Chapter 3

The Lion and The Jewel: The African Dilemma
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Wole Soyinka’s name is taken with respect and gratitude when we talk of drama in general and African drama in particular. In most of his drama we easily get the flavour of the African culture and the tradition. Since he was born and brought up in the African tradition, it is very obvious that the native land will reflect its identity in the works of the native writers like Soyinka. As a highly educated man he understands his culture with better perspectives. As a native of Africa it is quite natural to understand African culture, tradition and the African ethos for him. Through all his dramas he has tried to become a companion to his fellow Africans. In this way he wants to help his people and ultimately would like to bring change in the situation of his country and the whole of African continent.

In this drama he wants to talk about the rigid African tradition that cannot be changed overnight. The African culture, the African tradition and the African land are so backward that development cannot take place quite easily. The old and barbarian customs are really very difficult to change. It appears that they have established deep roots in the psyche of African people. The change is meant for
their welfare but still they do not accept the new ideas and continue to live in the same manner i.e. in extreme backwardness and poverty. In this drama his attention is to highlight the rigid African tradition. The Africans are so narrow minded that they even cannot judge what is good for them and what is not. So the weaknesses of the African people and the African tradition are in focus in this drama.

With the backwardness of culture and tradition Soyinka throws light on the fact that the British Civilization or the foreign culture cannot easily be established in the African countries. The native Africans would not allow them to do any work of progress in their country. They will not further allow them to settle down on their native land. With this reason in the drama he focuses largely on both the African culture and the foreign culture. Therefore it is a play of ideas versus action as we have Lakunle, the school teacher, who all the time goes on expressing his ideas. He never takes care to get his ideas implemented. At the same time we have Bale Baroka, the lion, the headman of the village Ilujinle who goes on performing the action. No clever ideas come out of his brain. Only some whims are the products of his uneducated brain. So his name is associated with implementation. His attitude and mentality are rather different from the school teacher Lakunle. For Baroka the ideas are not important
but only the action is very valuable. As we know he is an uneducated person but being the headman, he has the authority. He uses this sense of authority at the maximum. Lakunle is a common teacher who twice or thrice thinks about the matter and then also he cannot put it into practice and finally leaves the matter.

The first act is named "Morning". When the play opens, Lakunle the educated and literate teacher is busy in teaching mathematics. He has received knowledge from the outside country and now he has accepted the job of a school teacher in the village Ilujinle. The school is somewhere near the market place which is at the centre of the village. He was teaching mathematics and so he goes on speaking three times three are nine. The students of the village school are also reproducing the same thing with the same tune and tone. So there was a loud sound coming from the windows of that classroom where Lakunle was teaching. When the teacher was teaching the student Sidi, a common village girl of 16 who is the heroine of the play enters with the pail of water on her head. She is a slim girl with plated hair. She has put on a very typical African dress. As soon as she appears on the stage, the attention of the teacher is diverted and he leaves the practicing work to the students themselves. The teacher is now enjoying the company of Sidi leaving his own teaching duty. The teacher Lakunle is dressed in a
western clothes but not very fashionable. Lakunle starts talking to Sidi. He teases Sidi to handover the pail of water to him. She requests Lakunle to go away and to restart his arithmetic drilling. Lakunle advised her not to carry any loads on the head, as he is worried that by carrying the load everyday on the head the neck will be shortened and after sometime there will be no neck at all. Then he switches his attention to her tight but tiny dress. He tells that she should not wear such type of small dress as the people are always observing her beauty with lustful eyes. While talking to her he makes a mockery of women that women have a smaller brain than that of men.

Lakunle is a man of ideas. He has acquired knowledge from the western country. Since he is a literate fellow, he is worried about the situation of village Ilujinle. He states that his village is badly in need of some development. Here Soyinka says that the people who are thinking about the change in the village do not have any power to do anything like change in the village. And the people who have power to change every thing do not even think about change in the village. The reason behind this may be that they were afraid of loosing power they were enjoying due to lack of knowledge of the village people and their ignorance. Lakunle is a native African and because he has received education from the foreign universities, he has new
ideas and new awareness regarding the development of the village. He thinks not only in terms of his village only but also in terms of the whole African continent that it should be developed. That is why he wants to change the old customs of the African tradition. He desires to bring modernity and newness in African thinking and civilisation. He further believes that gradually he will change the whole country but first of all he should start with his own village. He has some high regards for his ideology that charity begins at home so he wants to start the developmental process from his own village. He thinks that if the cultured foreign people come with new ideas and new thinking the real inhabitants of Africa will surely give away the rigid customs of their country. There will be some new awareness and in that way their life style will also get changed. Lakunle is very serious and makes a firm reply that a prophet does not get honour in his own village. He also adds that wise people are often addressed as mad people.

Sidi demands the pail, which Lakunle was carrying. Sidi wants to go home but Lakunle does not allow her to leave him so easily. Lakunle would not aloe her to go until she swears to marry him. Since Lakunle is hopeful and interested to bring about changes in the village, he has decided to marry a common village girl like Sidi. In fact for the literate person like Lakunle, the girl from city may also get
ready for the marriage. So if Lakunle wants to marry a girl from city, he can have it without any precise effort. But then his ideas of bringing change in the village would not be true. The people will laugh at him saying that he wants to bring abstract change in the village Ilujinle and now he is marrying a beautiful madam of a city. People will find difference in his ideas and in his implementation. So in order to establish a model or example he selects Sidi as his wife. He equally loves Sidi but when his ideology is concerned he takes the side of his ideas. Because of his love for Sidi, he has kept an ultimate faith in her. Lakunle tells:

“I will stand against the earth,
Heaven and the nine hells.
But no one can snatch away Sidi from me”. (07)

Sidi will surely become the wife of an educated person like Lakunle. But she laughingly tells him that his words seem to the same as they were in the past and as usually do not carry any meaning. She further tells:

“I’ve told you and I say it again
I shall marry you today, the next week
Or any day you name.

