

## Hybridity - A Destination for the Postcolonial World in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* and Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*

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Received 4 April 2022; accepted 7 June 2022

Published online 26 June 2022

### Abstract

The concept of hybridity has hitherto been treated as a state of being which describes the double identity of a person or thing. Hybridity, which is the quality of possessing a dual identity upon an encounter with a foreign culture, has proven to be unavoidable as cultures interact and are internalized by individual minds. Studying the pattern of economic, intellectual, cultural and industrial growth of postcolonial countries- such as Nigeria, Ghana, America, amongst others, as they relate with other cultures on the international stage, hybridity metamorphoses from simply a state of being a crossbreed to a destination to be reached in order to attain equilibrium of non-identical ideas which now inform the modern mind. The position of this article is to bring to the limelight the aspect of hybridity which seems unrecognized, or rather, unexplored and unappreciated- the advantage of hybridity which provides the opportunity for a peaceful co-habitation of native and western cultures, and to disabuse minds of what Adichie calls the single story. As such, it should be pursued as a height to be attained, well above the dilemma of not wholly belonging to an indigenous heritage nor acknowledged as unwelcome in a foreign culture.

Literary prototypes have portrayed both the good and bad sides of hybridity, with the latter having more references and chances of survival than the former. Literary critics have, however, resorted to cross-culturality as a means of escape from a world ruled by the 'myth of group purity' in the words of Ashcroft et al. (2002). From this submission, it is opined that hybridity- in this sense, a peaceful blend of two cultures with the ability to strike a balance between them with natural mastery, is the future of postcolonial

worlds that seek stability. It is therefore, a destination rather than merely a state of being. This paper aims at reimagining the negatively coloured concept of hybridity.

**Key words:** Hybridization; Identity; Cross-culturality; Destination; Stability

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Orija, J. M. (2022). Hybridity - A Destination for the Postcolonial World in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* and Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 24(3), 105-111. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/12657> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/12657>  
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### INTRODUCTION

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The African-American, the Westernized African, the racial and cultural Mulatto, amongst others provide good examples of minds that adopted cross-culturality, whether peacefully or forcefully. In the opinion of the college-bred American Negro, W.E.B. Du Bois, hybridity is the merging of two worlds such that neither is discarded but both, in their individual peculiarity, are married to give birth to a new world which bears, with equal regard, the imprints of its parents. He explains it vividly thus: "in this merging he (the American Negro) wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America for America has too many things to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face" (p.9, brackets mine). From this submission, there is a clear awareness of a dual consciousness- and in fact, a desire to keep the identities of these 'selves' owing to their individual relevance. The desire for hybridity directly translates to the quest to trap a Negro soul in an American

mind without conflicts, an African soul in Western ways without friction- the desire to maintain peace and stability between two unlike cultures such as the African and the American.

The concept of hybridity shares basic ideas vaguely with the American notion of "the melting pot" in its provision for the merging of two different cultures into a new one. The American notion of the "melting pot" has its origin in the immigration system of America which allows for immigrants from other parts of the world to bring parts of their culture yet be assimilated as Americans. The importance of this notion to this research paper is the idea of double consciousness which Du Bois makes reference to. The idea of double consciousness in the context of "the melting pot" replicates the idea of cultural hybridity as a destination not as a negative effect but as a potential which provides a platform for cross-cultural abilities which can grow into hybridity.

In his book, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1893), Du Bois' stand on the purpose of the double cultural heritage of the American Negro is the state of being of true self which is neither half of a thing nor an incomplete part of another, but a new product from a careful blend of both- a state in which a man can function in two worlds without being thought an outsider or an intruder in the one nor a half-baked son of the soil in the other.

Ashcroft et al (2002), submit that "Both literary theorists and cultural historians are beginning to recognize cross-culturality as the potential terminating point of an apparently endless human history of conquest and annihilation justified by the myth of group 'purity', and as the basis on which the postcolonial world can be creatively stabilized." P. 35. This submission underscores the position of Ashcroft et al on the future of postcolonial worlds. The present reality in postcolonial societies, as foreshadowed in literary works such as Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, is the habitation of Western cultures side by side African cultures but with the fear of blending them into a single identity. The most striking characteristic common to Postcolonial societies is the irreversible influence of Western culture on native way of life. In this submission, Ashcroft et al foresee cross-culturality as the end of racial inequality upheld by the baseless claim of a group purity- a sense of group equality that overshadows the humanity of others considered lower as illustrated allegorically in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. These scholars also proclaim it as the basis for stability of postcolonial worlds. This is because a symbiotic relationship between these two civilizations will enhance both.

