



THE ANTAGONISM OF TRADITIONALISM AND MODERNISM IN WOLE SOYINLA'S PLAY

THE LION AND THE JEWEL

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Abstract

The conflict between modernity and tradition and the reciprocal relationship between authority and gender is the main topic of the drama *The Lion and the Jewel*. The article looks at the main disputes between traditionalists and modernists. Additionally, it highlights on how the author explores the conflict between tradition and modernization in Nigeria by using personality, and structure. where Baroka, Sidi, and the rest of the illiterate Ilunjule population serve as a representation of the ancient civilization. collide with a contemporary society being headed by Lakunle, a professional school teacher who has been inspired by Western culture and is educ

Keywords: Tradition, western, old, new, domination, modernity, bride price, marriage.

Old mindset has assumed many forms, including traditions, mythology, popular teaching, narrative, philosophical theory, practical religious applications, and other expressions, even after writing replaced oral tradition as the main mode of transmission. Modern indicates the present instant. Modernism, a widespread social and cultural trend. Beginning in the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is a time period in literary history. The ongoing relationship of tradition and modernity is another well-known idea that explains how modernity came to be. It argues that the best approach to comprehend modernity is from a historical evolutionary perspective.

When the concepts of tradition and modernity are compared in a societal context, traditions show the true nature of the culture in question, whereas modernity is shown by disregarding parts of it for reason. A tradition denotes a tried-and-true method or behavior sadiku that has been handed down through generations of people. Whenever the eras of earlier times and today are contrasted, tradition and modernity's thinking processes are completely at odds.

Modernity has value since it makes it necessary to adapt to ever-changing circumstances because development is associated with it. Humans have a duty to go forward with their knowledge and consider if conventional norms and rituals may still be relevant in the current world while maintaining their historical significance.

More importantly, Soyinka succeeds in describing the current atmosphere which was enhanced by a variety of genuine scenarios to play. He portrays African life, for instance, by having the actors hold a reflection up to the natural world and showing reality as it is. The story's principal topic is the conflict between tradition and modernity. The play *The Lion and the Jewel* illustrates how polygamy is a significant issue in this civilization. The old-fashioned habits and conventions are undoubtedly challenged by current norms. Music, dancing, and imitation are just a few of the aspects Soyinka used to advance the play's plot. It is obvious that he upholds native custom and supports the way people live and the place of women in society.

In Nigeria, it is acceptable to have more than one wife, and this activity has a significant impact on tradition. In Soyinka's play, the highly sexual society in Africa is shown. The amount he receives reflects a variety of cultural customs, including bride-price, multiple marriages, and women requesting men to be partners with them. In addition, the author explains a few indigenous behaviors, such as marriage, music, dance, and other traditions.

The drama, which is set in the Nigerian town of Ilujinle, is divided into three parts: the beginning of the day, the mid of the day and the conclusion of the day. The major focus is on the conflict between traditional Yoruba values in Nigeria and the colonizers' westernization. Soyinka employs a variety of methods with African influences in an effort to state his need for Afro-centricity. The piece includes dancing, poetry, and traditional music from Nigeria. Of course, these plays helped bring Nigerian theatre to the attention of the world. Via the two male characters he introduces, he gives two different worldviews: one based on African culture and the other, more Eurocentric in style. As a consequence, the play turns into a sort of philosophical argument between the two extremes, and Soyinka introduces a further prominent female character to serve as a mediating agent.

The older half is made up of people, and the next half is young. Each of them has unique learning practices, social mores, religious beliefs, and educational requirements. Adolescent people and elder generations are vastly apart from one another. The older generation constantly focused on practices, customs, and an outdated civilization, but the younger generation believed that these conventions and traditions were useless in today's modern and technologically sophisticated world.

In the story, Lakunle, who plays a modern academic instructor, successfully transforms his birthplace into a modern town by adopting a modern lifestyle. The teacher is almost 23 years old. He wears an old-fashioned English suit that is clearly one or two sizes too small, clean but not pressed, and worn but not ragged. His tie is tied in a little knot that is hidden by his shining black waistcoat. He is dressed with tennis sneakers in Blanco white and pants with a 23-inch bottom.

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-three-inch-bottom trousers, and Blanco-white tennis shoes (1)

He had a disagreement with Baroka, a perfect example of ancient custom, which prevented him from contributing to this initiative. It is true that a person with a forward-looking outlook is unlikely to be interested in or easily adopt ancient customs.

Remarks by Lakunle and his criticism of Sidi's outfit It suggests that this individual is an exceedingly traditional man who dislikes immodest ladies. It also demonstrates Lakunle's odd viewpoints on traditional African clothing. He quickly adopts the ideas and traditions. He frequently criticizes several African customs relating to marriage, attire, and lifestyle for this reason. People are dedicated to modern civilization during their entire lives. It doesn't imply that people must abandon long-standing customs or undergo social change; rather, it only means that their steadfast faith has the potential to change the globe in its entirety. Interaction acts as a means of discovering other people's cultures and traditions. It brings united individuals with different cultures or people who speak various languages and have various origins.

