, socially, etc. (Bressler 240). Unconsciously, cultural colonization depicts the identity of the Other negatively. Also, Lakunle thinks that Sidi's refusal is natural due to being envious, "as a woman, you have a smaller brain" as he argues; "The scientists have proved it. It's in my books", trying to avoid useless discussions with her (Soyinka 5-6). This typical traditional village girl is under a direct influence of the school teacher who read western books that attacked the capability of women to think, especially of the Victorian era (Gilmore 124).

The term "ideology" is responsible to promote the racist idea of the superiority of the Occident and the inferiority of the Orient. Such ideology is handled by regimes which could be represented by the colonial power to control people unconsciously. Marxists resist such ideologies and try to make the repressed conscious of them. In fact, Marxism believes that the repressive ideology is the most mature and dangerous form of ideologies which has never been known as an ideology by the Other but it became the normal way of thinking and viewing life for them. Similar to lower class, the colonized is repressed by one ideology that seeks keeping power of the oppressor or "to keep us subservient to the ruling power system" (Tyson 57). In other words, the Other forms a new identity unconsciously, as happened with Lakunle.

Lakunle's ideas about women were both conservative and revolutionary. He was influenced by the shallow reading of western writings which contained the discrimination based on the physical difference between men and women which was common in the 19th century. Thus, Lakunle is unaware of constructing a new identity which was based on the colonial ideology as explained above. Also, the new identity is paradoxical in which Lakunle believes in the superiority of man and at the same time he seeks equality of both sexes. Lakunle's belief in the inferiority of women due to their mental capacity opposes the principle of gender equality. In this case, mimicry leads Lakunle to be impregnated with Homi Bhabha's concept of "ambivalence of colonial authority" (Msiska,

Postcolonial 47-49); "Sidi, I seek a friend in need. An equal partner in my race" (Soyinka 9).

Lakunle concludes that women are "the weaker sex"(6) due to these scientific studies. In this sense, the image of racism which was based on gender is suitable to Fanon's concept of "binary system" and developed by Edward Said in which character must resist it. Binary oppositions take various forms, including white vs. black, day vs. night, ignorant vs. educated, female vs. male, etc. (Bressler 240).

The play carries significant female images and presents them to the world through Soyinka's smart understanding of his native Yoruba customs in English. The old character, Sadiku will be Soyinka's mouth piece in explaining the theme of polygamy, and the role of the first wife of the bale, to the audience. The young character, Sidi keeps traditions, whether in clothes, marriage, way of speaking, etc. Supporting this point of view, Sidi refused to marry Lakunle without giving a full dowry:

SIDI: I've told you, and I say it again

I shall marry you today, next week

Or any day you name.

But my bride-price must be paid. (Soyinka 8)

According to Yoruba traditions, it is a parental responsibility to choose a wife for their child without taking into consideration the importance of love. The bride receives her dowry from the groom as a law. Then, the mother of the bride prepares all of the needs of her daughter for marriage. Divided fairly, the brothers and sisters of the bride take what's left from the dowry to make up their loss. By paying the money, the man gets some "rights to the children born to the wife, and sole sexual access" (Drewal 187). Lakunle tried to break these traditions in both asking Sidi's hand directly and refusing to pay the bride-price or the dowry. He asked her hand when she demanded to let her go by stating "Not till you swear to marry me" (Soyinka 7). So, their families did not arrange the marriage, which was a new condition. Moreover, Lakunle states that the bride-price has distorted the image of his society "heritage" to the world. He attacks the bride-price which fits the concept of "stereotypes" in Post-colonialism, as shown in the play:

LAKUNLE: A savage custom, barbaric, out-dated,
Rejected, denounced, accursed, degrading,
Humiliating, unspeakable, redundant.
Retrogressive, remarkable, unpalatable. (8)

Sidi rejects the idea of marriage without paying a full bride-price in order to protect her reputation as a virgin girl. If this happens “they will say I was no virgin” (8), says Sidi. According to Yoruba marriage traditions, virginity is a source of pride in which the family of the bride will avoid any shame. The wedding night is fearful because it decides whether the woman will be a wife or shall go back to her family with the shame. Moreover, when the woman loses her virginity, the family is going to be exiled out of the village. With the colonial impact of education and religion, virginity is no more valued. Men and women are allowed to choose each other without paying attention to their families. Virginity becomes a secondary issue (Falola and Oyeniyi 196). In this case, Sidi’s awareness of the importance of her virginity supports Fanon’s concept of resistance in postcolonial societies.

