

# 1 The Guide and the Lion and the Jewel: The Peace-Making 2 Efforts of R

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## 6 **Abstract**

7 The paper will unveil how both R. K. Narayan and Wole Soyinka contributed much to  
8 establish peace in their respective countries through their literary works. They have engaged  
9 themselves in a journey to protect traditionalism and the practices of their cultures from any  
10 kind of foreign intrusion. Almost all their literary works bear the testimony to their  
11 peace-making efforts. However, amid them, The Guide by R. K. Narayan and The Lion and  
12 the Jewel by Wole Soyinka make it clear that both writers have prioritized traditionalism over  
13 modernity. This research discovers how the characters of the above-mentioned texts engage  
14 themselves in different deeds to find out the auspicious of traditionalism and the negative  
15 aspects of modernity and how they succeed in doing so. At last, the paper will bring out how  
16 both R. K. Narayan and Wole Soyinka have emerged as peace-makers through their literary  
17 contributions.

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19 **Index terms**— traditionalism, modernity, spiritualism, afrocentricity, eurocentricism, indianness etc.

## 20 **1 Introduction**

21 Sahitya Academy Award-winning writer R. K. Narayan always loved to focus on the age-old cultural practices of  
22 India through his writings. It was his motive to spread the message of Indianness through his novels. In recent  
23 days, his novels have become a media to dish out the wealth of Indian culture amidst the rest of the world. Even  
24 in India, students learn about history and culture of India through reading his fictions. So, the critics consider  
25 him the finest Indian fiction writer of all time. Narayan never produced any novel keeping in mind about the  
26 readers who are only well-versed; rather he always wrote for the mass people. He aimed at manifesting Indian  
27 mythology, history and culture among us through the writings which are lucid to read and easy to understand.  
28 And the same spirit of Indianness evoked Narayan to pen the novel, The Guide. This novel brings into focus  
29 how Narayan established himself as a peace-maker in India disseminating his ideas of non-violence and 'ahimsa'  
30 (non-violence). By the same token, Wole Soyinka has emerged as a peace-maker in Nigerian society, who strongly  
31 believes that a society cannot progress without its own culture and its practices. Soyinka's play The Lion and  
32 the Jewel encapsulates the importance of traditionalism in African society. It also unfolds how the intruders from  
33 the west invariably try to influence the Africans with their ways of living. And Soyinka has considered this as a  
34 threat to the cultural variation of Africa. Moreover, he has shown how the people of the west have been trying to  
35 impose their thoughts and ideas on the peace-loving people of Africa. In this play, we find him a very committed  
36 playwright who, by all means, wants to maintain the peace of his locality. His peace-making efforts take us to his  
37 world of tension, confusion, and synthesis. This research has shown how both R. K. Narayan and Wole Soyinka,  
38 through their abovementioned literary pieces, contribute to establishing peace in their respective countries. The  
39 characters they have made in their works are also committed to maintaining peace in their localities. They  
40 represent the ideas of the writers. Raju from The Guide goes through different tough phases of his life and at  
41 last, he becomes a saviour of his society. The way Raju takes the responsibility of saving the villagers from the  
42 bad days of drought is very similar to Narayan's project of spreading the history of India through writing to make  
43 people conscious about India's myth, trend, culture, and its practices. Wole Soyinka, through the play, The Lion  
44 and the Jewel, brings out manifold tensions prevailing in different societies of Africa. He has shown these problems

## 1 INTRODUCTION

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45 have emerged because of the intrusion of western cultural components to the African society. In his play, he also  
46 accentuates western subjugation, in the name of enlightening the backward people, and has created confusion  
47 amid the African people. They have got baffled. They are being influenced by western culture since most of  
48 the governments of Europe have been injecting money along with their cultural practices. The ambivalence of  
49 African people becomes conspicuous through the projection of the character, Sidi. However, Soyinka, through  
50 Sidi's rejection of Lakunle, aims at removing confusion and tension from the society and wants to reestablish peace  
51 in the locality. Throughout the novel, Narayan speaks of the necessity of spiritualism. The novel deciphers his  
52 ideas about non-violent resistance and ahimsa (nonviolence). The storyline helps us understand that Narayan  
53 strongly believes in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. Moreover, his concept of Indianness also dominates  
54 the novel. He felt that "to be a good writer anywhere, you must have roots-both in religion and family. I have  
55 these things." He always worked with dualities of life such as appearance and reality, good and evil, beliefs and  
56 betrayals, tradition and modernity etc. But this novel particularly deals with Gandhian ideology and Indianness  
57 which ultimately lead Narayan to prioritize spirituality over modernity.

