

Social and Cultural Resistance in Yorùbá Novels: A Literary Reflection of Identity and Resilience

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Abstract

The Yoruba people in West Africa, Nigeria, is a unique tribe with a rich culture. Despite colonisation, civilisation and westernisation, which aimed to erase cultural identity, Yorùbá culture has remarkably survived and thrived globally. This study, therefore explores the depiction of social and cultural resistance in Yorùbá novels, uncovering how written literature reflects, and shapes cultural identity. Through a critical analysis of selected novels - Olabimtan's Kékeré Èkùn and Ayànmọ, Işólá's Ó Le Kú and Şaworoide, and Gbenro's Lofúrufú – This study examines how Yorùbá novelists employ literary elements to convey the resilience of their cultural heritage in the face of colonialism, globalisation, and cultural erasure. The novels were selected based on the relevance of their thematic pre-occupation. The study is premised on Lev Vigotsky's sociocultural theory, which posits that knowledge and understanding are constructed through social interaction. This study reveals that Yorùbá novels serve as a powerful medium for cultural preservation, subverting dominant narratives and amplifying marginalised voices. Resistance in these novels takes many forms, including the celebration of traditional practices, the reclaiming of cultural symbols, and the challenging of oppressive systems. This study contributes to the understanding of literature as a tool for cultural resistance and highlights the significance of Yorùbá novels in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the Yorùbá people. Ultimately, this research demonstrates that literature can function as a potent form of cultural resistance, inspiring future generation to embrace and honour their cultural identity.

Keywords: Resistance, Yorùbá novel, Culture, Identity.

Word Count: 246

Introduction

Nigeria, like many other countries, was colonised by the British Colonial forces in the late 19th century. Therefore, Yorùbá people, a prominent tribe in Nigeria, due to colonisation, experienced significant cultural transformation as a result. The colonisation had significant effect on their indigenous governance structure, occupational patterns, and ways of life, including their worldview, thoughts and

beliefs. For example, colonialism severely affected the Yorùbá language, as English was favoured and imposed over it in most formal settings. For instance, the introduction of western education brought about cultural shifts, thus, Yorùbá's contact with foreign language and religion through missionary schools, greatly eroded some of the Yorùbá traditional values and practices. Aberuagba (2023) corroborates this assertion as he avers that many Christian converts forsook the traditional ways of life and values.

Prior to colonisation, the Yoruba people had a monarchical system of governance, a hereditary structure in which the 'Ọba' (King) was the paramount leader of his kingdom. The people referenced him as a god, who is next to the Oriṣà (divinities). To the Yorùbá people, he is next to the divinities and that is why they refer to him as 'Áláṣẹ̀ ikejì Ọ̀riṣà' (Commander, the next to the divinities). The Ọba's crown, adorned with beads and veils, symbolised his authority and spirituality. However, with the arrival of British colonisers in the late 19th century, the power and the authority of the Ọba began to diminish. Simply put, the power and authority of Yorùbá kings were weakened (Johnson, 1964).

The colonial administrators introduced indirect rule, which altered the political landscape and created tension within Yorùbá society (Aberuagba, 2023). The effect of colonialism on Yorùbá culture transcends the aforementioned as it also led to a change in economic activities. For example, the agrarian Yorùbá economy which thrived on various agricultural crops in the pre-literate era was later streamlined to cash crops and this consequently challenged traditional agricultural practices. Additionally, colonisation influenced traditional attires, ways of dressing, marriage customs, religious practices and many other aspects of Yorùbá culture. Meanwhile, we cannot ignore various efforts of Yorùbá natives in the areas of cultural rebirth, propagation of Yorùbá values and identity, right from the colonial era till the post-colonial period.

However, in the contemporary era, it is evident that Yorùbá culture urgently needs revitalisation for it to reclaim its lost glory. So, one of the key agents of Yorùbá cultural revitalisation is the literary artistes, who utilise literary media to inform, educate, entertain, and remind the society about the history, culture, philosophies, ethics, religion, values, beliefs and other aspects of Yorùbá cultural heritage through creative works. Through this, Yorùbá cultural heritage is helped and preserved.

Writers' Acts of intervention on Culture Revitalisation

As Sangotoye (2021) notes, literature is a universal means of communicating humanity's emotional, spiritual and intellectual concerns. Literary artistes therefore play a vital role in the socio-political, socio-cultural, and socio-economic progress of their societies, through portrayal of the past, present and

future events. As members of society, literary artistes are concerned about the happenings around them, addressing the ills of society and proposing solutions to make it a better place. Indubitably, literary works reveal the lifestyle, philosophy and every aspect of a particular group of people or society, and Yorùbá novels are not exception.

