

Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*: An Allegory of Imperial Resistance

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Abstract

Since the composition of the drama *The Lion and the Jewel* in 1959 by Wole Soyinka, critics have been intrigued regarding its contribution to postcolonial and anglophone African literature but the objective of this article is to illustrate the drama as an allegory of imperial resistance with various theoretical approaches. The study delves into exploring how a counter-discourse is created against the discourse of racism and dominance of the imperialist. The paper deals with the unprecedented forms of psychological resistance from the colonized people. It also foregrounds an “ideological resistance” in the drama against Eurocentric politico-cultural hegemonizing and hybridizing effort. Thus, the paper argues that the drama conveys the imperial resistance through counter-discourse, psychoanalytical approach, and ideological resistance through syncreticism, and consequently, the drama has been a metaphor for all “marginalized voices” in the postcolonial world.

Keywords: allegory, imperial resistance, counter-discourse, ideological, hybridity

Colonial discourse analysis, theory, and criticism in postcolonial approach have increasingly elucidated that literature, criticism, and theory come from particular discourses which cannot be considered in any way impartial. Primarily, postcolonial reading advocates that colonialism and imperialism were not only about the physical suppression of *other* people but also engaged a more deceptive kind of discourse which is discursive in texts. As a postcolonial playwright Wole Soyinka tries to not only supersede this colonial discourse but also to expose the strategies engaged in the construct of “other cultures” as “objects” of knowledge for imperial hegemony. That is why he is considered a postcolonial writer “writing back” to the imperial “centre.” He asserts Nigerian nationalism proclaiming it central and self-determining, and questions the bases of European concepts of polarity between the center and periphery. Being born in 1934 in the Yoruba community in Nigeria which had been a British colony from 1901 to 1960, Soyinka has an inevitable inclination towards subversion and his subversive strategies divulge both the dimensions of domination and the postcolonial responses to this domination. He perceived that Europeans were trying to change and stereotype his Yoruba culture to adapt the colonial exploitation, and the African artistic and cultural essence was becoming either dependent upon Western ideas or forced into silence. Soyinka rejects this European stereotyping by confirming the complexity, humanity, and even ambivalence of African culture. He developed “newer” literature which established the concept of national literary differences within English writing and is considered as discrete national formations rather than as a “standard” version of the metropolitan language. This study of national traditions in English is the leading way of rejecting the claims of the metropole to uniqueness and this system is characterized as the “process of self-apprehension” (xi) by Wole Soyinka in his *Myth, Literature and the African World*. The self-apprehension is the sense of difference that constitutes each national literature which is an element of a self-constituting entity. Through this self-apprehension Soyinka



welcomes the postcolonial cultural syncretism which does not deny pre-colonial language and culture and also does not reject the positive accretions from the colonial culture. During the 1940s and 1950s when Soyinka was at school and university, the politico-cultural consciousness among the Africans was so acute that they started a concerted effort to assert Nigerian cultures against the values imported from the imperial center. Various literary movements including the “Negritude School of Writing” and “Ethiopianism” by the politico-social conscious writers were the logical consequence of colonial resistance because “to become aware of one’s self as belonging to a subject people is the founding insight of anti-imperialist nationalism. From that insight came literatures, innumerable political parties, a host of other struggles for minority and women’s rights, and, much of the time, newly independent states” (Said 258). Chinua Achebe, leading Nigerian novelist, during his student life at University College, Ibadan, was a comrade for resistance movement and this influence encouraged him to write *Things Fall Apart* (1958) in which he “wrote back” to Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Soyinka as a student of the same university in 1952 was highly influenced by Achebe and wrote the drama *The Lion and the Jewel* in 1959. Just after one year Nigeria became independent and the “contrapuntal approach” to the drama indicates that the cultural resistance against colonialism contributed a lot to the Independence or Nationalist Movement of Nigeria. But in the drama as a postcolonial literary piece, the ways of resistance against this British imperial propaganda is allegorical because “allegory becomes a site upon which post-colonial cultures seek to contest and subvert colonialist appropriation through the production of a literary, and specifically anti-imperialist, figurative opposition or textual counter discourse” (Slemon 11). This resistance is not a violent anti-colonial struggle and the rebellion of the colonized people against colonial authority as the traditional study of colonialism focuses; rather it is a “resistance that manifests itself as a refusal to be absorbed, a resistance which engages that which is resisted in a different way, taking array of influences exerted by the domination power, and altering them into tools for expressing a deeply held sense of identity and cultural being” (Ashcroft 20). In this sense Frederic Jameson’s “national allegory” is different from the allegory *The Lion and the Jewel* confirms though the drama belongs to the third-world text because in the drama the isolated experience is not epitomized as allegorical of the public and national incident; the drama also does not develop out of the imitation of the Western literary forms. Rather, Soyinka enters the discourse of English literature, replaces English language through abrogation and appropriation, takes a dominant tool of imperial representation – the dramatic form – and provides a creative ethnography of Africa. As a result the drama has been a model of postcolonial resistance writings ever after.