*Dictionary of Critical Theory* defines hybridity as "a term used in contemporary Postcolonial studies to theorise and to a certain degree celebrate a global sense of mixedness- a mixedness of cultures, nations... interestingly, in colonial and imperial discourse, of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term hybridity carried negative connotations

and was used primarily to signal what the 'white' races had to fear if miscegenation was left unchecked... Today, the term is probably most closely associated with Homi Bhabha, who uses the term to stress the interdependence of colonizer and colonized...however,... Aijaz Ahmad, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Benita Parry have all offered critiques of the term on the grounds that it is idealist and doesn't accurately reflect the reality on the ground" (Buchanan, 2010). According to literary critics such as Ann Dobie, Bill Ashcroft, Gayatri Spivak, amongst many others, there are forms and stages of hybridity such as double consciousness and mimicry. According to Lois Tyson (2006), "Postcolonial theorists often describe the colonial subject as having a double consciousness or double vision, in other words, a consciousness or a way of perceiving the world that is divided between two antagonistic cultures: that of the colonizer and that of the indigenous community" p. 421. W.E.B. Du Bois refers to this concept illustrating with the typical American Negro who is in a dilemma as how to reconcile these extremely varied cultures. This reconciliation has often expressed itself in tension, aggression and distortion of cultural expression within and among objects of the process. An example of this is the character of Obi Okonkwo in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*. Obi, like many non-Westerners armed with Western education, and who have inevitably adopted the ways of Western civilization, finds it difficult to marry values, ideals and legacies of both the African culture which he was born into and the Western culture which he has been forced to adopt by the virtue of his birth in the postcolonial society of Umuofia. The interaction of these two cultures naturally results in their co-habitation in Obi's mind. But it turns out that he has not gained mastery of both, neither can he come to a point of non-conflicting balance between the two- for which he pays dearly.

Mimicry, according to Ann Dobie (2012), is "imitation of dress, language, behavior, even gestures..." p. 208. For Homi Bhabha, "mimicry is thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power" (p.121). From this submission, mimicry is simply a sign of what goes on deep down in the roots of indigenous cultures where an interference and a distortion had taken place by the evasion of a forcefully domineering foreign culture- an attempt bearing a far resemblance, yet mockery of such foreign impostor. This paper focuses on the possibility of the resemblance which eventually grows into an assimilation that does not impose a surrender of indigenous customs, rather, proves a modification.

Ann Dobie defines hybridity as one of the basic assumptions of Postcolonialism thus: "the interaction of cultures creates blended ones, mixtures of the native and colonial, a process called hybridity or syncretism. Characterized by tensions and change, this process is dynamic, interactive, creative. As Bhabha explains in

his interview with Cary Olson and Lynn Worsham, "For me, hybridization...is a social process. It's not about persons of diverse cultural tastes and fashions." p.189. Dobie's submission on hybridity bears a different tone from the usual pessimism associated with the interference of Western cultures in indigenous way of life. Although Dobie does not deny the reality of the tensions and unprecedented change it erupts at intervals in different parts of the world, she presents it as a process, and one that is creative, having established that it is a natural product of the interaction of the two cultures. Following the spirit of optimism on the subject of hybridity, Abiola Irele, in his essay "In Praise of Alienation", expresses the need to treat hybridity as a process that can give birth to a renaissance. Irele's idea of hybridity is embedded in his position of what he termed "alienation" from native culture. According to him, "Alienation, in this sense, cannot mean total loss; the fulfilment it promises resides precisely in the degree of integration it helps us to achieve. In its creative potential, alienation signifies the sensitive tension between the immediate closeness of the self and the reflected distance of the other." (Irele, 'In Praise of Alienation', pp. 606-607).

Irele also presents hybridity as a future for postcolonial worlds, citing the effect of a long process of hybridization on Europe, he challenges his readers to allow the process of blending and acculturation of two cultures to derive for the growing culture a new civilization developed by cross-fertilization of cultures. The trend and long term effect of colonization and hybridity on contemporary world powers have shown that if positively approached, hybridity can lead to the development of a culture. "The fact remains that the civilization we now associate with Europe was originally a derivation [from her former colonial masters- Rome], and as it developed, it continued to assimilate elements from other world civilizations" (p. 605) (brackets mine). He supports his argument on the basis of the irreversible transformation experienced by the postcolonial world as well as her desire to associate herself with the most reckoned with civilization- Western civilization: "It also happens to be the case that Western civilization, at least in its contemporary manifestations and circumstances, provide the paradigm of modernity to which we aspire" (p.605). Therefore, why hate and resist the very same ideals that we seek to attain?