The Lion and the Jewel, the name of the play, has significance since it refers to the couple being married there. Two men court Sidi, the jewel, for marriage, but she chooses to get married Baroka, the lion, and the bale of Ilujinle instead. The Bale frequently married a different female every few months. Baroka and Lakunle's rivalry for Sidi's hand in marriage brings to life the conflict between the old and the new. While Baroka desires to include Sidi in his harem of women, Lakunle thinks about owning one woman who, at least theoretically, is equal to him. He serves as an illustration of a modern Nigerian guy.

Lakunle had larger knowledge of books, but he did not know how to use it to make the gem of the Yoruba town. He attempts to attract Sidi all the time. He also calls attention to her careless actions to feed her yearning for a careless figure. He utilizes colonial control to mistreat Sidi emotionally even if he does not physically hurt her. He initially pursuit of Sidi in the acts introductory scene shows his longing for modernism. Let me take it (1), he commands, grabbing the water jug Sidi was carrying.

Lakunle is attempting to disrupt the custom of a woman's work by doing this in an effort to be a contemporary gentleman and release Sidi from her heavy burden. As typical Westerners would, He then asks for the woman's hand in marriage, but he refuses to pay the bride's price. He also rejects the customary bride fee, which is another example of his progressive ways. He proposes a Western-style union to Sidi since he is much in love with her. He explains why he will not pay the bride price by detailing that to pay the price would be to buy a heifer off the market stall (8)

According to his own requirements and circumstances, Lakunle employs or misappropriates the word tradition. He thus assumes an uninformed Western attitude regarding bride costs, in part because to his precarious financial situation. Sidi's preference for tradition over westernization consistently opposes Lakunle's contemporary and westernized method of wooing. Hence Soyinka shows the customs and ceremonies of his Yoruba nation as a result. The Bale is valued in a polygamous community, for example: He may wed any number of girls as he wishes, for instance. He only uses them for his own entertainment, and once his new favorite arrives, he banishes the old beloved to the lavatory. According to Lakunle, we portray it as the culture that do not respects women in its own right. And he says, they are used to 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 (4)

Baroka presents him as a rigorously orthodox Yoruban monarch who is committed to maintaining the status quo in his community, but he eventually admits to having modernized. In his initial role in the play, he expresses his first distaste with contemporary lifestyles. Baroka walks into a scenario where a play is in progress without speaking, and everyone present, apart from Lakunle, kneels and greets the speaker with the typical term *Kabiyesi, Baba*. A simple good morning from Lakunle upsets Baroka since this Yoruba welcome is meant to be addressed by a king. In his anger, Baroka starts to wonder why he isn't being treated with the dignity that he needs.

Compared to pre-colonial times, spouse inheritance is seldom utilized in modern Africa. The Yoruba practice of transferring property to wives is shown in the drama. In this case, a guy is obligated to wed his dead father's junior bride. After his father's passing, Baroka received Sadiku, his most beloved and eldest wife. Sadiku may be seen dancing under the Ogun tree in celebration of Baroka losing his masculinity. She bounces around the tree while she chants enthusiastically, I was there when it happened to your father, the great Okiki. I did for him, I, the youngest and freshest of the wives. I killed him with my strength... (32)

Soyinka establishes an obvious contrast between these two ideas—tradition, portrayed by Baroka, and contemporary times, symbolized by Lakunle. Lakunle tends to reject his progressive ideas when it is beneficial to do so and has a number of out-of-date beliefs. In a similar spirit, Baroka asserts that his personality does not detest progress but rather finds its repetition and stasis uninteresting. He is preparing to employ a stamping machine to turn the community into a prosperous one like Lagos.

As Baroka prohibits the West from advancing into his hometown, he demonstrates his determination to preserve tradition in his community. Baroka is opposed to the Public Works effort to construct a railroad in Ilujinle. In order to build a train line across the community, the Department of Public Works agency sends in laborer's and agents to clear the bush. When Baroka learns about this, he gives the surveyor money, a henhouse, and a goat as payment.

The engineer and the workmen left convinced that the rails were supposed to be put further out after the surveyor expressed his satisfaction. Without a doubt, Baroka's motivation for opposing progress is to keep his town true to its ancient roots. The main characters in the play argue with both old and new people on the inside and outside. The conflict among Lakunle and Baroka over Sidi's involvement in the wedding is the play's main event. These two conflicting lifestyles are on display in the matter. Lakunle thus depicts development and a developing sexuality that was attracted by Sidi's personal attractiveness.