In the drama, Soyinka develops counter-discourses against the colonial discourses showing that the colonial discourses are not seamless, totalitarian, and immune to doubt and reflexivity. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin say, “The term ‘counter-discourse’ has been adopted by post-colonial critics to describe the complex ways in which challenges to a dominant or established discourse (specifically those of the imperial centre) might be mounted from the periphery, always recognizing the powerful absorptive capacity of imperial and neo-imperial discourses” (56). Soyinka discovers the fractures within discourse, which allows for forms of resistance which as counter-discourse operate within discourse. On the other hand, Soyinka illuminates some psychological ways in which the resistance against imperialism is exposed through mimicry, hybridity, difference, and ambivalence which as a set of unexpected resistance are developed by Homi K. Bhabha, one of the most important theorists in postcolonial criticism. Soyinka is very far-sighted regarding resistance against colonial propaganda in the sense that in the postcolonial age his ways of psychological resistance is

effective because he knows that the authority of dominant nations and ideas is not as complete as it seems. Western civilization cannot be surely claimed very unique when other civilizations are so analogous. Consequently, during the development of cross-cultural relations for globalization, there is always a gap between the illusion of completeness of the dominant tradition and the reality of the indigenous culture, and this gap psychologically enables the dominated to transmit a message of resistance. Moreover, Soyinka emphasizes that liberation from imperialism is a fight for the conservation and survival of the ideological values of the people and for the synchronization and development of these values within a national context. Ideology is the prevalent system of thought and belief for looking at and interpreting any culture in the world. Yoruba ideology has been suppressed and changed as a result of its internal dynamics created by the colonial agents and outside European influence. Under these circumstances, in Anglophone African Literature, Soyinka not only resisted Eurocentric politico-cultural hegemonization but also offered a way out of the colonial impasse between the colonizer and colonized through replacing destructive cultural encounters with the acceptance of cross-culturality as the possible dissolving point of a ceaseless human history of subjugation and annihilation. He wants to develop an ideological unity through cultural syncretism among the Africans because the ideological unity of any social group is a precondition for any liberation struggle. Thus the drama *The Lion and the Jewel* is considered an allegory of the resistance against imperialism for creating a counter-discourse, psychological confrontation, and ideological negotiation through cultural syncretism, and, consequently, the drama has been a roadmap for all marginalized voices against imperialism in the postcolonial world.

Counter-discourse

Imperial discourse tends to depict the colonized or the native as the “Other” which carries all the dark human traits such as exoticism, violence, hostility, and mystery. The colonial propagandist writers such as Rudyard Kipling, EM Forster, Joseph Conrad, Rider Haggard, and Mary Kingsley are accustomed to objectifying the colonized, and dividing the colonized and the colonialist in the Manichean dichotomy (“us” and “other”) though their writings were tempered with an ambivalence between sympathetic and critical attitudes towards the European imperialist mission in the Orient and Africa. This tendency of “othering” in the orientalist is so acute that “Michel Foucault describes the creation of mental illness in European society as a process of ‘othering’, where the madman is confined and silenced in order to define the normative, rational self” (Loomba 138). Against this imperial discourse *The Lion and the Jewel* as a postcolonial literary piece creates a counter-discourse through “simulacrum.” French philosopher Jean Baudrillard in his book *Simulacra and Simulation* expands greatly on the idea of simulacra and proposes that people construct some sort of hyper-reality that is parallel to reality; this hyper-reality comes from the constructed reality of images we think of and know: “[i]t is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (Baudrillard 1). Steven Connor adds another issue to simulacrum that “in response to the awareness of the fading out of the real, is a compensatory attempt to manufacture it (simulacrum), in an escalation of the true, of the lived experience” (56). In the fictional world, as well as in the real world, simulations of reality reinforce, and sometimes caricature. But if this simulacrum, a key that explicates the postmodern condition, can be used from the postcolonial point of view, the simulacrum will reproduce designs of cultural and racial “otherness” reminding us of the immediate past and offer the framework to make the colonial intruder an “other” through caricature. The objective of Soyinka in the drama will be fathomable regarding the simulation if we can understand how simulation in the drama works to disseminate hyper-reality that depicts an