In response to Obiajunwa Wali's position in his paper 'The Dead End of African Literature?' (1963), modern African literature has been described as a child of two worlds- the indigenous and the foreign- which is very evident in the language in which it is written for wider readership and easy response to the West. From the foregoing, if the current goings-on in Africa produce the content of Modern African Literature, then, it is safe to conclude that Africa herself, as she is known today, is a child of two worlds. This simply describes her hybridity. The fear of a complete surrender of indigenous culture or

a total loss of 'self' in the process of hybridization should be eliminated. The trend of Europe's growth by cultural assimilation, productivity (from cultural intercourses) and cross-culturality is enough evidence to provide an appreciable level of courage and confidence for Africa to embrace the process of hybridization and have a growing, rather than a divided consciousness.

While illustrating with Chiekh Hamidou Kane's novel, *Ambiguous Adventure*, Irele comments on the dilemma resultant from divided consciousness and consequences of not utilizing the gift of a dual heritage to arrive at a destination of balance and growth: "The hero; Samba Diallo, is the archetype of the divided consciousness, of the African who suffers in his mind the effects of a cultural dispossession. His agony is that of his dual nature marked by a cleavage rather than an integration of its two frames of reference" (p. 601). He further explains that instead of mourning the process, "the very tensions and conditions of stress of the process [of alienation and transition] would have been beneficial, if they helped to concentrate our minds both wonderfully and intensely upon the nature of our alienation" p. 606 (brackets mine).

Bertens (2001), while quoting Bhabha's submission on hybridity and hybridization, points out the positivity of hybridity, and specifically emphasizes the optimism with which Bhabha describes the concept of hybridity: "Shifting his focus from 'the noisy command of colonial authority', and 'the silent repression of native traditions', to 'the colonial hybrid', Bhabha argues that the cultural interaction of colonizer and colonized leads to a fusion of cultural forms that form one perspective, because it signals it's 'productivity', confirms the power of the colonial presence..." (Bhabha [1985] 1994b:112). Very important to the purpose of this research is Bhabha's description of hybridity as a "fusion", and the formation of a single perspective from two cultural forms. This suggests that the two cultures can be made into a fine blend devoid of the fibres and hard lumps of despair and cultural dilemma- hybridization is a proof of contact and union with the Western culture.

The process of hybridization has been negatively coloured because it suggests a loss of identity: a total surrender of identity and a necessary projection of Western culture, exclusively. The reality of the postcolonial world, however, is that everything in our way of life from our dressing to our educational system have been put into the process of hybridization by the reason of contemporary relevance, globalisation and a necessary interaction with other cultures. Contact between the West and the Anglophone and Francophone parts of Africa had different modes of political and social influence but similar results in the emergence of cultural hybridity- although they employed the policies of assimilation and indirect rule in Francophone and Anglophone West Africa, respectively, both parts of Africa had and still have the presence of both indigenous and Western cultures very much effective.

Cheikh Hamidou Kane, in his novel *Ambiguous Adventure*, presents Samba Diallo as is from a simple, religious African background who holds his religion in high esteem, and though of noble birth, has subjected himself under the tutelage of a disciplinarian who instilled in the young dark-skinned Moslem a pure love for nature, simple satisfaction with the traditions of his people and a strange and fearless acquaintance with the subject of death.

Samba Diallo's aunt, the Most Royal Lady, sets her nephew on the quest to learn the secret of the white man in Europe. This earns him the trouble of the hybrid, which his life later on, in the novel embodies explicitly. We see him voice out his pessimism towards hybridity to his French friends- the fear of vanishing at the end of the itinerary 'like a courier' (p. 113). This explains Samba Diallo's fear of losing completely, his African identity in his search for one he perceives to be advanced.

Samba Diallo's disposition towards the subject of hybridity is such that perceives the hybrid as one who has become the two sides of his double consciousness not with the simple mastery to command equal influence over both, but because he does not decide what he must take from or leave with the newly encountered culture as a way of counter-balance. He further confesses that the hybrid, in his opinion, is characterized by confusion- a result of not desiring to be either, and indecision- a result of not knowing which should be left for the other. Born out of optimism, however, is the possibility that neither be dropped for the other to be adopted, but both can be fused to make a new one. This should be the definition of the hybrid- that there must not be a complete surrender of culture as a matter of compulsion or as an only option, rather, a marriage of indigenous and foreign culture can save both cultures.