58 At the outset, we find the protagonist of the novel, Raju running a shop at a railway station. Then he becomes  
59 a railway guide. And then he turns a married woman's lover. Gradually, he turns a dancing girl's manager. In  
60 the middle of the novel, we find him a swindler who cheats people. This activity makes him a prisoner. Finally,  
61 his transition from a materialistic one to a spiritual guru makes him a genuine human being. Raju goes through  
62 a process of crime and punishment. In this regard, Sharan remarks that:

63 In the course of his ordeals, he changes himself thoroughly and accepts the challenges of reality. He plays his  
64 role of a holy man with a ring of sincerity and embraces death at the end of the novel. Thus, 'Railway Raju', the  
65 guide becomes a 'spiritual guide' and all his imperfection and impersonation turn into a real act of self-sacrifice.  
66 (1993:21) Most of us know that Mahatma Gandhi struggled not only for India's independence but also for making  
67 a united India where all people, regardless of class, caste and creed, will live a happy and peaceful life. Gandhi's  
68 dream of establishing a peaceful society is very similar to that of R. K. Narayan. And Narayan has brought this  
69 issue into focus through the projection of the character, Raju. In The Guide, Narayan creates a picture of Gandhi  
70 which we can compare with Swami or Raju. The villagers of Mangal consider Swami or Raju as Mahatma. They  
71 deeply believe that Raju will rescue them from the evil spirit of drought. They also believe Raju's fasting will  
72 bring rain to the land as Gandhi's fast became able to bring changes in Indian society. Raju, the Swami will save  
73 the land the way Gandhi's fast saved India. In this regard, we find the villagers saying the following words about  
74 swami (Raju): "He is like Mahatma. When Mahatma Gandhi went without food, how many things happened in  
75 India! This is a man like that. If he fasts there will be rain." (The Guide, 102)

76 It is Narayan's art of characterization that he imbues Gandhian spirit for saving others and risks his own life,  
77 into his character Raju. Raju tries to acknowledge his past life sins to the villagers for several times. However,  
78 they do not want to believe those, rather they regard him as their saviour. Raju's fast makes it clear that he  
79 also does not want to destroy the peace of villagers. As soon as the villagers regard him as their saviour he does  
80 not hesitate to sacrifice his own life to bring back peace to the village, Mangal. Indeed, Narayan's own beliefs  
81 regarding spiritualism have been reflected in the actions of the character Raju. Thus, Narayan becomes a great  
82 peace rooting facilitator in Indian society.

83 Moreover, Narayan's portrayal of Malgudi represents his concept of Indianness. The Malgudian society and its  
84 tradition represent the society and the tradition of India as a whole. In addition, Narayan has used symbols which  
85 stand for typical Indian tradition and culture. The portrayal of the temple and the river Sarayu represent the old  
86 nature of Indian culture. To fully understand Narayan's Indianness G. S. Rathore voices, The temple's influence  
87 on the democratic consciousness is so profound and efficacious that it results in the ultimate transformation of  
88 Raju. It enables the establishment of the identity of the mask and the man. The second symbol of the village,  
89 Mangal as well as Malgudi, signifies native strength, continuity of tradition, the ecology of a whole race with  
90 its inescapable influence on the individual consciousness and elemental determinism of individual destiny. . .  
91 . Thirdly Malgudi is the symbol of modern India caught in the throes of change under the impact of western  
92 civilization. Its faith and resilience are effectively affirmative of the root of a changing tradition. . . . Lastly  
93 Narayan's invention of Mempi Hills is paralleled in his creation of Sarayu River, thereby completing the image  
94 of a whole country as a structural symbol for the Universe itself. (7) Again, Raju's transformation into Swami  
95 gives us the idea of age-old faith of the people in sanyasi. In this regard, G. M. A. Christy utters:

96 It is true that R.K. Narayan has proved that typical Indian thoughts and feelings can be expressed in foreign  
97 language without trying to imitate the native speakers of English. He gave his characters Indian thoughts and  
98 feelings and expressed it in his scenes and backgrounds. Indian culture and tradition is rich and varied and it is  
99 not easy to summarize through few situations or characters. But Narayan made it exuberant and all his characters  
100 share Indianness. ( ??) III. Portrayal of Yoruba Culture in the Lion and the Jewel In any society, culture is  
101 the most predominant force which determines other important forces of the society. It includes shared values,  
102 beliefs, symbols, and behaviours among individuals. Our decisions and actions are largely guided by the cultural  
103 components. According to Madzingira, "Culture is the totality of human endeavors in a given time and place.  
104 People are constructs of their culture. Culture gives people their identity and dignity. It is every day expression  
105 and future aspirations. Culture and development are intertwined because culture underpins development and  
106 reinforces it." (3) This paper tends to give a very accurate picture of culture within the play the Lion and the  
107 Jewel that depicts the tragic and comic nature of life.

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108 The above-mentioned description will make us understand how Soyinka prioritizes localness over Eurocentric  
109 ideas in The Lion and the Jewel. Indeed, the play takes place within a day and is divided into morning, noon, and  
110 night. It basically unveils the conflict between traditional Nigerian Yoruba values and the Western influence of  
111 Nigeria's colonizers. In this play, Soyinka seeks to satisfy his thirst for Afro-centricty by applying many methods,  
112 which are in African origin, in his play. It is needless to say that this play enabled the Nigerian drama to become  
113 part of the world theater. Through introducing Sidi and Lukunle he introduces two worldviews; the Afrocentric  
114 view and the Eurocentric view. The critic says "The play turns to be a kind of ideological war between these two  
115 poles; and furthermore, Soyinka adds another important character who is a female to mediate the conflict." (2)

## 116 **2 IV. Conflict between Old and New Set of Values**

117 Indeed, the play, in many ways, explores the value of traditional Yoruba ways against the European innovations.  
118 Lukunle, an eager but naive schoolteacher, who believes in modernity and Western ideas, does not want to accept  
119 the age-old ideas of African culture. On the other hand, Baroka, the village leader, advocates traditions and  
120 considers modern ideas as the threat to his culture. In this regard, the two characters represent the two sides of  
121 the major social and political issues in Africa. Likewise, Sidi, the village Belle, also believes that modern ideas  
122 are threat to African cultural diversity. In this way, the play presents us with Afrocentric and Eurocentric ideas  
123 which are in constant conflict.

124 Also, the play is a comedy with a message, which puts the Westernized schoolmaster Lukunle against the  
125 leader Baroka, illustrating the division between the modern and the traditional. Thus, Wole Soyinka writes  
126 about Yoruba rituals and beliefs to reveal his roots. It begins with Lukunle pouring out his heart to Sidi but she  
127 does not want to pay attention. If only Lukunle can pay dowry then she would marry him. However, to Lukunle,  
128 that is being barbaric, outdated and ignorant. The following lines bear the proof of the aforesaid statement:  
129 "Lukunle is dressed in an old style English suit, threadbare but not ragged, clean but not ironed, obviously a size  
130 or two too small. His tie is done in a very small knot, disappearing beneath a shiny black waistcoat. He wears  
131 twenty-three-inch-bottom trousers and blanco-white tennis shoe." (Collected Plays 2, The Lion and the Jewel, 1).  
132 Erapu ??1975 illustrates that:

133 The school teacher turns out to be a man with a missionary zeal to transform the village from 'primitivity' to  
134 'modernity'. Lukunle is a romantic and a dreamer on the one hand and a jester with an imperfectly hidden zest  
135 for life on the other hand (3)(4).

136 He proves to Sidi that he is a man of words, not action. She says "These thoughts of future wonders-do you  
137 buy them or merely go mad and dream them?" (The Lion and the Jewel, 5). Therefore, she calls his speech  
138 nonsense. Moreover, he says Nonsense? Nonsense? Do you hear? Does anybody listen? Can the stones Bear to  
139 listen to this? Do you call it Nonsense that I poured the waters of my soul To wash your feet? (6).