Lakunle stresses his plan to change the villagers’ life into a modern one in no more than two years. He believes that he can send his message to the people. It is a matter of his responsibility as an educated man to enlighten the ignorant. In Postcolonialism, this responsibility echoes Rudyard Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden” (Habib 738) which is a cause to colonize the “other”. Similar to the colonial idea of the superiority of the west, Lakunle’s behavior represents such tendency. Lakunle supports his speeches with English proverbs. He states that “Charity, they say, begins at home” (Soyinka 6). He starts with himself by seeking a romantic love story and breaking the traditions. He does not search for a woman who behaves like a traditional girl in cooking, carrying loads, and even “Child-bearing”. He applies Bhabha’s philosophy of “mimicry” which is a state that the colonized people try to look like the colonizers (Tyson 421), scrupulously through explaining some new traditions like the way of sitting, eating, walking, and clothing, as explained below.

In his book, *Orature and Yoruba Riddles* (2015), Akintunde Akinyemi mentions that Yoruba people used to eat with bare hands. In other words, they eat with fingers (86). In brief, Lakunle was

highly influenced by the life in Lagos when he states that he wants to walk with Sidi together on the roads, "Just like the Lagos couples I have seen" (Soyinka 9) which means that he breaks the conservative traditions of the village. It is worth mentioning that Lagos was under a heavy impact of colonial power; the city of Lagos was known for its modernity and urban life (Jonsson, et al 245). To leave home, whether physically or spiritually, characters will witness Homi Bhabha's concept of double consciousness in which characters wander to which culture they belong, leading to a homelessness feeling (Bressler 241). Lakunle thinks that Sidi is "Ignorant girl" (Soyinka 9). She is unable to get his ideas which are the following:

LAKUNLE: Together we shall sit at table

__Not on the floor __and eat,
Not with fingers, but with knives
And forks, and breakable plates
Like civilized beings. (9)

The significance of the above lines indicates that Lakunle satirizes the native traditions of the way of eating. He already adopted the colonial ideology which focuses on the superiority of the Occident and the inferiority of the Orient. The first is civilized while the other is barbaric which is based on the Western stereotypes. Such vision should be replaced by Eastern representations to ensure justice as suggested by Edward Said. In Postcolonialism, such case is tackled by Frantz Fanon, who believes that the colonizers and the colonized have "psychic warping". Such kind of psychological distortion is the main cause for "a collapse of the ego" which means accepting commingling foreign cultures with native traditions which leads to the loss of one's identity (Bressler 239). Lakunle adds indirectly that Yoruba women used to eat food waste which is a negative image in their heritage as he thinks. He does not agree with these traditional images by stating that "No wife of mine, no lawful wedded wife, shall eat the leavings off my plate" (9) because it is an "uncivilized" (10) image of his people which signifies that there is a change in his identity due to foreign impact on his character. And then he imitates the west even in the way of kissing. Lakunle tries to kiss Sidi but she refuses because it is

strange and unhealthy. He criticizes her and states that it is a modern way of kiss, as explained in the following lines:

LAKUNLE: ...

Uncivilized and primitive—bush girl!

I kissed you as all educated men—

And Christians—kiss their wives.

It is the way of civilized romance. (10)

The lines present Christianity as the source of civilization and education or they all are tied together in which Christianity at the top of the pyramid (Msiska, *Wole Soyinka* 16). In addition to that, Lakunle attacks polygamy when he asserts that “No man shall take more wives than one” (Soyinka 34). Polygamy was first introduced in *The Lion and the Jewel* by Sadiku when she asked Sidi’s hand for her husband; “Baroka wants you for a wife” (19). Here, Wole Soyinka presents a historical Yoruba heritage to the spectators. Polygamy was a common practice in Yoruba due to the need for the workforce. As an economic unity, members of the family work together to make living, especially in farms (Hudolin 90).