Samba Diallo, who used to lead a devoted life of prayer and was renowned for his love for solitude, perseverance at the hearth and instinctive nobility, now despises the ways of his people as well as their religion. Has he, as he feared he would, lost his Diallobe self to the adventure of the White man's secret (to conquer without being in the right)? Has he now come to hate who he was before he went to Europe? Had he also lost his identity to the West?

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## HYBRIDITY AS A SOCIAL PROCESS

Social process refers to the pattern of growth and change in a society over the years. In social relationships, four social processes occur frequently; exchange, cooperation, competition and conflict. (Anon, 2020). According to Garcia-Canclini, (2001), in her paper titled 'Hybridity', "'Hybridity' has been used by authors in the social sciences, literary, artistic and cultural studies to designate processes in which discrete social practices of structures

that existed in separate ways combine to generate new structures, objects and practices in which the preceding elements mix". Based on these premises, hybridization as a social process describes a pattern of formation of a new identity over time from two major ones which come in contact. The end product of this process is a change in worldview and behavior but that in some ways bears resemblance to its parents.

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## HYBRIDITY IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S NO LONGER AT EASE

Obiajulu Okonkwo is the name the catechist Mr Isaac Okonkwo, the son of Achebe's classic hero in *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo gave his own son. The name directly translates as 'the mind is at rest, finally' because he was born after many girls. In this text, Isaac Okonkwo gets afraid that his father's curse comes to fulfilment on his own son because he betrayed his culture for the West. But a closer look at his fear for the Osu betrays an ulterior motif for that choice of name. It can be seen as a complete removal from his father's high stake of cultural conformity and a rigid legacy of traditional adherence, a dream come true of the life he envisioned when he eloped with the British missionaries. Therefore, Obiajulu appears to live up to his name initially in the novel as a far cry from but simultaneously, the victim of the shortsightedness of his grandfather as the story later unfolds. Contrary to his name, Obiajulu is an embodiment of the paradox that rids both Umuofia and himself of their long awaited rest and aptly depicts the unrest that plagues the hybrid.

Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* written three years after Nigeria's Independence- 1963, contains the story of a man- Obiajulu, who suffers a major life breakdown because he could not blend his double heritage- African heritage and Western culture. His British education and the expectations of his people both compete for the ownership of his mind and the control of his actions and their consequences. This literary text gives expression to the commonly accepted narrative of the inevitable unpleasantness that comes with the process of hybridization. Like many other literary texts on the subject of hybridity, in this text there is no hope for the one who is transiting from a purely indigenous consciousness to an exploration of other cultures made available to him or her, and for which foreign contact is the visa. This paper attempts to re-write this narrative by projecting another possible conclusion for this cliché. Simon Gikandi, in the preface to the novel, emphasizes the "novel's original evocation of an emerging postcolonial culture and the crisis of a young African trying to find a bearing in the chasm between a dying colonialism and stillborn independence." P. i. This readily brings to mind the conflict between colonial legacy and the unprepared self-rule that imposed itself as its aftermath. This already



foreshadows the treatment of hybridity as a concept in the novel. The most obvious effect of hybridity is the unwilling, and in most cases, unwanted awareness of a double sense of cultural allegiance, which finds expression in language, dressing, ideals on marriage, industrialization, amongst others.

This novel does not only confirm a trending misconception, but also highlights the consequences of fighting the process of hybridization. However, Obi's surprise at the change he meets upon his arrival to Lagos and Umuofia defends the rationale behind accepting and utilizing hybridity as well as confirms the relevance of hybridity as transcending a state of being but a destination for stability. On this ground, this paper argues that to catch up with the fast paced evolution in the world and to escape suffering redundancy, cross-cultural interactions and contacts are necessary, therefore, the peaceful co-habitation of indigenous and foreign cultures should be embraced.

In this novel, Achebe makes a statement through the character of the president of the Umuofia Progressive Union which is later supported by the way the novel ends- with Obi, who initially takes a bold stance of non-compromise against the culture of bribery and social decadence. The statement appears to counter the survival of, and in fact, feasibility of hybridization: "you see...a man may go to England to become a lawyer or a doctor, but it does not change his blood. It is like a bird that flies off the earth and lands on an ant-hill. It is still on the ground." The first statement would have survived the attention of critics and earned an interpretation that suggests the ability to retain ones identity even after contact with a foreign culture, but its supporting illustration quickly reveals the intention of the author. This proverbial illustration suggests the well accepted limitation to the process of hybridization that successfully gives to births a healthy hybrid at a mature stage in the process. In this case, Obi's limitation is the belief systems in his culture that hinders his marriage to Clara and misunderstands his new city life which eventually brings him devastation.