140 The above-discussion makes it clear that Wole Soyinka strongly wanted to bring into focus the constant conflict  
141 between Afrocentric and Eurocentric ideas in Africa. And his play The Lion and the Jewel has successfully  
142 portrayed the conflict.

143 V.

## 144 **3 Afrocentricity vs Eurocentricism**

145 Afrocentricity includes a set of views that encourage the writers to write about the history and culture of Africa.  
146 It is an intellectual perspective which discusses the ways of African life. The term 'Afrocentricity' was first coined  
147 and popularized by Asante and he states that it is essentially concerned with the tradition and cultural variation  
148 of African society. As a movement Afrocentricity places African history and culture at the centre of any analysis.  
149 The movement brings into focus how Africans are being marginalized. It rejects Eurocentric ideas imposed on  
150 African people. It analyses how Afrocentric ideas are being pushed aside because of the intrusion of Eurocentric  
151 ideas into African culture. No doubt, Soyinka always prioritizes Afrocentricity over Eurocentricism. And the  
152 way the play, The Lion and the Jewel portrays rich cultural heritage of Africa endorses his love for own culture  
153 and tradition.

154 We find that dance and music plays a key role in shaping the entire play. These are drawn from African  
155 tradition and they are also similar to other African rituals. These are the vital objects of African oral literature.  
156 Moreover, these components show us the importance of oral literature in the literary domain of Africa. According  
157 to Feuser "the center of Soyinka's literary art is on African forms." (2) In the play, one must observe that Sidi,  
158 Sadiku and the villagers occasionally chant, sing Volume XVIII Issue VI Version I 11 ( A )

159 and dance. Soyinka used it to unravel the Afrocentricity in his play.

160 In the play, we also find Soyinka presenting a dichotomy between two ideologies, Afrocentricity and  
161 Eurocentricity. On the one hand, Lukunle represents the European tradition and on the other, Sidi and all  
162 other villagers represent African tradition. As a result, a conflict arises when the two sets of opposing ideas  
163 emerge. Lukunle desires to marry Sidi in a westernized way. But Sidi refuses to accept so. She is more willing  
164 to marry Balle, an old traditionalist of the village. The entire episode unveils why Sidi does not want to come  
165 out of the cycle of her age-old tradition and culture. It also proves that Soyinka values Afrocentricity much over  
166 Eurocentricism. In this regard, Asante states:

167 An afrocentric critique must focus on and invest energy in depicting Africans as inevitable creators. Thus in  
168 The Lion and the Jewel we found Soyinka presenting the Africans as civilised in their own kind of way, and at  
169 their own pace without the need of the European views or help. Thus Sidi could not approve with what Lakunle  
170 called civilisation which is dining in the city not carrying buckets of water on her head and also using some  
171 modern tools. Sidi appreciated her own African way of living and culture. She was not influenced by Lakunle's  
172 western views. This depicts Africans as civilised in their own kind of way. Hence we can say that Soyinka  
173 reflected African people as subjects not objects of history. (1) VI.

### 174 4 Conclusion

175 This paper has elaborately analyzed how both R. K. Narayan and Wole Soyinka, through the abovediscussed  
176 literary pieces, have shown us they are completely faithful towards their own culture, tradition, rituals and trends.  
177 They have prioritized localness over any kind of westernized idea. It is clear that the characters namely Sidi and  
178 Raju largely represent the beliefs and ideas of Narayan and Soyinka. The way Narayan contributes to establishing  
179 peace in Malgudi is very similar to the way Soyinka plays a major role in protecting Yoruba culture from the  
180 vicious cycle of Eurocentricism. Again, the way Raju represents Indianness through his sacrifice for the village  
181 people resonates the way Sidi rejects westernized ideas of Lakunle. Narayan has chosen the path of spiritualism  
182 to save his culture from the evil spirits of modernity. Conversely, Soyinka has celebrated the components of  
183 African oral literature to encounter the onslaught of westernized ideas. Consequently, it can be said that the  
184 peace-making efforts of both Narayan and Soyinka have succeeded in many ways.<sup>1</sup>

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