But my bride price must first be paid. (08)

Here Lakunle is in dilemma. He wants to marry Sidi in order to set an example before the villagers and particularly before Baroka and on the other hand he is not ready to pay the official bride price because he hates the custom of bride price and he wants to discard that custom. He is interested and has deep concern for Sidi but he is not ready to pay the bride price. In African tradition this is a very strange custom that the marriageable candidate has to pay the bride price to the parents of bride before the marriage. So it is highly impossible for the person to marry without paying the bride price. It is a very foolish matter that if the parents of that girl do not receive the official bride price, the relatives and the people surrounding them will start commenting, taunting and suspecting that the girl has lost her virginity before the marriage. Sidi tells that she does not want to become an object of laughing for the people of village. Here Lakunle replies that women are not a purchasable item or commodity. They are also human beings with some soft feelings. He assures her that he wants a life companion and since he loves her he will marry only Sidi. Lakunle tells that man shall take the woman and the two shall be together as one flash. He never considers woman as his mere
property. It is his firm assurance that after the marriage she will have all the freedom and she can live as per her wishes. He will help her to live a civilised life. He will never allow her to eat the leavings of her plate. Further he will allow her to wear high heel shoes and she will be free to apply the red paint on her lips. They will dance in the clubs like the civilised Christian dance.

Lakunle expresses his love by kissing her on her eyes. At that time Sidi tells him that he is rather cheating her, as he is not ready to pay the lawful bride price. Instead of that he is now taking liberty with her. Sidi warns him that first he should pay the bride price then only he will be allowed to touch her body. If he fails in doing that he will go mad and the bright future of the students will get spoilt.

The Noon part begins near a road by the market. Sidi enters happily with a magazine and she is happy because there is a photograph of her in that magazine. Lakunle follows her carrying a bundle of firewood. Sadiku meets them in the centre and she started talking to her. Sadiku tells her that she is going to meet her at her house. She clarifies her intention behind coming over there. She says that her husband Baroka sends her and he has sent good wishes and proposes her for marriage. On behalf of her husband she says:

Baroka wants you for a wife...” (19)
Lakunle does not like this proposal of marriage by Baroka and so he abuses him. He addressed Baroka as:

"The greedy dog! Insatiate camel of a foolish doling race..." (19)

Sidi does not like Lakunle's attitude and she by praising her beauty asks Lakunle not to speak like that. Sadiku asks about her answer and Sidi says:

"You will make no prey of Sidi with your wooing tongue
Not this Sidi whose fame has spread to Lagos
And beyond the seas". (20)

Sadiku tries to convince her and says Baroka has decided not to have any other wife after her. And after his death she will have the honour of being the senior wife of the new Bale. Sadiku adds that Sidi has to live in palace and after his death she will become the head of the new harem. According to Sidi Baroka has proposed because he comes to know about increasing popularity of Sidi. Sadiku is shocked with Sidi's statement. She compares her face with Baroka's and says:
"Compare my image and your lord's
An age of difference!
See how the water glistens on my face
Like the dew-moistened leaves on a Harmattan morning
But he — his face is like a leather piece
Torn rudely from the saddle of his horse,
Sprinkled with the musty ashes
From a pipe that is long-over smoked,
And this goat-like tuft
Which I once thought was manly;
It is like scattered twist of grass
Not even green
But charred and lifeless, as after a forest fire!
Sadiku, I am young and brimming; he is spent
I am the twinkle of a jewel
But he is the hind quarters of a lion!" (22)

Sadiku asks her to come to take supper as Baroka has arranged a small party for the reason that great capital city has done so much honour to a daughter of llujinle. Sici is not ready to believe that a man like Baroka will arrange a party because a daughter of llujinle has received a great honour. She is well aware that it is only a
dinner diplomacy through which he would like to propose to her. At this time Lakunle talks about follies of Baroka and how he foiled the public works attempt to build railway through Ilujinle. Baroka gave bribe to the surveyor of the public works department and rejected the railway line by saying that the earth is not suitable because it could not support the weight of a railway engine. This is once again a contradiction in the sense that instead of making any progress in the village Baroka prevents the railway line from the village because that will bring a kind of reformation in the life of the village people. If the village people will accept a kind of change, then they will become more conscious and this consciousness of the people becomes a hurdle for him. He would like his people to be ignorant because that will serve all the purposes that he has in his mind. In the eyes of the people he is a kind of leader who pretends to become a true saviour. But in reality he is not a saviour at all. He just does the work that is suitable to him and that is beneficiary to him. He is not interested in the people of the village Ilujinle. He has his own interest and he always tries to fulfil his interest by any means.

The scene then turns to Baroka's room. He is engaged with one of his favourites. He tells her that he is going to have a new wife that night. His favourite gets angry this time. Here is an irony that a husband tells the wife that he is going to have a new wife and the
wife has no right to protest. It is a tradition; no doubt, in the African tribal to become polygamy but the question is that the male does not care for the inner feeling of the spouse. We can say that the wife has no right to say anything against her husband. Soyinka, as a writer, has hatred against such a tradition in his own people. It is very disgusting for a wife that she has to propose a young lady to become a kept wife. Sadiku enters and informs Baroka that Sidi has refused his proposal by any means. He believes that a woman always refuses such things in the beginning. He says:

“It follows the pattern – a firm refusal
At the start”. (26)

Baroka accepts the fact that he has lost his manliness. He says:

“The time has come when I can fool myself
No more. I am no man, Sadiku. My manhood
Ended near a weak ago”. (26)

But he also clarifies his aim behind making Sidi as his wife. He says:
"I wanted Sidi because I still hope....
That, with a virgin young and hot within,
My failing strength would rise and save my pride". (26)

We can derive one sense from this statement of Baroka that he would like to marry Sidi not because he loves her but because he has lost his power as a man and through Sidi he has hope to retain that power and in that way he will save his pride. So the question is of ego and pride and not of any humanitarian approach. The scene ends here.