When the bridegroom gives the bride's family presents of money or property, this is referred to as the bride-price. This technique is still used by Muslims and native Africans as a component of their religious beliefs. In the past, the similar system was used throughout India also, although it has since altered. Yet, in line with custom and culture, primitive African civilizations require the bride-price from the husband.

The bride should feel honored to score an excellent agreement. It is thought that a girl seems not a virgin or a woman who is unfit of marriage if she marries for no money. Sidi, an ancient African girl unused to Western concepts and traditions. And she says,

I've told you, and I will say it again, I shall marry you today, next week or any day you name. But my bride-price must first be paid. Aha, now you turn away. But I tell you, Lakunle, I must have the full bride-price (7).

Lakunle, who has European sensibilities, challenges African custom. He criticizes the rituals associated with conventional African weddings. He refers to the bride's price concept as, A savage custom, barbaric, outdated, rejected, denounced, accursed, excommunicated, archaic, degrading, humiliating, unspeakable, redundant, retrogressive, remarkable, unpalatable (7). Sidi's emotional state is also shown in the play's midpoint. She quotes Lakunle's contemporary notions about becoming own when she is given the chance to become Baroka's youngest wife, stating that he seeks to have me as his property where I must fade beneath his jealous hold (21). She is a conventional maiden, but she has embraced the contemporary notion of not being Baroka's control. Baroka's employment of the stamp device, a western invention, reveals his emotional state. He convinces Sidi to join him through this technique. In order to draw attention to Sidi's emerging egocentric nature, Baroka assures her that he would have her picture put on the local stamp.

The play then depicts the custom of many weddings. This serial marriage is an injustice against women where their men are allowed to wed several females. They reject her and just utilize her for their own pleasure. When some time has gone, they will review another one. Baroka, the character, was focused on this plurality of marriages during the play. This enriches their social legacy; he says with pride. In order to demonstrate their authority and confidence in their manhood, he pretends to have given birth to a child in his sixty. He does not, however, want to undermine his tradition by introducing modern follows to his Illunjile community. He also says, yes, yes . . . it is five full months since last I took a wife . . . five full months . . . (18).

Bale Baroka made a point of saying that he wanted a fresh bride. Additionally, he says he has to be married to a woman right away. He is unable to tolerate the publishing of his picture. On the flip side, when Sidi appears on the primary page of the journal, an average girl's image is superior to his own, in addition to one of the village's often used restrooms. Sidi's popularity was improved by the publication's article including her photo. In order to ruin her image and enjoy Sidi's sexual physique, Baroka intended to wed him. This demonstrates the masculine sexism of the Baroka, who against women.

Sidi thereafter admired her photos from the paper while standing near to the school. This symbolizes the concept of modernity. Sadiku enters the town square while holding a package. She studies a formed figurine of Baroka that she has taken off before laughing. Sidi looks at her as she lowers it. When the individual is tackled, Sadiku asks whether his wife has scotched his surname. She laughs and remembers how she scotched Baroka's father years ago. She maintains that at the time, because of her young age and strength, women were destined to consume men. She chuckles once again and says that while men rush quickly, women today stand, watch, and create their own lives of the men. Sadiku inquires Sidi, well, will you be Baroka's own jewel? Will you be his sweetest princess, comforting him on weary nights? What answer shall I give my lord? (20)

Without hesitation, Sidi turned down Sadiku's proposal since she thought he was too old for herself. She confidently argues that the man is not going to suit her any longer by contrasting her youth with his appearance. Sadiku gleefully predicts that Baroka will get ashamed and disagree with himself if he hears that his application had been turned down by the local treasure. He says, the time has come when I can fool myself no more. I am no man, Sadiku. My adulthood ended near a week ago (29)

Sadiku used every tactic at her fingertips to get Sidi to take part in the festivities. Sidi meets Baroka even though he is aware he cannot assist her. Baroka attempts to demonstrate his wrestling skills to Sidi, but Sidi acts too sophisticated, making fun of and bringing his lower during their exchanges. Yet, Baroka accidentally charmed her ethnicity, and Lakunle was won over by him in every way possible.