The images of progress in colonial Nigeria are taken seriously in *The Lion and the Jewel*. Lagos was the typical modern city for Lakunle due to the decline of some Yoruba traditions. New tools began to invade this country, beginning with the magazine. It was a significant instrument for the villagers to show their heritage to others which were a revolutionary step, as stated “The images? He brought them all. There was hardly any part of the village which does not show in the book” (Soyinka 11). The magazine has specific roles in the play. First, it challenges the Bale’s status in the village by putting Sidi’s image on the cover page, as shown in the following lines:

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. On the cover of the book in an image of you from here [*touches the top of her head.*] to here [*her stomach*]. (11)

Whereas, the photo of Baroka was small and in an unspecific corner in the magazine, the villagers believe that it is better to be removed than putting it in an unsuitable place, "His image is in a

little corner somewhere in the book, and even that corner he shares with one of the village latrines" (12). Second, the magazine allows the Bale to see Sidi and this helps developing the theme. Third, the magazine represents the colonial influence on Nigeria as a new tool. Notably, a photographer visited the village before the events of the play take place. Then, he came back with his pictures in the magazine (Uno 95). In *The Lion and the Jewel*, the photographer is described as "the stranger" (Soyinka 11). Sidi is used to compare Lakunle with this "stranger", fitting the postcolonial term "mimicry", as stated in the next quotation:

SIDI: You are dressed like him
You look like him
You speak his tongue
You think like him (14)

One may conclude that the stranger is an English photographer due to the various surface similarities between him and Lakunle in the way of clothing, appearance, speaking, and thinking. The stranger represents the West or the colonizers who obviously never paid any attention to the status of the tribal chief as happened with the Bale's photo or even in the party, "*The stranger springs up every second to take photographs of the party, but most of the time his attention is fixed on Sidi dancing with abandon*" (17). The bale was upset by comparing his photo with Sidi's one, leading him to throw the magazine away (27).

In his book, *Modern Drama and Rhetoric of Theatre* (1992), W. B. Worthen states that the playwright provides the audience with another modern machine which is the stranger's camera. It reflects the inevitable transformation of Ilujinle toward modernism. However, it should be noted that the stranger and his tools never appeared on the stage. They were presented through the play within a play in a short party. Lakunle became the stranger and four girls performed the role of his car. In this scene, there is no real camera, flashing, and capturing photos, but there is an act of such things. The camera has a significant indication which is that it records the Occidental image in Africa. In other words, the real acting scene focuses on the western tools in which the spectators do not stand a chance to see the real Africa, as stated "Soyinka's photographer,

and the instruments of the Western representation he embodies—photography, comedy, theater—can never really find Africa in the lens” (202). So, the play within a play introduces other modern device, the car. As a symbol of modernity, Lakunle is proud of being the driver and “*he does a realistic miming*” (Soyinka 14). Lakunle believes that the village will witness a real change soon:

LAKUNLE: A motor road will pass this spot
And bring the city ways to us.

...

The ruler shall ride cars, not horses
Or a bicycle at the very least. (34)

Furthermore, Lakunle believes that the Bale is the first obstacle in front of any kind of development. In other words, the old generation and traditions reject what is new. The school teacher told Sidi that Baroka is “a die-hard rogue sworn against our progress” (23). He also states that the Bale ruined the plan of building a railway in the village which is negative behavior. Soyinka sheds the light on this crucial point of transformation and resistance in the late colonial period. Therefore, Lakunle adds that “Did you never hear of how he foiled the Public Works attempt to build the railway through Ilujinle” (23). In his book, *Wole Soyinka : A Ridiculous Dramatist* (2016), Sachin Dete argues that Lakunle's concept of progress is limited. It lacks the deep meaning of development which could be shallow progress. Dete adds that developing the railways or car streets is positive but talking about secondary things is superficial, such as changing the tools of cooking, clothing, walking, attending night clubs, etc. Moreover, Baroka does not reject the idea of progress but he refuses it as an unknown youth step, leading the society to negative consequences (36). Dete supports his claim by the following quotation:

BAROKA: I do not hate progress, only its nature
Which makes all roofs and faces look the same.
And the wish of one old man is
That here and there (Soyinka 47)

Baroka stands for the voice of the playwright whose wisdom is required in the world of chaos. He suggests a wise solution which is that people should learn from each other. There is no shame when people understand each other, teaching the true values, and one

completes the other by focusing on upholding the principles of the old generations. Even, Baroka is ready to get knowledge from the school teacher as stated in the play. Also, he believes that children are a source of wisdom (36), as mentioned in the following lines:

BAROKA: The proof of wisdom is the wish to learn
Even from children. And the haste of youth
Must learn its temper from the gloss
Of ancient leather, from a strength
Knit close along the grain. The school teacher
And I, must learn one from the other. (48-49)

The Bale, Baroka shows a readiness to use the printing press, which is a modern machine. He has two stated goals in *The Lion and the Jewel*: first, he wants to woo Sidi by printing stamps; “Tens of thousands of these dainty prints ... reaching out toward the sun” (46). Second, showing Ilujinle to the world is another aim, “We shall begin by cutting stamps for own village alone. As the schoolmaster himself would say—charity begins at home” (47) No effort must be spread to help the village is the slogan of Baroka. Therefore, people may use useful inventions for the sake of their home, but in *Wole Soyinka : A Ridiculous Dramatist*, Sachin Dete attacks such duality in which the Bale criticizes some inventions while using others. Wole Soyinka creates this irony through the paradoxical character of Baroka to satirize the same condition in the colonial period (38).

While in *Postcolonial Identity in Wole Soyinka* (2007), M. H. Msiska believes that neither modernity nor traditions are depicted through the character of the Bale. There is a needed mixture between them to face the challenges in the postcolonial period. Baroka depends on both tradition and modernity to gain the jewel of Ilujinle, Sidi. Msiska applies the postcolonial concept of “*instrumentalist hybridity*” to this process in which things are gathered to serve personal interest. In this case, people could be tailored to new circumstances which is a solution to face the “negative hybridity” represented by Lakunle (55-57). The conflict between these two forces solves the progress of postcolonial Nigeria, as a form of “*cultural symbolic arbitrary*” (46). In other words, Baroka is a Machiavellian character who uses foxy devices

to achieve his self-desires. He used to be called the fox due to his cunning strategies to get Sidi. The first description of Baroka foreshadows that the Bale is a manipulative and tricky character, as described by Sidi in the following line “the fox of the undergrowth” (Soyinka 12). Also, when Baroka sent his senior wife to ask for Sidi’s hand, Lakunle attacks him from being purely mercenary and using his cunning tools:

LAKUNLE: [*bounds forward, dropping the wood.*]:

What! The greedy dog!

Insatiate camel of a foolish, doting race;

Is he at his tricks again? (19)

Lakunle tries to warn Sidi of the Bale’s cheating plans, but Sidi states that she is aware of them when she replied “You’ll make no prey of Sidi with your wooing tongue” (20). Sidi has added that the Bale used to set a trap for girls through his “little suppers”, in which they became victims of his selfish desire. Therefore, the school teacher mentions that it is the reason behind calling him the “Fox” and “die-hard rogue” (23). Sadiku’s first attempt to convince Sidi is not accomplished. The senior wife told her husband that Sidi refused him due to his old age. She adds that this new challenge comes as a result of the magazine (26). This is a result of the progress which led Sidi to think that she is more important than the Bale; “I am greater than the fox”, referring to the location of her photo (12). It is resistance and a kind of revolution against the Bale’s will. After describing him of being “too old”, “*Baroka ... comes up with a copy of the magazine. Opens it and begins to study the pictures*” (27). The last quotation supports Sadiku’s claim that the magazine came with new concepts. Hence, the Bale was twice insulted by his picture location and the refusal of Sidi to be his wife.

Seeking rehabilitation, Baroka makes use of his wife’s bad habit of babbling; the plan is based on telling Sadiku that he is impotent to put an end to the idea of marriage. The Bale used Sidi’s words of being “too old” to serve his interest. He did not wait too much to start his new strategy to woo Sidi as indicated in the following lines; “The time has come when I can fool myself no more. I am no man, Sadiku. My manhood ended near a week ago”(27-28). Sadiku pretends to be sad and starts moaning. She

immediately goes to the village center where she met Sidi and Lakunle.