The third and the last part named Night starts at village centre where Sidi stands by schoolroom window looking to her photographs. Sadiku enters with a carved figure of the Bale, naked and in full detail. Laughingly she puts the figure in front of the tree. At that time Sidi looks at it with a great amazement. Soyinka has applied psychology and showed how the negativity of a woman turns into a positive response. By this Soyinka has studied human mind and particularly the mind of a woman. He has clearly indicated that if you would like to be successful in applying human psychology, you must be negative about the things that you would like to trace. It will become automatically a positive response most probably in case of a woman. Sadiku has to have a positive reply from Sidi and
therefore, she starts telling her about Baroka's loosing his manliness indirectly. For this she started telling to herself:

"...... We women undid you in the end...... smeared in shame...."

(30)

Hearing all these Sidi comes out and asks Sadiku to tell her about the victory that she is referring at that moment. Sadiku sustains the interest of Sid by not telling her anything in the beginning. This is also a psychological treatment. If you asked a human being not ask any question on any particular thing, then he/she has many questions in his or her mind. It is also a fact that if we do not indicate not to ask question, then he/she has no doubt about that thing. But the moment we emphasis on not to ask question, he/she has question. The same way Sadiku continues her dance without responding to Sidi's question. She dances with the words:

"Take warning my masters
We'll scotch you in the end" (31)

This increases Sidi's curiosity and she immediately holds Sadiku and asks her to tell everything in detail. Sidi is so much irritated without
response from Sadiku that she holds her firmly as she is about to go off again and she warns her not to move until telling anything. At that time Sadiku tells her about the secret of Baroka's loosing his manliness. She takes a promise from her that she would not disclose it to anybody. Sidi here asks the reason to her that if Baroka knows the reason, why does he asked her for marriage? Sadiku tactfully replies that he proposed because he has some hope. Lakunle enters and he is surprised to see Sadiku and Sidi dancing. He says:

"The full moon is not yet, but
The woman cannot wait
They must go mad without it". (31)

Sadiku does not like the entry of Lakunle because she knows well that Sidi is being convinced after a long process of time and if Lakunle says something different, she may loose her plan. She calls him scarecrow and threatens him to go away from that place. Lakunle does not understand the process that they are taking and so he asked about it. Sadiku abuses him by calling him 'less than the man' and Lakunle replies very boldly that he is totally a man. He replies:
“I will have you know that I am a man
As you will find out if you dare
To lay a hand on me”. (32)

Sidi, after hearing all these, immediately decides to go to the palace of Baroka. Lakunle warns her and asks her not to go there, but Sidi goes away with the words asking Lakunle to stay there. She is now in overconfidence. She says:

“.... I long to see him thwarted, to watch his longing
His twitching hands which this time cannot
Rush to loosen his trouser cords”. (32)

Sadiku teaches her some tricks about how to present herself before the Lion. Sadiku exchanges some words with Lakunle. She says that Lakunle's betrothed was supping with the Lion. Lakunle is surprised to hear the word betrothed. Sadiku reminds him the bride price that he has to pay. She advises him to take a farm for a season and one harvest will be enough to pay the bride price. Sadiku also refers to the changes that he is going to make in the village. Lakunle replies:
“Within a year or two, I swear,
This town shall see a transformation
Bride price will be a thing forgotten
And wives shall take their place by men.
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
No man shall take more wives than one
That’s why they’re impotent too soon.
The ruler shall ride cars, not horses
Or a bicycle at the very least.
We will burn the forest, cut the trees
Then plant a modern park for lovers
We’ll print newspaper everyday
With pictures of seductive girls.
The world will judge our progress by
The girl that win beauty contests.
While Lagos builds new factories daily
We only play 'ayo' and gossip.
Where is our school of ballroom dancing?
Who here can throw a cocktail party?
We must be modern with the rest
Or live forgotten by the world
We must reject the palm wine habit
And take to tea, with milk and sugar”. (34)

He also asks Sadiku to come to school to learn something. He refers her illiteracy. Now the scene changes to Baroka’s bedroom. Baroka is engaged in a kind of wrestling and he hears Sidi’s voice. Baroka willingly ignores her voice. Baroka here pretends to be an uninterested person and in that way attracts Sidi to him. The day is the day off for the servants. Sidi makes herself to some extent bold. She asks:

“Is this also a day off
For Baroka’s wives? “(36)

Baroka tactfully replies that his favourite Ailatu was at her usual place. They talked about the affairs of husband and wife. During the interaction between Baroka and Sidi the phrase that Baroka uses to address to Sidi is that of “My Child”. It demands interpretation. Not that he considers Sidi his daughter and so uses that phrase. In fact the use of that phrase reflects Baroka’s superiority complex. He
considers Sidi just a small child compared to his seasoned cunning. No doubt, if we consider age, Baroka is of sixty-two years and Sadiku nearly seventy years as Lakunle refers. Then Sidi become a child in the eyes of them. But here is an emotional blackmailing also. In the course of this interaction, the language and terminology used by Sidi are equally intelligent and draw our attention. She knows it well that Baroka is a person who enjoys everything without spending anything. The taste, which Baroka has cultivated, is that of ground corn and pepper but he does not pay the price of even snuff for it. She becomes sarcastic in her conversation with Baroka in order to ridicule him without knowing the fact that she is entering into a trap of Baroka. The play has got extensive use of proverbs and idioms and this conversation is one of the best examples of it. Sidi says:

"—to take one little story—

How he grew the taste for ground corn
And pepper – because he would not pay
The price of snuff". (40)

Shockingly Sidi enters into that trap just like a rabbit voluntarily entering into the mouth of a lion. She takes to Baroka in such a sarcastic tone that the readers initially feel she is talking about
someone else. She uses the pronoun “He” for Baroka instead of addressing to Baroka directly. The violent reaction of Baroka to his opponent, with whom he is wrestling, is a sign of the injury of his ego. Baroka finds her sarcasm of pepper and snuff unbearable and so that violent reaction comes in Baroka. He explains everything before Sidi but he feels that Sidi has not paid any attention to his explanation. Baroka once again tries to prove himself suitable for her but Sidi shows her witness and answers in a different manner. Though it is only an art of convening Sidi, Baroka uses it as a means to prove himself the best suit in the village Ilujinle. Baroka holds Sadiku responsible for his polygamy. He says:

“Sadiku straightway, flings herself into the role of go before And before I even don a cap, I find Yet another stranger in my bed!” (44)

Sidi sympathises with his pathetic situation and she feels that his life is full of unhappiness. Baroka replies very tactfully. He says:

“I accept the sweet and sour with A ruler’s grace.” (44)
He says so because he finds that Sidi herself is being trapped in his net and now it is the time to make her more impressive. Then he uses the word "My Sidi" instead of 'My Child' or 'My Daughter'. What it indicates! It clearly indicates that Sidi is in full control of Baroka as she is being convinced for what he wants to be. He praises her and says:

"...And now
I find her deep and wise beyond her years" (45)

He brings a familiar magazine and an addressed envelops and asked about the stamp affix on it. Sidi naturally replies that she knows it is a stamp and she has seen it at Lakunle's place. Baroka is disappointed with the name of Lakunle and he immediately leaves the matter and says:

"Oh. I see you dip your hand
Into the pockets of the school teacher
And retrieve it bulging with knowledge" (45)

He shows a machine and says that perhaps Lakunle is ignorant about its functions. This is also interesting in a sense that Soyinka
has shown the ignorance of the people of Africa about new
technology. When Baroka says even Lakunle is not aware of it, this
means the others are not so educated as Lakunle is. And if Lakunle
is not aware of it, then the rest are uneducated. So naturally if a well-
educated person like Lakunle is not aware of it, then nobody else
knows about it. But Baroka's indication is different from what it is! He
wants to prove that this machine will produce a magazine and it has
photograph of Sidi and other girls of llujinle. He also refers to the
letters and other printed matter mailed through road, rail and air. He
assigns this responsibility to Sidi. He says:

"...We shall begin

By cutting stamps for our own village alone

As schoolmaster himself would say

Charity begins at home" (47).

He also says that the people of llujinle have made up tales of the
backwardness of the village. It hunts Baroka. He explains that he
does not hate progress but he hates the nature of it. He tries to
convince her. He says:

"I find my soul is sensitive, like yours" (48).
Sidi now finds no difference between Baroka and Lakunle. She says though the word are different both have equal thought. Baroka says that it is a bad thing that Sidi has compared him with a schoolteacher Lakunle. Sidi gives the reason for this thinking that she has a simple mind. Baroka here once again compares himself with Lakunle with reference to the wisdom that they have an art to learn even from children. Now Sidi is fully convinced. So she says:

"Everything you say, Bale,
Seems wise to me." (49)

Baroka refers to a proverb:

"...Old wine thrives best
Within a new bottle" (49)

This refers to his oldness. He wants to say that though he is old by an age; his vigour is not less anyhow. The people who know little of Baroka consider him as pleasure living man. But he says:

"It is only the hair upon his back
Which still deceives the world..." (49)
A crowd of dancers appears on the stage and the scene changes once again to the market place. It is now full evening. Lakunle and Sadiku are still waiting for Sidi’s return. Since long time has passed, Lakunle is worried about Sidi. He worries that Baroka may have killed her. He threatens Sadiku for her act and says:

“I’ll come and see you
Whipped like a dog. Baroka’s head wife
Driven out of the house for plotting
With a girl.” (50)

Lakunle suspects that Baroka has imprisoned Sidi in a dark narrow cell and she would rot there forever. But he claims that he will find her out by any means and he is ready to risk his life for that. The group of dancers come nearer and Sadiku asked Lakunle to give money to them. She starts dancing with them. The dance that the dancers perform is a dance of virility which of courser none other than the story of Baroka. Sadiku talks of her health and says that she can twist her waist with the smoothness of a water snake. At this time Sidi burst in and throws herself on the ground against the tree and sobs violently beating herself on the ground. Sadiku tries to ask
something but Sidi pushes her away and asked her not to touch her. Then Lakunle tries to solace her but she pushes her so hard that he sits down abruptly. He feels that Baroka must have beaten her. He says:

"Baroka is a creature of the wilds, Untutored, mannerless, devoid of grace". (52)

Lakunle advises Sidi that she will go to court and plea for justice. Sidi explains the fact that whatever Baroka has said about loosing his manliness was a lie to Sadiku. Sidi explains further that he told it to her afterwards that it was a trick. Baroka knew that Sadiku would not keep it as a secret to herself and a woman who hears to would go to him to mock him. Lakunle asks her about her virginity. Sadiku also asks the same question. Sidi shakes her head violently and bursts into tears. Lakunle is disappointed hearing all these things. He says:

"Oh heavens, strike me dead! Earth, open up and swallow Lakunle. For he no longer has the wish to live Let the lighting fall and shrivel me
Lakunle immediately feels that such thoughts are the thoughts of coward people. He feels that this trial is his own trial. He says:

“My love is selfless
The love of spirit
Not of flesh” (54)

He offers his love to Sidi even after this event of seduction by Baroka. He says:

“Dear Sidi, we shall forget the past
This great misfortune touches not
The treasury of my love.” (54)

He asks Sidi to forget about bride price, as she is no more a maiden. Sidi is surprised to know this. He asks Sadiku to go. He thinks of his principles and says that now there is no question of bride price to pay. Sadiku enters and informs him that Sidi is packing her things and she is dressing herself as a bride. Lakunle thought that Sidi is preparing to marry him and so he explains that he is not in hurry. He
is ready to wait for a day or two. He has to hire a praise singer. He is not ready to marry in haste. He says:

"A man must have time to prepare". (56)

He also thought of his pupils whether they like his marriage or not. Sidi enters loading a bundle in her hand and dressed embroidered cloth and has magazine in the other hand. She goes to Lakunle and gives him books. She says that she tries to tear it up but her fingers were too frail to tear it up. Sidi invites Lakunle to her marriage. He understands that she is inviting him on his own marriage. But when Sidi comes to know about it, she says:

"Marry who? You thought...
Did you really think that you, and I....
Why, did you think that after him,
I could endure the touch of another man?
I who have feel the strength,
Perpetual youthful zest
Of the panther of the tress?
And would I choose a watered-down
A bearded less version of unripend man?" (57)
Lakunle does not want to let her go but Sidi gives him a shove and says some harsh words to her and goes away. She seeks the blessings of Sadiku and asks the musician to sing and she also starts singing and dancing. The play ends with music and song but the situation is very shocking to Lakunle.

The play is a successful representation of the living significance of African heritage, culture and the social norms of his people. The dramatist has presented the idea of the need for absorbing new ideas in place of older and rotten tradition, which at no means is beneficiary to the people of Africa. The idea in the play is a conflict between the traditional African values of life and the modern lifestyle and it is very well presented by the revolutionary ideas of one of the prominent characters Lakunle and that traditional idea of Baroka and Sidi.

The "Morning" part is the exposition of its chief characters Baroka, Lakunle, Sidi and their status in the society in which they are living. The location of the play is the scene of one village school, which is in the centre of the village. Lakunle, the school teacher is teaching his students. He is an educated man in the village Ilujinle. The people of that village are living very traditional and orthodox type of life. They do not know anything about the modern lifestyle, scientific and industrial inventions. Lakunle wants to bring change in the
village. He wants that the people should take education and the facilities of city life style should be made available to llujinle people. Sidi, the heroine of the play, appears with a small pail of water on her head. She is in her traditional clothes. Her traditional style of dressing exposes her body, which Lakunle does not like. He informs her that it is because of her traditional dress; she becomes the object of attraction to all the young boys of the village. He advises her that she should dress like modest woman. Sidi thinks that Lakunle is insulting her so she calls him a mad man of the village – llujinle. For her Lakunle’s revolutionaries ideas are nothing but only whims.

Sidi and Lakunle discuss about the condition of women in their village. Sidi says that women are not weaker sex but they play an important role in managing the house. She gives the example that they pound, they yam and also remain bend all day to plant the millet with a child strapped on their back. Lakunle promises her that there will be machines in two or three years which will do all the works of women. All these facilities are available to the women of Lagos.

Lakunle is the only person to conduct certain activities in the village for its development. He wants the help of Sidi in his mission. He loves her and wants to marry her because he believes “Charity
begins at home" and he should marry a tribal girl. But for Sidi Lakunle's love is nothing. She will marry a person who will pay her bride price. In Africa it is a tradition that anyone who wants to marry should pay the bride price demanded by the girl's father. It is also a matter of pride for a girl. But Lakunle is against such degrading traditions. He wants to marry Sidi because he loves her. He believes that by paying Sidi's bride price, he will buy her. But Sidi is a woman, a human being and not a commodity. He is not ready to accept such kind of tradition. He says:

"A savage custom, barbaric and dated,
Rejected, denounced, accursed,
Excommunicated, archaic, degrading,
Humiliating, unspeakable, redundant,
Retrogressive, remarkable, unpalatable." (08)

Sidi has her own self-esteem. She is ready to marry Lakunle but she insists that Lakunle should pay her bride price, otherwise the people will laugh at her and they will suspect her character and will believe that she marries the schoolteacher without a price because she is not virgin. She says:
"I must have the full bride price....
But Sidi will not make herself
A cheap bowl for the village spit". (08)

Yet Lakunle believes that it is "An ignoble custom, infamous, ignominious custom". (08)

Lakunle and Sidi possess different views about the concept of wife. He is not ready to accept a woman as wife who will look after the house, husband and children. For him a woman should have the same respect as man. So he says to Sidi that if she marries him she will live a new life. He says:

“When we are wed, you shall not walk or sit,
Tethered, as it were, to my dirtied heels,
Together we shall sit at table,
Not on the floor – and eat,
Not with fingers, but with knives,
And forks, and breakable plates,
Like civilised beings.” (09)
He mentions further that they will wonder in the street arm in arm like Lagos Couples. Just as the girls of Lagos wear high-heeled shoes, paint their lips and stretched their hair. He will teach Sidi all these new manners and they will spend the weekend in nightclubs at Ibadan. He will make Sidi a modern woman. Through these ideas of Lakunle Soyinka presents the negative side of the modern life style. The modern women do not enjoy the same respect as men but they are sometimes only plaything a toy in the hands of men.