Like Soyinka's Lakunle, Achebe's Obi refuses to pay the bride price and defies the traditional Osu caste system in an attempt to divorce themselves from their traditional practices- an act that symbolizes their dual consciousness. Therefore, the erroneous belief that the traditional self must be lost to the newly imbibed cultures comes in full play.

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## **HYBRIDITY IN WOLE SOYINKA'S *THE LION AND THE JEWEL***

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The *Lion and the Jewel* was written in 1963, three years after Nigeria became independent. At the opening of the play, Lakunle 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." Here is a character who tries to avoid being caught associating with the indigenous customs and traditions of his people and also strives to meet up to the intellectual and social disposition of the Western culture. Lakunle is somewhere in the middle of African traditions and Western culture, although, he tilts greatly towards the latter, as he adores Lagos for its fame of being a civilized place, a place where western thoughts and ideals in form of dressing, industry and education are comfortable to breed and grow: "what I boast is well known in Lagos, that city/ of magic, in Badagry where Saro women bathe/ in gold..." (p. 5). Lakunle is portrayed as a character who imitates Western ways as he looks up to them as the standard for intellect and civility, whereas, he has not been fully assimilated into the Western culture as his semi literacy, appetite for a traditional jewel as well as his traditional proverbial tendencies give him away. The resultant dilemma of his imitation is well displayed in his self-contradictions as his anti-modernist ideas of a woman's brain being "smaller" than a man's contradicts his desire for "...an equal partner in my race of life" (p.8). This aptly describes the negative representation which hybridity and its processes or forms- imitation and mimicry, have been associated with.

Sidi, however, presents hybridity as a necessity. "You see, bookman/ we cannot really do without your head" (p.18). She admits that she has been learning of the ways of the white man one she considers modern, enlightening, knowledge, education: "The school-man here has taught me certain things/ and my images have taught me all the rest" (p. 21)- this explains that western education has brought her to appreciate and explore her own beauty, business advantages and potentials.

Baroka is the village chief and a custodian of tradition, yet, he secretly has possession of "a strange machine, a most peculiar contraption with a long lever" (p. 26). Baroka opens up his tolerance and indeed acceptance of western religion, and by extension, culture and worldview thus: "Christians on my /father's shrine, child/ do you think I took offence? A-aw..." (p. 42). Baroka proves to have been a secret disciple of the western ways- his secret printing machine, and this gives him away in the manner in which he speaks and relates with the youthful Sidi who is also tilted towards modern ways. Sidi testifies to this: "...you speak/ almost like the school teacher, except/ your words fly on a different path..." (p.53). Baroka confirms this later on in their discussion: "Your school teacher and I are much alike". Baroka encourages hybridity explicitly with these words: "The old must flow into the new, Sidi" (p.54), although this has the effect if a double entendre as it also reveals Baroka's move towards seducing Sidi.

Lakunle defends his desire to attain Western standard of civility as he reveals his fear: "we must be modern with the rest or live forgotten by the world" (p. 37).

His ambition may be considered a little overdone but it contains, more mildly, one of the reason for hybridity which is to maintain relevance with the world. As at the time the play was written- a post-colonial era, it had begun to dawn on Africa that she was caught between a time-wheel of the past and the future which leaves her present as a mixture of the both, therefore the three major characters in the play find themselves unconsciously drifting away from an undiluted African way of life and gravitating towards new ideas from contact with the West, a proof that hybridity might just be an inevitable future for postcolonial societies that seek stability, versatility, relevance, growth and productivity.

Soyinka's play satirizes Lakunle's blind imitation of Western culture. At the end of the play, the meaning, in the context of this argument, that emerges is that imitation as illustrated through the character of Lakunle, is a far-cry from the stability and cross-cultural abilities that hybridity affords the cultural hybrid. At the end of the play, we can deduce the significance of the old to the new through the character of Baroka. He seems to be able to strike more balance between the old and the new as he simultaneously stands for tradition and accommodate modern ways. This echoes that the old is as important as the new, hence, hybridity. Lakunle's loss of Sidi to Baroka signifies that a total abandonment of the traditional for the foreign does not guarantee one the aspired recognition which is represented in this play by the metaphoric jewel in the person of Sidi. Instead, a blend of both gives one more prospect meeting the requirements of winning the prized jewel. This is illustrated in how Sidi's mockery of Baroka switches to admiration for having a similitude of the new while representing the old. This points to the necessity of cross-cultural abilities which Lakunle's blind chase of Western ways robs him of.