immediate past colonial stranger through the circulation and proliferation of counter “otherness” and caricature is its logical consequence. *The Lion and the Jewel* in the name of “the dance of the lost Traveller” reproduces an incident of a photographer, a stranger (the Whiteman) who had come from Lagos to Illujinle sometime before the action of the play begins. The real incident is re-created through mimes and gestures. In the simulated event Lakunle, an agent of colonial modernity, is forced to participate in the dance and play the role of the photographer. Just like the photographer who suddenly fell into the river while focusing his lens on Sidi, the village belle and the heroine of the drama, Lakunle puts forward a reckless foot and vanishes completely, and the splash sound created by the local musical instruments echoes his falling in the pond and another musical sound expresses euphoria of the villagers. At last, “They (villagers) are in an ugly mood, and in spite of his (Lakunle’s) protests, haul him off to the town centre, in front of the ‘Odan’ tree” (16). Moreover, the four girls, local friends of Sidi, are to dance the devil horse (the motor-car) by which the stranger arrived in the Yoruba community. Clearly, the author uses the simulated event to manufacture the past event for the awareness of the faded reality. Then, it exposes the truth through caricature. As a result, Lakunle – and, therefore, the stranger (the white man) – is made an alienated “other” socially and culturally, and becomes an object of laughter to the audience. So the “simulacrum” helps the author to innovate a counter-discourse by which the colonialist instead of the colonized is being categorized as the “other” and ultimately the imperial gaze turns on the empire itself.

In the drama Soyinka interrogates the cultural hegemonic discourse of “The White Man’s Burden,” a phrase coined by Rudyard Kipling to pronounce the strain and duties of empire to civilize the inferior or colonized races and the Eurocentric white racist supremacy. It also develops an ethnography of Yoruba culture as a counter-discourse against the colonizers’ process of subordination and material exploitation through a so-called European burden. Generally, this European metaphysics provides the colonial authority with the justification of ordering the colonial reality for ruling the colonized. But the constructs of polarization – civilized and uncivilized, ruler and ruled, governor and governed – are defied as an essential way of ordering reality as Soyinka constructs a new liberating narrative not for reversing the colonial hierarchical order but for questioning the philosophical notions on which that order was based. In the drama, Lakunle, the representative of white Europeans, in his mission pretends to come across only inferior people, namely Sidi, Baroka, and Sadiku. He frequently uses the term “savage” for them, considering them barbarians, and puts them against his assumed civilized white identity as he thinks that the civilized white identity is characterized by abilities such as rationality, knowledge, intelligence, and power of judgment. Despite his ardent love and devotion for Sidi, he addresses her as “Bush-girl you are, bush girl you’ll always be;/Uncivilized and primitive – bush girl!” (9). Similarly, he considers Baroka, the Lion and Bale of Illujinle, as an inferior and uncivilized man: “He (Baroka) is a savage thing; degenerate/He would beat a helpless woman if he could ... (35). And “Baroka is a creature of the wilds,/Untutored, mannerless, devoid of grace” (58). Moreover, he terms Sadiku, the primary wife of Baroka, as “a woman of the bush” (36) and wants to teach her. He instructs her to attend his school. This attitude of Lakunle’s typifies the imperial hubris of white racist supremacy that relentlessly tries to assert hegemonic persistence of its civilizing mission to the indigenous people. But ironically, Lakunle is completely unaware of the fact that the colonizer provokes and develops a cultural alienation in him and creates a social gap between him and other members of the society. Consequently, Lakunle is trying to assimilate the colonizer’s

mentality and considers himself superior to his own society's people and looking down on his own culture. This assumption of Lakunle's produces a counter-discourse among Sidi, Baroka, and Sadiku. Sidi rejects his Western ambition of civilizing the indigenous people as absurd and farcical to the traditional society: "O oh. You really mean to turn/The whole world upside down" (5). It authenticates that Lakunle's ambition is not desirable because no culture is unique. That is why culture must be liberated from the destructive dialectic of history through the discourse of the multicultural, syncretic accretion against the cultural hegemonic discourse of "The White Man's Burden" and Eurocentric white racist supremacy.

