

Compare and
contrast both character
sarzan the mad man
and sarzan the
prisoner



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Order 515069 Topic: Compare and contrast both character sarzan the mad man and sarzan the prisoner When middle age traditions are viewed from the viewpoint of the modern man, conflicts and contradictions are bound to surface. Issues of faith and issues of reasoning cannot go in tandem. Both are poles apart. The ancient African traditions are strange and crazy and for the one who gets exposed to it for the first time they may look ridiculous. But the African people deeply revere their traditions and if one disobeys such traditions, the social consequences will be terrible. So, a stranger to the land of Africa should not question or comment unfavorably on the age-old traditions. Keita returns to his village after completing his duty with the army, and stays to build a road. He strongly criticizes the superstitious practices of the people like sacrificing animals, and is not tired of repeatedly telling them that it is the practice of the savages. He is disgusted with such cruel practices. Overwhelmed by his re-exposure to traditions, he goes crazy and looks like the possessed individual. The local people call him " Sarzan". For his act of disrespect to traditions he must get punishment. Kieth's outlook had broadened, as he was the part of the French Army and seen action in many places of the world. When he returns to his native village, he is quite unhappy to accept the ways of the people sticking to traditions and follow them unquestioningly. No one is willing to accept his reformation processes and unable to bear their stout resistance Keita loses his mental balance. In that tradition-bound world it was no ordinary sin to take a stand against the old tribal gods and customs. The spirits of the ancestors will not condone the serious lapse on his part. The local people are not willing to accept him as the normal human being. He is an individual who has lost senses—a mad man according to them. He is the prisoner with the villagers

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and he will be punished according to the tribal traditions. No one can waive the punishment for the audacity of challenging the divine authority of African gods. Charles Larson (1998, p. 39) describes the strange transformation of Keita, as far as the African people are concerned, thus: "Thiemokho Keita was gone for the villagers. Only Sarzan was left. Sarzan- the-Mad." (Man) For the one who disrespects traditions, the people of Dougouba have no regard and show utter contempt towards that individual. That was the position of Keita and Larson describes the punishment proceedings thus: "Sergeant Keita. "Ayi! Ayi!" said the old men. "Ayi! Ayi!" echoed the children. "No, not Keita!" said the old father, "Sarzan," just Sarzan. We must not rouse the anger of the departed..." (p. 35) The story, indicates through the process of sarzon the madman turning out to be sarzan the prisoner, due to the stubborn resistance that he offers to the tradition-bound African people and meets equally stubborn opposition from them who are bent upon to maintain respect for their inherited culture. To strengthen and give meaning to the change in the personalities of sarzon the madman and sarzon the prisoner, a brief reference to the history of Africa has been made in the story and the historical setting of the village has been outlined. The people have never taken kindly to the toucouleur invasion and destruction of their customs. They wish to rebuild the society according to the old traditional lines and Keita's character outlines that process. Works Cited Larson, Charles, Under African Skies: Modern African Stories, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, August 5, 1998.