Baroka stands for a movement or tendency towards a blend of both traditional and Western ideologies. His character already foreshadows the feasibility of this paper's aim. He keeps his possession of a stamp machine secret and that implies that he could not boast of it openly; for some reasons, he is not bold to show it off like Lakunle does of his haphazard grasp of Western values. This explains the dilemma of the one on the journey to becoming a cultural hybrid. The position of this paper is that African texts hint at the representation of hybridity as a state of stability. Soyinka's text depicts this through the statements of Sidi and Baroka respectively thus: "You see, bookman/ we cannot really do without your head" (Soyinka, p.18), "...the old must flow into the new, Sidi" (Soyinka, p.54). In Achebe's text, it is the opposite that is used to arrive at the same point: Obi's inability to strike a balance between his cultural heritages and grow into hybridity costs him his much aspired peace, career and cultural dignity.

In a Ted talk in 2019, Chimamanda Adichie tells a few short personal stories to illustrate what she calls the

dangers of a single story. According to her, "the single story forms stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story the only story" (Adichie, 2019). According to her, a single story is dangerous. It is the inability to see the world as anything other than what we already know about it. For her, the dangers of a single story is stereotype and myopia. What she calls the single story is seeing the world from one side, not minding the fact that there may be one thousand and one other sides yet to be explored. This paper draws materials from Adichie's talk to drive home the point that the subject of hybridity should not be synonymous with confusion, that there is more to the cultural hybrid such as cross-cultural abilities, potential for balance, relevance, and not merely cultural dilemma.

The rationale behind the choice of *The Lion and the Jewel* as a literary platform to argue the subject of hybridity lies in opposing the widely accepted notion that the hybrid does not always survive the process of hybridization or reach the apex of his career to successfully attain a natural mastery of both indigenous and foreign cultures. As already established in the works of literary critics and writers, the process of hybridization is characterized by change- whether desired or not.

Imitation and mimicry are forms or stages of hybridity which distinguish them from the final stage of change by the quality of being half-baked: only a vague resemblance, the practical expression of the desire to be like the exalted other. This is vividly illustrated in the character of Lakunle, the school teacher who magnifies his little exposure and boasts of his semi literacy. He aspires to attain modernity conferred by his assimilation into the Western culture- a process which has haphazardly begun and has no future. The crises of his imitation is the conflict in his modern philosophy. He lacks the attitude of criticism that truly marks modernist tendencies as he takes hook, line and sinker what his 'books' tell him, upholds the modernist ideal of gender equality but agrees with 'his books' that women "...have a smaller brain than [men]" (p. 4).

The relevance of this literary text to this paper is to reveal the indispensability of the effect of Western influence on Africa and how more of it is desired despite its open denial. Soyinka illustrates this through the character of Sidi who now sees herself through the light of opportunities offered by what she calls "civilized" life. In fact, Sidi's yardstick for 'greatness' is the fame handed down to her through a magazine. Baroka is also of the opinion that a man must allow the "old to flow into the new" in order to keep abreast of new and foreign ideas, yet, not lose contact with the old and indigenous. Even the Stranger in the play, a man from the modern city of Lagos with a "one-eyed box...eventually tries the local brew skeptically, appears to relish it and drinks profusely" (p.17).

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## CONCLUSION

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One would ask what deeper level of meaning hybridity would have to a postcolonial state other than to encourage the embrace and accommodation of a foreign culture with the understanding that it does not necessarily require a sacrifice of the indigenous culture. The process and indeed importance of hybridization begins with the motive with which it is done. In contemporary times, hybridization seems to be a wheel in fast motion that takes along idle viewers as it speeds by, but like Baroka who did not seek Sidi's hand before she became famous for her pictures in the magazine, the process of hybridization is initiated when there is the need to upgrade, the ingredients of which are embedded in a foreign culture. Although, Baroka's employment of catchy Western ways was strategic in his plan to get Sidi, the jewel of Ilujinle, he is caught in the possession of "a strange machine, a most peculiar contraption with a long lever" (p.26).

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