The secret is no more a secret when Sadiku told both of them one by one. Sidi believes that it is a good chance to “mock” the Bale. She pretends to apologize because she insulted him to mock the Bale by asking him to give her a chance to think of the proposal of marriage while she thinks that he ended the idea of marriage due to his new condition. Sadiku asks Sidi to swear that she will not tell him that she deceived him by telling the secret. Moreover, she advised Sidi to be aware of the “fox’s cunning” (32). Lakunle warns Sidi never to go to the palace of Baroka because “he would beat a helpless woman if he could...” (33). Sidi pays no attention to these words and goes directly to the palace. Helplessly, the school teacher directs his speech to Sadiku, as stated; “Could you not keep a secret? Must every word leak out of you...?” (33). Trying to imitate the West, Post-colonialism puts these actions under Spivak’s philosophy of “white men are saving brown women from brown men” (Spivak 92).

In the palace, Sidi asks forgiveness for her answer. Baroka pretends that he knows nothing about the answer as explained “But up till now Sadiku has brought no reply” (Soyinka 37). By the ending of the supper, the Bale satisfied his desire through his cunning words. In *Modern Dramatists: Wole Soyinka*, James Gibbs argues that the “seduction scene” (53) is the core of the *Lion and the Jewel*. Also, he believes that Baroka is the main character who delivers the message of the playwright. Gibbs concludes that Baroka’s speech “the old must flow into the new” is applied in this scene (53). In other words, traditions must go with modernity together to establish a new healthy condition in postcolonial Nigeria.

Wole Soyinka applies Georg W.F. Hegel’s³ concept of gathering the opposing things in *The Lion and the Jewel*. According

³ Georg W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) is a German philosopher who was influenced by the French revolution. His ideas focus on defeating the feudal system. Other

to Hegel, when a thesis is followed by an antithesis leads to a new form, called the synthesis to create "a new social order" (Bressler 193). Thus, Yoruba traditions stand for the thesis, Western values represent the antithesis. The synthesis will be formulated in the audience's mind in which they judge and conclude through their own perspectives. In this way, reader-response theory plays a key role in such analysis. The psychiatric critic, Norman Holland⁴ thinks that the reader's own experience shapes his way of understanding the text. The reader's vision of the text portrays the psychological tendency of the reader himself. Thus, such reading is subjective. In fact, each reader understands the text in a different way from the other depending on his daily life. Holland concludes that "The immediate goal of interpretation, like the immediate psychological goal of our daily lives, is to fulfill our psychological needs and desires" (Tyson 182-83). In this case, the Western reader views the play unlike the Eastern due to their cultural differences. One may stand with modernity while the other may fight for traditions to revive his identity.

After that, Sidi returns to the village center and tells Lakunle and Sadiku that it is a deceitful plan, "It was a trick. He knew Sadiku would not keep it to herself" (Soyinka 53). So, women shall hear the rumor and come to mock the Bale, as Sidi did. Thus, Lakunle thinks that it is a suitable time to achieve his first principle which is that never to pay the bride-price, as he declares "That we forget the bride-price totally/ Since you no longer can be called a maid"(54). He also supports his situation by a western proverb which says that "Man takes the fallen woman by the hand" (55). Sidi is not ready to touch another man out of her chastity and admiring the Bale strength. Even, she told Lakunle that Baroka at the age of sixty is too strong "but you at sixty, you'll be ten years

modern western thinkers could not avoid his philosophy due to its radical concepts and its social concerns (Habib 382).