Soyinka in the drama builds an eco-centered or eco-critical discourse against the discourse, "progress in the developing world through colonial technology." The common colonial discourse is that the quality of life in the colonized countries is improved due to the increased use of imported machinery and technology from the "metropolitan centre"; it was a colonial policy to build roads and railway engines seemingly for the betterment of the colonized. But the irony is that the destruction of the environment has been one of the most damaging aspects of European colonization. It also elucidates in the postcolonial eco-critical context that the ecological imperialism creates global warming, inducing a rapid climate change. In the drama, during a conversation between Lakunle and Sadiku, the former, an anglophile, says:

In a year or two I swear,
 This town shall see a transformation
 ...
 A motor road will pass this spot
 And bring the city ways to us.
 We'll buy saucepans for all the women
 Clay pots are crude and unhygienic
 ...
 We'll burn the forest, cut the trees
 Then plant a modern park for lovers
 We must reject the palm wine habit
 And take tea, with milk and sugar. (37)

Lakunle's above specified notion of "progress" defines the procedure of establishment of Eurocentric norms and values. Lakunle is so infatuated with the modern or Europeanized way of life that he announces, "Alone I stand for progress" (26). The scramble for modernization entices Lakunle into the destruction of his own environment and he took up the technological benefits of modernity and turned himself into the barbaric instigator of environmental damage. Through Baroka, Soyinka creates a postcolonial environmentalism against the discourse of so-called progress in the colonized countries that such progress contributes nothing but the mechanical homogeneity of things, and defilement of virgin vivacity and magnificence of nature. That is why Baroka foils the surveyor's laying of the railway track by bribing him. Baroka's motto is to avoid the access of Eurocentric mechanical modern civilization to the heart of Africa: "I do not hate progress, only its nature/Which makes all roofs and faces look the same" (52). Baroka wants only the non-imperial, eco-friendly development, not "the murderous roads," the destruction of "the humming birds," and smoking "the face of Sango" (the God of thunder and lightning) in the name of progress (52). Since this modernity is based on the ideas of scientific and material progress that determine the colonial power, Soyinka's attitude towards modernity is tantamount

to Homi K. Bhabha's viewpoint in "Caliban Speaks to Prospero" where he wants us to consider modernity using the perspective taken from the experiences of the colonized people:

Our major task now is to probe further the cunning of Western modernity, its historical ironies, its disjunctive temporalities, its much-vaunted crisis of representation. [...] We must never forget that the establishment of colonized space profoundly informs and historically contests the emergence of those so-called post-Enlightenment values associated with the notion of modern stability. (64)

It is assumed that colonialism has been a hidden presence in shaping the meta-narrative of modern progress and as a result, colonialism and modernity are inseparably connected. So, Soyinka challenges and transforms the ideas of modernism which means the anthropocentric Western drive for degrading and destroying the environment in Nigeria in the guise of economic development.

Psychological Resistance

Psychological resistance against imperialism in the drama emanates from the colonial ambivalence and anxiety during "stereotyping" the colonized as "other" and the colonialist as "self." According to the "stereotype," the "self" always considers himself superior and unique, and the "other" as inferior, but this stereotyping as a colonial discourse is based on conscious or unconscious misrecognition of reality because the reality is that there is no basic difference between the "colonial self" and the "colonial other." This misrecognition of reality known as "colonial reality" brings in the colonizer a sense of narcissism which is simultaneously a source of colonial aggression and colonial anxiety as Homi K. Bhabha explains:

The strategy of the stereotype, as a form of (mis)recognition, depends on staging the encounter with 'otherness' in an airless space of fixed coordinates. No mutual movement is possible in that space, because relationships there are largely predictable or reactive: the discriminated subject is reduced to a projection, an over-determined instance, while the perpetrator of the stereotype acts out only narcissistic anxiety and political paranoia. ('Black Male' 110)