Soyinka presents another event to develop the action of the play, and he takes the opportunity to expose the ignorance of the village people through one event. One modern journalist comes to llujinle and takes photographs of Sidi and other villagers. He has camera and motorbike but since the llujinle people have not seen these things, they observed the journalist with curiosity. They consider his motorbike as the ‘Devil’s Horse’ (11) and camera as ‘one eyed box’ (11). In his second visit he brings one magazine, which contains beautiful photos, one of them is of Sidi. She becomes aware for the first time that she is really become a beautiful girl in the village. Two things happen because of the magazine. It arouses self-knowledge and self-awareness in Sidi as she says:

“I would demand my worth to wed
A mere village school teacher”. (12)

She further says:

"Sidi is more important even than the bale
More famous than that panther of trees.” (13)

The most important development, which the magazine performs, is that the photos of Sidi arouse lust in bale Baroka. He looks at the photos with lust and decides to marry her. At the end of the first part he appears when Lakunle, Sidi and other villagers are performing the dance. It is the entry of the villain in the play because later on we shall find that he always exploits the innocent villagers physically and also he has never made any attempt to develop the village. Thus the first part ends with Baroka’s comment:

“Yes, yes... it is five full months since last,
I took a wife...five full months...” (18)

The “Noon” Part once again exposes the character of bale Baroka. Baroka’s cunning nature is revealed through his comment to Sadiku and through Lakunle’s comment.
Baroka decides to marry Sidi after seeing her photographs. Sidi becomes reputed. She is a jewel and being the head of the Ilujinle, Baroka wants to possess the jewel - Sidi. He is so voluptuous that he forgets his own age. He is 62 years old, where as Sidi is too young. Baroka takes the help of his senior wife named Sadiku. He asks Sadiku to propose Sidi on his behalf. It is the irony of the African tradition that the wife has to propose other girl on behalf of her husband.

Sadiku proposes Sidi in the presence of Lakunle. Lakunle wants Sidi. Sadiku tempts Sidi by informing her that she will enjoy a glorious life after her marriage with Baroka. Baroka also swears that he will not marry again so Sidi will be his last wife. Sadiku further says that Baroka is an old and will not live for a long time and Sidi will become the head wife of the head weds the oldest son of her husband and becomes the senior wife so Sidi will be able to enjoy the title of “Senior Wife”. Baroka has many wives and they live in separate houses but Sidi will live in the place instead of out houses. Sadiku informs her she will enjoy a rich life because Sadiku herself enjoyed such kind of life for 41 years.

Sidi is not an innocent girl. She knows the villainy of Baroka. She knows that she is very popular and by possessing her Baroka wants
to gain new fame. She also knows the age of difference between her and Baroka. She compares her photos with Baroka's. She says:

"Compare my image and your Lord's,
An age of difference." (22)

Sadiku is disappointed but she gives an invitation for supper to Sidi at night at Baroka's house. Sidi rejects it because she knows that whoever dined with him becomes his concubine or his wife the next day. Baroka has exploited women of the village and have not made any progress in the village and therefore, Lakunle is against him. Sidi is not the only reason of conflict between Lakunle and Baroka but the backwardness of Ilujinle is also responsible for the conflict between them. The railway authority wants to install railway track in the village and they have already started working but when Baroka comes to know about this he gives bribe to the surveyor and prevents them from setting up railway track in their village. If they install railway track in the village, there will be change in the village. Trade, progress success and civilization will come to Ilujinle and it will bring a new awareness among the people. They will not obey him. Lakunle says:
"Voluptuous beast! He loves this life too well,
To bear to part from it, and motor roads,
And railways would do just that,
Forcing civilization at his door." (24)

When Sidi refuses the proposal of Baroka, Lakunle becomes happy.
He is satisfied at the thought that at least there is one woman in llujinle who understands him and his ideas.

Baroka is waiting for the answer of Sidi. Sadiku returns and informs him that Sidi has rejected his proposal on the ground that he is too old. It is a great shock for Baroka. He has never thought he is growing old but Sidi makes him aware of the fact that he is 62 years of age. He tries to convince Sadiku that he is not an old man because he still defeats the young person in a log-tossing match. He can kill even leopard and boa (dragon) at night to save the farmer's goats. He can even climb the silk cotton tree to break the first pod.

He is so much disturbed by the refusal of Sidi that he makes last plan to trap Sidi. So far he was very proud of his manliness but now he declares that he has lost his manhood. He says:

"That rains that blessed me from my birth,
Number a merge sixty-two,
My veins of life run dry, my manhood gone!” (28)

Thus the Noon Part of the play reveals the character of Baroka again and the boldness of Sidi. Sidi is no more a timid girl of the village as she used to be formers. She is not ready to surrender herself to Baroka and she rejects the proposal of Baroka with boldness without any fear. She is ready to face any difficulty. Baroka is defeated by Sidi and becomes revengeful. He appears very voluptuous like beast. He cannot believe that in his village any woman possesses so much boldness to reject him. Sidi's rejection makes him aware that he is not a young person but an old man and will not be able to exploit the girls anymore. His ego is hurt for the first time. But he is cunning and makes one plan to trap Sidi and to teach her a lesson.

The “Night” or the ending of the play is shocking for readers because they do not find poetic justice of virtue be rewarded and the villain and evil be punished. Here we find contrary thing that the hero is defeated, whereas the villain gets victory. Although the end is surprising, unexpected, there is a definite purpose behind presenting such kind of end.

Baroka, the bale of Ilujinle declares that he has lost his manliness. He reveals this secret to his senior wife Sadiku. Sadiku informs Sidi
about this weakness or shame of Baroka. Sidi becomes happy and she wants to ridicule Baroka because this is the best opportunity to laugh at him. She decides to go to Baroka's place and ignores Lakunle's request.