Baroka and Lakunle have different perspectives about marriage. Baroka is happy to maintain his conventional marital lifestyle, but he is missing the closeness that Lakunle is looking for in a partner. He desires a union in which another important person, in this case Sidi, serves as more of an accompanying than a primary marital spouse. He wants a relationship that is mostly based on intimacy. A relationship in which he and his spouse are on equal footing. Neither a wife who serves as a subordinate companion in relationship or whose position in the union is one of service. He tells Sidi, I do not seek a wife to fetch and carry, to cook and scrub, to bring forth children by the gross..., Sidi, I seek a friend in need. An equal partner in my race of life (7, 8). He explains to Sidi exactly what he meant by looking for a lifelong partner. He informs her,

When we are wed, you shall not walk or sit tethered, as it were, to my dirtied heels. Together we shall sit at a table - not on the floor - and eat, not with fingers, but with knives and forks, and breakable plates like civilized beings. I will not have you wait on me till I have dined my fill. No wife of mine, no lawful wedded wife shall eat the leavings of my plate - that is for the children. I want to walk besides you in the street, side by side and arm in arm just like the Lagos couples... (8)

Lakunle is largely motivated by the desire to have an ongoing relationship, but Baroka is mostly motivated by an intense sexually urge to seize young, attractive women as his brides. Regarding the types of marriage, Baroka is content to be a polygamist in a marriage that is polygamous, but Lakunle is fine to be a monogamist in a monogamous marriage. Lakunle briefly felt jealous of Baroka's polygamous lifestyle. He chastised himself for having such an idea. He stated,

Yes, one must grant him that. Ah, I sometimes wish I had his kind of life. Such luscious blossoms make his nightly pillow. I am sure he keeps a time-table just as I do at school. Only way to ensure fair play. He must be healthy to keep going as he does. I don't know what the women see in him. His eyes are small and always red with wine. He must possess some secret...No! I don't envy him! Just the one for me. Alone I stand for progress, with Sidi my chosen soul-mate, the one woman of my life... (26)

Lastly, there are distinctions among both of them when it comes of the manner in which a male pursues a woman as well as how he offers her. Lakunle approaches women in a contemporary manner before making a proposal. Beyond any question, Lakunle had gained Sidi's affection. If not for Lakunle's unwillingness to shell out her bride-price and Baroka's cunningness, which caused her to lose her sex, she would have wed Lakunle. This was made clear as she informed him, they will say I was no virgin that I was forced to sell my shame and marry you without a price (7).

In the Yoruba tribe, paying the bride price served as a guarantee that a lady was a virgin, making being married morally right. In the end, Sidi agreed to marry Baroka in order to maintain her standing as a virtuous lady, neither because she liked him or was particularly taken aback by his ability in bed. In the Yoruba tribe, virginity is valued as an ethical principle, Chastity is the state of exclusively engaging in sexual activity with your spouse or partner, or not engaging in sexual activity with anybody else (Collins Dictionary).

Lakunle must pay Sidi's bride price before she agrees with being Lakunle's wife. As he saw the custom as a devaluation of a woman's value as an individual, Lakunle declined to give up her bride price. For him, the act of buying a woman amounted to turning her into property rather than a living individual. Sidi, still believed that paying Lakunle's bride price was a crucial condition that needed to be met before their marriage. She had

a deeper reason behind making the payment of her bride price. Sex was considered a holy ritual among married individuals by the Yoruba culture. She wished to maintain her track record as a woman of integrity. Thus, paying the bride price was a sign that a woman was ethical when she joined married life rather than an unethical woman. She spoke to Lakunle,

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 first be paid..., They will say I was no virgin that I was forced to sell my shame and marry you without a price (7).

Due to his constant pushing of those who are in his assistance, regardless of what occurs, Baroka is not portrayed in this play as a nasty character. It still does so in opposition of contemporary norms. The play also looks at contrasts like old versus new and civilization versus development.

It is a hilarious play wherein Soyinka depicts an adolescent who embraces all the Western world's ugliness and shallowness and so comes out as an imitation of a contemporary person. Soyinka cherished his nation's heritage. His devotion was founded on a thorough awareness of the qualities of Nigerian ancestry that endure. He had been conscious of the advantages of the Nigerian way of life. According to Soyinka, the one who is truly contemporary is not the individual who rejects tradition but the one who gives it a fresh, logical interpretation. The remarks of Bale, Soyinka's spokesman, which are apparent in the drama *The Lion and the Jewel*, reveal Soyinka's perception, the old must flow into the new, Sidi. Not blind itself or stand foolishly (54).

In the end, modern society must be incorporated into tradition to prevent it from becoming obsolete in an ever-changing world. According to common assumption, if tradition is not saved, modernity will lack a foundation. This connection will remain surface-level as long as it decides to ignore all before and tried. The contemporary must be acquainted with the past; the old needs to embrace the fresh concepts, and alternately. By adopting both ideas, the future era may live a well-informed existence.

A community might become a hollow husk by blindly copying the glitz and glamour of the contemporary world and abandoning all the old virtues. However, following to tradition out of superstition might also breakdown a person to the position of a young man. As the characters employ blend tradition and modernity for their ends, internal tensions are also on show. Additionally, the play's entire storyline and structure give away this ongoing battle. While such conflict is not the play's main topic, Soyinka skillfully weaves the idea of tradition and modernity throughout.

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