Accordingly, since the aggressive attitude of the colonialist is based on misrecognition, there is a sense of weakness in the aggressor's minds behind their aggressive attitude. This psychological weakness of the aggressive colonialist works as a psychological resistance against imperialism. This psychological resistance is explained by Bhabha with the help of Lacan's "mirror stage," "a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation" (qtd. in Homer 25), and he suggests "Like the mirror phase the fullness of the stereotype – its image as identity – is always threatened by lack" (77). Just like the mirror stage the colonial superiority (ego) is based on an illusory image of narcissism and out of the so-called narcissistic belief of superiority the colonial power shows an aggressive expression of domination over the other but simultaneously just like the infant who experiences the feeling of fragmentation in the mirror stage, the colonizer contemplates his own identity and observes that his identity is never quite as stable as his narcissism and aggression imply. As a result the ambivalence and anxiety is created in the colonial mind and Bhabha terms this situation a psychological resistance against imperialism. In *The Lion and the Jewel* Lakunle, an agent of colonialism, suffers from the malady of an unstable identity because superiority complexes constantly haunt him resulting in the collapse of his ego and self-esteem. He assumes the roles of a teacher, a cultural emissary, a representative of modernism, and a reformer of economic and technological progress. He thinks that his white colonial identity is characterized with rationality, loyalty, goodness, and intelligence. That is why, against the demand

from Sidi for bride-price, Lakunle terms the custom of bride-price as “A savage custom, barbaric, outdated/Rejected, denounced, accursed/Humiliating, unspeakable, redundant” (7). But in the concluding part of the play Lakunle’s confessional statement, “I know I am the biggest fool/ That ever walked this earth” (61), exposes the irony that his position as a colonial agent is not as complete as he thought in the first part of the play. His mental condition is characterized by the colonial ambivalence and anxiety which, according to Bhabha, works as a psychological resistance against imperialism. Before Bhabha, Chinua Achebe introduced in “An Image of Africa” (1977) the same counter-attack based on colonial anxiety against the virulent stereotype when he tried to prove that the colonial authority in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, as in the case of the literary canon, is not at all stable and coherent as it seems to be. He says:

Conrad did not originate the image of Africa which we find in this book. It was and is the dominant image of Africa in the Western imagination and Conrad merely brought the peculiar gifts of his own mind to bear on it. For reasons which can certainly use close psychological inquiry the West seems to suffer deep anxieties about the precariousness of its civilization and to have need for constant reassurance by comparison with Africa. (123)

So, Achebe’s description of colonial anxiety pre-figures the structures of the stereotype which Bhabha elaborates. Interestingly, in the drama Soyinka reifies implicitly this stereotyping tendency which produces the colonial ambivalence and anxiety as a psychological resistance against imperialism.

The drama transmits psychological resistance against imperialism through “mimicry” which, according to Bhabha, “is an exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas. This exaggeration means that mimicry is repetition with difference, and so it is not evidence of the colonized’s servitude. In fact, this mimicry is also a form of mockery” (qtd. in Huddart 38). In other words, the colonized mimics the language, culture, manners, and ideas of the colonizer in an exaggerated form and sometimes repeats the mimicry with a difference but anyway this mimicry is not evidence of the colonized’s slavery but rather an agency of the colonized’s resistance against imperialism through one kind of mockery. In the drama we find Lakunle as a colonial mimic man who grew up in a time of transitional whirlpool in Nigeria in the Yoruba community when more powerful and more advanced colonizers like Britain was destroying the indigenous Nigerian culture. In the first part of the drama “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 waist-coat. He wears twenty-three-inch-bottom trousers and blanco-white tennis shoes” (1). Lakunle tries to imitate the dress code of the colonizer but he cannot be identical due to his difference in dress. His inconsistent outfit produces a caricature which, as a mockery, conveys a resistance against imperialism. This mockery is exposed when Sidi blames Lakunle for pronouncing big loud words with no meaning and informs him “They (villagers) call you a fool – even the children –/Or you with your fine airs and little sense!” (3). Moreover, “Mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference” (Huddart 86). This process includes purposefully changing the colonial language, omitting some words and grammatical rules to break the stereotyping in language. As a result, the stereotypical superiority of the colonizer in language is shattered through mockery. During the first meeting between Lakunle and Baroka, Baroka addresses Lakunle, “Akowe. Teacher wa. Misita Lakunle” instead of Mister Lakunle, and welcomes, “Guru morn guru morn” (16) in lieu of good morning. This abrogation