At first Baroka neglects Sidi and calls her an unwanted stranger but as he is cunning, he starts talking like Lakunle and informs Sidi about his reformative ideas. He also informs her that he is against polygamy but it is Sadiku who always brings a new wife for him. If he looks at any maid girl, or calls her name or praises her, Sadiku brings that girl and he finds another stranger in his bed. So according to him Sadiku plays the matchmaker without asking.

Baroka shows stamp machine to Sidi and Sidi forgets that she is in the house of Baroka. Baroka seduces innocent Sidi and she lost her virginity.

Lakunle is disappointed and yet he is ready to marry Sidi. He sticks to his reformatory ideas and ideals. He is ready to accept Sidi, even though she is no more a virgin now. He does not love her beautiful body only but he loves her soul. He is ready to marry her but she should give up her insistence on bride price. Hearing Lakunle's proposal, Sidi returns to her house. Lakunle is astonished and asks Sadiku to follow Sidi. Sadiku returns with a news that Sidi is preparing herself for the marriage ceremony. Lakunle becomes
happy but he feels that it is too early because he has to prepare himself for the marriage and he has to arrange other things also.

Sidi comes in bridal clothes and gives one book to Lakunle as a gift. She also says that he can also come. Lakunle is surprised and cannot understand Sidi's action. But Sidi's answer shakes his whole personality. She says:

"Marry who... You thought...
Did you really think that you, and I....
Why did you think that after him
I could endure the touch of another man?" (57)

She calls him "a book nourished shrimp" (57) by giving him a book as a gift. She has already made it clear to him that for a book warm like Lakunle, books are everything and he does not need a woman to pass his life but he can pass his life happily with books. Just as any book contains good ideas, Lakunle's mind also contains good ideas but it remains only ideas. Sidi is a woman with all kinds of desire and only Baroka can satisfy her and not a book warm Lakunle. Sidi also says that Baroka has retained his manliness even at the age of sixty whereas Lakunle would be ten years dead at that age.
Lakunle realizes that Sidi is the enemy of her own self. He fails to prevent her from becoming a mistress of Baroka and the play ends with the boon of Sadiku for Sidi that she may soon become the mother of Baroka's children. The play ends with the victory of Baroka, victory in the sense that Sidi accepted the traditional life and customs of the African culture in spite of Lakunle's modern and revolutionary ideas. It is a matter of fact that Soyinka has presented the play on two levels in the sense that first he wanted to present the climax of the rigidity of orthodox African culture and secondly he wanted to present the shallowness of the modern life style in comparison to orthodox life style of African tribal society. The idea of this play was apparently suggested by the fifty-plus Charlie Chaplin's marriage to the teenage daughter of the American dramatist; Eugene O'Neill led Soyinka to think about how a number of Yoruba chiefs had married girls young enough to be their grand daughters. The energy, wicked cunning and ability to satisfy their own lust in these chiefs are celebrated in the figure of Baroka who despite his years has no trouble in outwitting the pompous and superficially Europeanised schoolmaster Lakunle and stealing the pretty young woman like Lakunle has set his heart on marrying right from under his nose.
A close reading and assessment of present play indicate that it bares a striking note of the African Voice in it. The African Voice includes in it not only the merits and demerits of their traditional life but also merits and drawbacks of the civilized world. At many stages in the play we find how Africans have been victimized, kept illiterate, ignorant and mentally blinded by the native African themselves who on the surface play a role of African leaders struggling for education and upliftment. So the first tune of the African voice which we find here is how Africa is victimised by native Africans themselves. The best example which fits in this tune is Baroka. A couple of instances can be given to prove this exploitation by the native people. The first and the foremost instance is the village school, which he has opened but does not want that anybody should be educated. He knows that education brings awareness and awareness always opposes exploitation. The second instance which we find is even more effective. And that is how he tries to prevent the railway authority from giving the railway facility to the people of Ilujinle. Though verbally he speaks about progress, His offering the bribe to the people of railway authority in the form of hen and yam is a proof that he knows all those ways of corruption, which we generally find in a so called civilized man.
Soyinka does not hesitate to display this harsh reality that Africa is exploited by Africans equally as by Europeans. The presentation of this harsh reality bears a touch of black humour the way he offers bribe and manages to keep the railway track far away from Ilujinle has sad tone in it. Soyinka courageously presents that if Africa has remained backward the blame should not go to the White Colonisers. The Black Native leaders should share that blame equally. In fact, this play can be read along with Chinua Achebe’s, *A Man of the People* where Achebe presents the same situation – how far Africa is progressing in the hands of native rulers. The conflict between Odili Samalu and I M Naga and finally how this minister of culture exposes his own culturelessness indicate that the future of Africa is not very bright because one era of exploitation ended and the other began. Odili Samalu’s statement in this sense is important:

"Before independence what one knows was more important, but after independence whom you know became more important". (A Man of People, Chap. Second)

The play brings into comparison and contrast the Nigerian tribal life with the Western civilised life. But this comparison has been made in a wider perspective. The playwright does not want to simply glorify
the Western civilised world and overshadow the African tribal culture. Soyinka has paid equal attention to the fact that tribal life has its own standard and status. While there are certain drawbacks with the civilised way of life, it is reflected at its best in Lakunle's words to Sidi. He refers to the exterior which does not make a man civilized in a real sense of the term. It reflects the drawback of so-called civilisation. At one stage Lakunle while talking about progress talks of Magazines with photographs of beautiful girls. If this were the meaning of progress, Africa would suffer even more with such a progress. It does not remain unnoticed by Soyinka how the environment of the world has been damaged in the name of urban civilization and progress. Lakunle wants in place of forest well arranged park for lovers. What a forest can do a park cannot. Lakunle's desire for well arranged park gives an idea about the stereo type existence and monotony of life which man has invited in the names of civilization. Soyinka's deep insight into the nature of fair sex is reflected through Sidi and Sadiku. It is believed that a woman is a greater enemy of a fellow woman. We find that happening in the play. Sadiku's attempt to victimise Sidi by making an attempt to send her to Baroka is the best example of it. It seems that Soyinka is a good reader of the nature of woman. He makes Baroka speak about loosing his manhood. Baroka says this fully
knowingly that Sadiku does not keep it as a secret. His confident she would disclose it to Sidi, which he wants. Baroka’s idea is a sign of Soyinka’s ability to peep into the nature of woman.