⁴ Norman Holland (1927-2017) is an American critic who involves in Psychoanalysis, focusing on the reader's behavior. He plays an important role in developing reader-response theory, as well (Norman N. Holland).

dead! In fact, you will not survive your will not survive you honeymoon... Come to my wedding if you will... If not..." (57). One may conclude that the strange ideas of the school teacher will vanish soon. Sidi and a crowd end the play with a Yoruba song and dance:

SIDI: Tolani Tolani
T'emi ni T'emi ni
Sun mo mi, we mo mi
Sun mo mi, fa mo mi
Yarabi lo m'eyi t'o le d'omo.⁵ (58)

The significance of these lines lies in both the Yoruba language and its meaning. As a language, Yoruba stands for African identity and traditions. While the meaning may represent various things, such as the continuity of Baroka's thoughts, and the child could be a symbol of Nigerian independence. Also, the destiny of Sidi summarizes the condition of women in postcolonial Nigeria in which they are fated. Women's condition is typical for Gayatri Spivak's idea which says that the subaltern cannot speak (Spivak 104). When Sidi refused to marry the Bale due to his old age, she became a victim of his tricks. Finally, she surrenders to her fate and agrees to be his wife, whereas, the school teacher imitates the West negatively.

The school teacher is a shallow representative of the western values. His principles are challenged when he wished to live the life of the Bale "Ah, I sometimes wish I led his kind of life" (Soyinka 25). He lost his identity by imitating the colonizers in which he belongs neither to Yoruba traditions nor to western values. Thus, Homi Bhabha's use of double consciousness could be suitable in this situation.

Conclusion

It is important for the reader of Soyinka's plays to understand the 'how' and 'why' that is related to the character's behavior.

⁵ Wole Soyinka translates the quotation as "She belongs to me, belongs to me/ come close to me, wrap yourself around me/ Only God knows which moment makes the child" (58).

Some of the characters share the same attitudes while others are different. Soyinka presents a traditional leadership about to collapse, represented by the bale. The bale's position is challenged by the photographer, Lakunle, and Sidi. The photographer focused on Sidi without taking into consideration the status of a bale. Lakunle attacks the bale many times, accusing him of old fashioned. Sidi refused to marry the bale at the beginning, which is considered an insult. These actions indicate the end of the traditional authority in postcolonial Africa as a result of colonization.

The photographer could represent the colonizer's influence in changing Sidi's self-importance by putting her photo on the covering page and neglecting the bale's. Lakunle mimics the West in the way of clothing, speaking, eating, and walking. His character is paradoxical, which suits the concept ambivalence of colonial power. Similar to the colonizers who try to civilize and educate the Other while they believe in the superiority of the white race, Lakunle seeks equality of both sexes while he attacks the capacity of woman. He adopted the shallow phase of Western identity. In this case, Lakunle suffers from the collapse of the ego, which leads to loss of identity.

As a shallow representation of the Occident, Lakunle tries to protect Sidi from the bale which could stand for Gayatri Spivak's idea of white men are saving brown women from brown men. Unconsciously, Lakunle adopts the Western stereotypes that view the Other as savage and barbaric. To conclude, Lakunle tries to promote his own agenda without paying attention to the Other, which could be taken under the concept of identity politics. While, the playwright tries to suggest a solution that is based on mixing tradition and modernity to face the postcolonial challenges of life.

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قراءة من مفهوم ما بعد الاستعمار لمسرحية الأسد والجمهرة للكاتب وول سوينكا

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المستخلص

يُعدُّ وول سوينكا (١٩٣٤-) أحد أبرز الكتّاب الأفارقة المعاصرين لذي حصل على جائزة نوبل للأدب عام ١٩٨٦ إذ عكس مسرحه القضايا الإفريقية ومشكلة ضياع الهوية في عهد ما بعد الاستعمار في نيجيريا. تحاول كتاباته إحياء تلك الهوية من خلال زيادة الوعي الثقافي ومحاربة سياسة الهوية التي اعتمدها الأنظمة الدكتاتورية فضلاً عن المستعمر، وتناقشت الدراسة المسرحية الكوميديّة، الأسد والجمهرة (١٩٥٩)، التي تركز على صراع الجيل الجديد متمثلاً بالمعلم لاكونل الذي يقفُّ الغرب بكل ما هو سطحي مقارنة مع الجيل القديم متمثلاً بعمدة القرية باروكا للفوز بالفتاة سدي التي تعدُّ جمهرة القرية. واعتمدت الدراسة على نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار لتحليل النص، مطبقة أهم مفاهيم نقاد تلك النظرية.