and appropriation of the English language involves a rejection of the metropolitan power over the means of communication and remolding the colonial language to new usages such as mockery, caricature, etc. Besides, the drama uses the technique of selective lexical fidelity which leaves some words untranslated such as “Gangan and iyailu”(drum) (15), “Kabiyesi Baba”(thanks father) (16), “Sango” (god of fire) (23), “Tanfiri” (confection) (45) and this technique is used here as a strategy for transmitting the sense of cultural particularity and departure from the site of colonial privilege. But there is a difference between the result of Lakunle’s mimicry and that of Baroka’s mimicry because the mimicry of Lakunle produces ambivalence in his own identity, rational self-image, and that is why he frequently tries to define his identity; on the other hand, Baroka’s mimicry deliberately mocks and undermines the ongoing pretensions of the superiority of the stereotyped language of colonialism and empire.

The Lion and the Jewel offers a psychological resistance against imperialism through “hybridity.” “Hybridity” generally refers to the mixed-ness of various cultures within every form of identity but here the resistance against imperialism comes from the “on-going process of hybridity” which Bhabha terms as “hybridization.” The process of hybridity or hybridization brings two cultures in contact and this contact constructs “in-between space” between the two cultures, and this space is termed by Bhabha as the “Third Space of enunciation” (*The Location of Culture* 37). Cultural identity always develops in the space where it cannot claim its individuality or hierarchical purity because every identity is identical with the other in the space. But ironically, the colonial discourse never lets the colonizers think themselves identical. As a result, the colonizers enter an ambivalent and contradictory space through disavowal: sameness between colonial culture and colonized culture is simultaneously recognized and repudiated. Then despite their apparent mastery, the ambivalence plagues the colonizer so much that the subversive and discursive practices implicit in the colonial process are hampered. Consequently, the process of hybridity or hybridization reverses the “structures of domination in the colonial situation” as Bhabha explains in his highly influential article “Signs Taken for Wonders: Question of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817”:

Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the ‘pure’ and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power. (165)

Lakunle is convincingly a representative of “hybridity” because he demands that he represents the Western culture though he was born in the Yoruba culture. He is much fascinated by most aspects of colonial progress: he wants to spend the weekend in night clubs, to walk side by side with Sidi like the Lagos couples, to kiss Sidi just like in the West, to see the pictures of seductive girls in the daily newspaper, to show progress through the beauty contests of the indigenous girls, to do ballroom dancing in school, and to throw a cocktail party. Lakunle is an agent or imitator of colonial modernity, progress, and civilization. His sense of civilization and progress is clarified through eating with knives and forks on breakable plates as an act of civilized people. As the Western

civilization flourishes, the ruler will ride cars, not horses. So in the “in between space” of Western and Yoruba culture the identity of Lakunle emerges with these so-called modern characteristics. The space in which the identity of Lakunle emerges is very ambivalent and contradictory because his identity cannot be recognized/repudiated as either superior or inferior. He becomes too close to home for the colonizer and this closeness/similarity is not comforting for the colonizer because the resemblance is a reminder of the shaky foundations of racial stereotypes and therefore, the unjustifiable nature of colonialism. In this regard we may focus on Thomas Babington Macaulay’s “Minute” of 1835 on education in colonized India; Macaulay wanted to educate Indians to create an “in-between” or “go-between” class to help the British govern India. Accordingly, the British created a class of educated Indians who ironically became “boomerangs” against the British, creating resistance against colonialism through anxiety. The situation in India is identical to the plot in *The Lion and the Jewel* even though the drama is written in the African context. So, Lakunle belongs to the “in-between” class in the Yoruba community and through “hybridization” he stands for resistance against imperialism.