The remarkable difference which Soyinka highlights between Lakunle and Baroka is the difference of idea and action. Idea without action is like a soul without body and action without idea is like body without soul. Lakunle is all soul and Baroka is all body. Lakunle speaks about his love for Sidi all through the play without any implementation while Baroka just implements without thinking of love and attachment. Sidi becomes a shuttle cock in between these two poles of human predicament.

Soyinka does not offer his own conclusion to the central dilemma of this play. It can be considered an open endedness of the play. Sidi’s throwing a book and calling him a book warm passes a hint that she finds Baroka’s action more convincing than Lakunle’s idea. Her decision enlarges the symbol of her character into the African continent. Her decision is the decision of Africa indicating that Africa cannot change overnight because the roots of tribal life are very much deep rooted into the psyche of Africans. Lakunle’s idea about progress and reformation contradicts the idea of natural living and preservation of good environment. He would like to have urbanization in Ilujinle with factories, chimneys and smoke. The
The playwright here juxtaposes urban aspect with rural aspect. Industrialisation leads to urbanization but it is at the cost of rural peace, prosperity and healthy environment. The only progress, which this change brings, is the progress of materialism. Soyinka has effectively brought this remarkable drawback of the urban civilisation to the surface.

The play creates an impression upon the mind of the readers and viewers that the tribal have their own sense of self-respect and chastity. They are even more stubborn and committed to their sense of self-respect. Any other civilised girl in place of Sidi would have most probably accepted the proposal of the school teacher without thinking about chastity or self-respect. But Sidi differs in this matter and proves how stubborn the tribal are in their self-respect.

While highlighting the self-respect of the tribal Soyinka does not forget to bring into focus certain customs of the tribal which may look odd to the civilised viewers. For example in Sadiku's attempt to inspire Sidi to be a kept of Baroka we find a wife supplying a mistress to her husband. One more odd tribal custom which we notice in the play is last wife of father becomes the first wife of the son and she plays the role of the head wife doing the same thing as Sadiku does.
The play brings in to contrast the urban attitude to monogamy against the tribal attitude to polygamy. Civilised society looks down upon the polygamy and it is treated as lack of cultural norms. But the tribal attitude to polygamy bears a sign of culture, strength and prestige. Whether Baroka of this play or Okonkwo of Things Fall Apart – all have the polygamist culture and they treat it as a sign of prestige and honour.

The architect of The Lion and the Jewel offers a glimpse of Soyinka's perfection and insight in the play writing. A close reading of the play gives an idea that the play has those structural norms which are to be found in a classical tragedy. A classical tragedy allows single revolution of the sun on the stage. Here we find the action of one-day taking place on the stage. The three parts namely "Morning", "Noon" and "Night" indicate that the action of the play does not exceed single revolution of the sun. Throughout the play the place of action remains llujinle and even within llujinle it is limited to "village centre". The only act of violence is the violence of Sidi's chastity and virginity that has been reported and not shown on the stage. In brief the play fulfils the condition of three classical unities of action, time and place of a Greek tragedy. One more remarkable aspect of about its structure is Soyinka's use of Yoruba words, tribal Gods and the technique of mime within play.
The tribal innocence of Sidi has never made her aware of the fact that love and liking are sometimes expressed through a kiss. When Lakunle makes such an attempt, she does not know what it is called and she frames her own tribal wording "Dirty Mouthing" for it. In the same way after her being seduced by Baroka Sadiku praise to the African God of fertility "Sango" for Sidi's pregnancy. Such a technique compels the readers and viewers to have some knowledge of Yoruba culture for the proper interpretation of the play.

The outstanding structural element of this play is the use of mime within a play. Many playwrights in the past have employed play within play technique but Soyinka makes the experiment of 'mime within play' in the present play. This technique serves more than one purposes at a time. Initially this technique serves the purpose of the humour. The way those girls enact a motorcar and imitate the photographer creates laughter. But at the same time when they used words like "one eyed box" for camera and "devil's horse" for a motorcar, their ignorance, illiteracy and backwardness came to the surface and the humour of the audience gets transformed into black humour. It is laughter with sad tone. This mime scene tells that what Soyinka cannot tell with so many words.

The three names each to the three parts of the play have a meaning to convey. "Morning" reflects a new hope in the life of Lakunle and
Sidi. "Noon" reflects the struggle and confrontation between the two. "Night" reflects despair and disappointment in their relation.

Even the title is chosen with some significance in it. The lion of this play is Baroka while the jewel is Sidi. Lakunle does not appear in the title but he plays a goldsmith. The jewel should be actually possessed by a goldsmith who can give proper shape and shine to it. But here in the play the aged man Baroka grabs this jewel named Sidi. Lakunle’s profession of teaching small children fixes within the word of goldsmith. He does the same job for those school children as a goldsmith does for jewels and diamonds. The ending of the play bears one tragic note in a sense that this goldsmith fails to possess that diamond and the diamond reaches unfortunately into the hands of a blacksmith.