Ideological Resistance through Cultural Syncreticism

Soyinka provides the means for the organization of resistance using imperial culture or ideology as a communicative medium or consuming it as “cultural capital.” The colonial people engage imperial culture and consume it in a strategy of self-fashioning and self-representation. The force of these processes leads the colonial subjects to change the imperial culture and ideology to adapt it to their own culture; consequently, these changes provide the capital known as cultural capital to the colonial subjects. The acquisition of cultural capital provides comprehensive avenues with the colonial subject for appropriating and consuming the dominant, hegemonic culture, discourses, technologies and then the colonial subjects negotiate a place from which they articulate their own narrative of nationalism distinct from powerful ideology such as imperialism. But in the drama this nationalism is not “nationalist consciousness, as Fanon warns, which can very easily lead to a frozen rigidity with the potential to degenerate into chauvinism and xenophobia” (Said 258). Rather, this nationalism encourages the oppressed to consume imperial culture and use it as capital. This capital enables their own culture to sometimes take a radical and exploratory form so that their own culture becomes very sustainable and resistant against any dominant culture. That is why this liberal nationalism is considered by Cabral as a roadmap to cultural freedom from foreign domination:

A people who free themselves from foreign domination will be free culturally only if, without complexes and without underestimating the importance of positive accretions from the oppressor and other cultures, they return to the upward paths of their own culture, which is nourished by the living reality of its environment, and which negates both harmful influences and any kind of subjection to foreign culture. (56)

Accordingly, in the postcolonial context, the cultural freedom comes from cultural capital or syncretic accretions from the imperial culture. This cultural freedom rejects such type of nationalism which turns into nativism just as in the case of negritude which “was the celebration of Blackness, of being Black, of specifically African culture and African values that sought to reify a pre-colonial African past” (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 110). Soyinka also rejects this negritude as he points out that “negritude stayed within the Eurocentric intellectual formulation of Africa’s difference, thus paradoxically trapping the representation of African reality in those binary terms” (qtd. in Said



277). That means, in negritude, the danger lies in the fact that it may incorporate the model of anti-thesis of the thesis of white supremacy. In *The Lion and the Jewel*, Soyinka not only makes a caricature about the notion of Lakunle's so-called modernism but also depicts negatively the crafty unscrupulous aged fox Baroka's cunning methods of winding stairs for adopting polygamy. Having affluence and power, Baroka has a harem full of the most beautiful women like new commodities added frequently. At the age of sixty-two he enjoys beautiful pictures of Sidi in a glossy magazine and sends his first wife Sadiku to woo her for him. At the same time, Soyinka portrays the same Bale positively: Baroka likes progress but does not want to "leave Virgin plots of lives." He wants to bring "rich decay and the tang of vapour rising from forgotten heaps of compost" (52). He hates "the skin of progress, masks, unknown, the spotted wolf of sameness" (52). Thus the drama has been equipped with multi-colored realistic scenes revealing African life and fashions very exactly; the local Yoruba culture is revealed as one with its own moral and ethical dilemmas regarding its negative treatment of women and positive accretions from the imperial modernity. Through such depictions Soyinka rejects the simple reversal of the imperial binary of civilized and savage by confirming the complexity, consciousness, and even ambivalence of African culture. Ultimately, the Nigerian people are portrayed not as a passive subject but rather as acquirer, utilizer, and negotiator of cultural transformation through cultural capital and this transformation fulfills many of the goals of imperial resistance.

The cultural transformation is also different from "Afrocentricity" which is "a worldview that emphasizes the importance of African people in culture, philosophy, and history; as an ideology and political movement" (Asante 133). Afrocentricity includes African culture, religion, belief, tradition, and ways of thinking and living in the African context for demonstrating pride in heritage which separates itself from the supposedly "universal" values of European taste and style. It is true that Afrocentricity offers the process of cultural decolonization which involves a fundamental deracination of the colonial binarism and a postcolonial subversion and appropriation of the rhizomatous European discourses; it also stresses the need to vigorously recuperate pre-colonial culture. But the fact is very clear to Soyinka that if he thinks recuperating pre-colonial language and culture means decolonization, it will create a colonial impasse which will create obstacles to development in postcolonial societies. Colonial impasse is a situation in which imperial discourse tends to depict the colonized or the native as the "Other" carrying all the dark human traits such as exoticism, violence, hostility, and mystery. On the other hand, the colonized enters in an antagonistic condition against the colonizer. Since he knows that the postcolonial culture is inevitably a hybridized fact that is based on the dialectical connection between the implanted European cultural elements and a peripheral ontology, this impulse of hybridization is a dynamic interaction which creates or recreates an independent local identity. That is why, in the drama, Soyinka implicitly hints at a long lasting dialectical relationship between European ontology and epistemology, and the Eastern urge to form or reform liberated local identity through postcolonialism which welcomes the postcolonial cultural syncretism. In the drama, the railway line through Illujinle is supposed to be constructed and for this, a white surveyor comes to Illujinle but Baroka foils this project by bribing him because he knows that many others will follow if the line is laid through the village. For this idea of Baroka, Lakunle calls him "a die-hard rogue" and "a sworn enemy" (24) against the scheme of progress. On the other hand, Baroka is allowing his servants to form "The Palace Workers' Union" (38) and announces a day off for them. Besides, during his persuasion of Sidi, Baroka shows her a stamp highlighting her image, and tells her

that her picture would embellish the official stamp of the village. The machine beside his room is also shown to be a stamp-producing machine. So we find that Baroka symbolizes the cultural syncreticity as an inescapable feature and strength of the postcolonial societies. Even Soyinka himself came out of Afrocentricity during the composition of *The Lion and the Jewel*. In Yoruba folktales an innocent maiden is often said to be attracted by a handsome stranger; this folktale is told to romantic young girls in Yoruba community to warn them about the danger that may come to them because they know nothing about the stranger's motive. But Soyinka changes the folktale a little to adapt his play in which Sidi, an attractive girl, has many suitors but the middle-aged Bale Baroka is the influential one though he has several wives. Out of curiosity and stubbornness, she tries to jeer at his impotency but ironically she becomes his prey. Apart from this, Soyinka depicts both the woman and male folk of the society as they are though the real depiction sometimes exposes the weakness in Yoruba culture because Soyinka knows well that all culture is composed of strengths and weaknesses, of positive and negative aspects, of virtues and failings, and of progress and regress. But he never supports such nationalism that brings any rigidity such as chauvinism, xenophobia, Afrocentricity, and negritude; rather he wants human liberation through adopting the positive elements from the oppressor culture and rejecting any form of binarism, oppression, racism, hegemony, and white racial domination.

Conclusion

One of the features of the play *The Lion and the Jewel* is to interrogate, question, and defy establishing Eurocentric domination, power, legacy, hegemony, and discourse. This text shows its difference from the constructs of the imperial center and this underlying difference makes the text distinctively a model of postcolonial resistance writings ever after. Innovating counter-discourse, Soyinka proposes a re-visioning inquiry about the colonial subversion of the canonical texts and their consecutive reinsertion in the process of subversion. Then such counter-discourse dislocates the colonial discourse and exposes the colonial "contingency" and "permeability." Consequently, the notion of Eurocentric white racist supremacy and the hegemonic persistence of the colonial civilizing mission for the indigenous people in the drama is threatened and disrupted. On the other hand, the drama has broken a traditional belief regarding colonial resistance that decolonization must come through the violent and rebelling struggles of the colonized people against colonial authority. Then it implements an unprecedented type of imperial resistance with a psychoanalytical lens which marks a hidden gap between the minds of the assumed colonizer and the colonized. This hidden gap creates at first caricature and mockery of the colonial stereotype, and then begets complex anxiety, tension, and uncertainties in the colonizer's minds. At last, such mockery, anxiety, tension, and uncertainties work as the active agency of the colonial resistance. Even in the postcolonial globalized world, when cross-culturality of the once colonizer and the colonized figures out the influence of the culture of the colonizers on the culture of the colonized, the play not only brings a resistant imagination of the once colonized people into being against imperialism but also reshapes the inner maps of the metropolitan center through the marginalized voices. Besides, the drama wants to develop an independent local ideology taking all positive indigenous cultural values and adopting the benevolent elements from the oppressor culture. Consequently, the ideology will be a perfect integration to show resistance against any dominant ideology. That is why the drama welcomes any technical, technological, and scientific development and modernity, and discourages such development that brings any forms of Eurocentrism, essentialism, Manicheanism, racism, patriarchy, and slavery. Thus the play as an allegory has designed a roadmap

for the imperial resistance from the colonized and marginalized people relegating and resisting Eurocentric domination, power, legacy, hegemony, authority and culture in the postcolonial world.

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