Yorùbá novelists play a vital role in cultural revival by examining the Yorùbá chronicles that shape peoples' memory and identity. They write about the rich history and cultural practices of the Yorùbá people, including their experiences related to social issues such as gender, family, occupations, governance and philosophy. Through these, they adopt and adapt the diverse Yorùbá orality and maxims that have been passed down through generations. These creative writers celebrate the heroic deeds of their ancestors, inspiring readers with themes of resilience and courage. Moreover, they expose the cultural basis of Yorùbá homes and families, highlighting the importance of individuals' roles, which they play in their various family units. In their creative works, they use Yorùbá language as a medium to assert their identity and heritage, contributing significantly to the revitalisation of Yorùbá culture. They ensure that the customs, traditions and values of the Yorùbá people continue to thrive for generations to come.

Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory was propounded by Lev Vygotsky as a response to Behaviourism. The core idea of this theory is on people's interactions, the way people interact with others in the society and the culture they adopt and live in, help to shape their mindset. This means, when people live together, they develop social and cultural competence. Vygotsky believes that, immediate relatives' interaction has a lot to do in growing cultural and mental abilities. Sociocultural theory is an emerging theory in psychology that expresses the important contribution that a society makes to an individual development, stressing the interaction between developing people and the culture in which they live. For someone to develop cultural ability, he must interact with the people of the culture. This theory caters for both individual differences and cross-cultural differences in development, therefore making it relevant to this study.

The Portrayal of social and cultural resilience in Yorùbá novels.

Religious Resilience

The Yorùbá have historically been devoted to their traditional religion, and this is evident in their belief in the importance of divination and seeking guidance from Ifá oracle, regardless of whatever traditional religious sect they belong. Simply put, regardless of the religious denominations they belong, they usually consulted Ifá oracle on their major life affairs or decisions. It is customary for a Yorùbá

man/woman to consult the oracle whom according to belief is the voice of Olódùmarè, the Supreme Being (Femi-Amao 2022).

According to Jégédé (2013), Ifá is central to the Yorùbá philosophical system of thought, and to the Yorùbá, the world is dynamic and unpredictable. Therefore, divination is essential in assisting human beings find solutions to the challenges and uncertainties of life. When foreign religions came to Yorùbá land, the missionaries and Islamic clerics observed that Yorùbá people are curious species, who always want to know the reasons and solutions to all what happened to them. They are also curious to know what the future holds for them, so as to prepare. The Yorùbá people were really entangled in their Ifá belief and divination system, as they obediently offered any sacrifices or propitiations, as prescribed by Ifá through the Ifá priests. This reflects in one of the Yorùbá axioms that says ‘Bí òní tí rí, òlá ò rí bẹẹ ló mú kí babaláwo máa dífá ojoojúmọ́’ meaning, what today holds is different from what tomorrow will bring, that is why the oraculist engages in daily divination. By implication, any religion that will not predict or grant knowledge of what tomorrow brings might not thrive among the Yorùbá people.

The foreign religion adherents observed that despite the peoples’ conviction in the new religion, some of them still believed in the idea of making enquiry from Ifá. They transferred this idea into their newly accepted religion; the Christians see visions and deliver prophetic words to people, while the Islamic clerics, use similar objects to that of Ifá divination tray, divining on the sand which they called ‘Yanrìn tíṭẹ̀’. The Yorùbá literary artistes, in many of their works, projected the aforementioned and they are still doing so in the contemporary era. The Yorùbá people still believe and patronise traditional religion alongside whichever foreign religion they practice, showing the traditional religion resistance and resilience. In Gbénró’s *Lófúrufú*, religious resilience is evident when Ọmọ̀dẹ̀rẹ̀ feels reluctant to marry Fádélé, her fiancé, on the excuse that Fádélé is an herbalist’s son. She is sad and will not talk to anyone about it, but her father, persuades her to mention what is troubling her. Surprisingly, Àgbàògún, Ọmọ̀dẹ̀rẹ̀’ s father does not see anything wrong in her daughter’s marriage with an herbalist son. So, to convince his daughter that nothing is wrong with Fádélé, Àgbàògún reveals to his daughter about his involvement in traditional religion despite the fact that he openly professes to be a Christian. His daughter is amazed with this new revelation. To lend credence to his claim, Àgbàògún further confirms to her that, he has an oraculist that he consults whenever he has any challenge or when there is need to take a critical decision concerning life affairs. To convince her daughter beyond doubt, he said this to say to his daughter:

Èmi bàbá rẹ̀ tí ò n wò yí, Àgbàògún
Mo ní babaláwo tí ó n bá mi dífá. Pàgà ni

Oṃòdéere lanu tí kò lè pa á dé. Ó ní' Bábá mi,
Şòòşì tí a wá n lẹ̀ nkó? O kú oṃodé tí n ẹ̀ ọ́
Wón gbòdò mọ̀ ẹ̀niyàn mọ̀ ẹ̀sin igbàlódé kan
Şebí agbo ilem ológùn-ún ni agbo ilé wa.
Oṃodún ni a máa n ẹ̀ ọ́dún Oḡún. Ojúbo
Oḡún n bẹ̀ ní agbo ilé wa ní Òkè-Odò di
bí a ti n sọ̀rọ̀ yìi. *Lofúrufú 49*

I your father, Àgbàogún that you are looking at
I have an oraculist that cast divination for me
Oṃodéere opens her mouth with surprise,
Unable to close it. She said 'Daddy, what about
the church we are going?' You are naïve. One
must be known as a devotee of one foreign
religion. Are we not from Oḡún's family, we
celebrate Oḡún's festival yearly. The shrine of
Oḡún is in our family house at Òkè-Odò as we speak.

The above excerpt confirms that the Yorùbá traditional religion is still in practicè, so it is evident that Yorùbá novelists are social realists. In our society today, both old and young still patronise the traditional soothsayers for clarifications or directives on their life issues whenever they are confused, even the youths are not left out. There is a common saying among some Christians who still celebrate their family divinities. To justify their action, which some of their critics usually refer to as a lukewarm act, they would say: 'Ìgbàgbó ò sọ̀ pé kí á má sọ̀rọ̀ (Christianity does not prevent us from practising our rituals). Although such utterance negates Christian tenets and doctrine, they use it to justify their lingering interest in the traditional religion. In the same vein, the Yorùbá Islamists usually say 'Ọlórún ò kọ̀ aájò' meaning, God does not go against using traditional/fetish means in solving one's life difficulties. All these are pointing to the fact that in the contemporary era, traditional religion still thrives. In Olábímtán's *Kékeré Èkùn*, although Àlàbí is a lay preacher in the church, he still partakes in the egúngún festival to the extent of putting on mask of a masquerade. As an offspring from the clan of masquerades (Egúngún cult), Olábímtán aptly describes Alabi thus:

Odún nàà kò délẹ̀ tí wón sọ̀ ọ́ di ọ́kan nínú àwọn
oníwàásù kékeré. Ojọ́ tí ó bá fẹ̀ wàásù gbogbo ijọ́
ni ó máa n fẹ̀ lẹ̀ sí şòòşì..... síbèsíbè Àlàbí kò lè
fi ita eégún şeré o.i 65

The year did not end before he is made one of the
lay preachers. Any day it is his turn to preach,
every church member always wants to be there

in spite of this, Àlàbí still attends masquerade festivals.

Through the above excerpt, we could observe that Yorùbá religion still resists foreign religion. It is evident that the Yorùbá religion continues to demonstrate resilience and resistance to foreign influences in the face of imposition of western beliefs. Àlàbí's action in the above excerpt reveals Yorùbá people's commitment to their ancestral traditions.

Governance resilience

Yorùba people have an organised ruling structure. In Yorùbá culture, governance is entrenched in traditional institutions and practices which respect people's rights and privileges. For instance, the head of a family and clan is known as Baálé, the head of a village is Baálè. At the peak of the structure is the Oba known as the King. Yorùbá kingdoms and cities are led by monarchs, who serves as the spiritual and political leader. The monarch has council of chiefs, that supports him in ruling the kingdom. Although the chiefs advised the king on political and other matters, the king's words and authority are final. Despite the fact that the traditional governance structures of the Yorùbá people have undergone transformation, due to the western political system brought about by colonisation and modernisation, the Yorùbá monarchical structure still plays a significant role in the cultural and social life of the people as well as spiritual role in their various towns and cities. The monarch's spiritual role is very important, as he is expected to perform some traditional rites during traditional festivals. Oladumiye and Adiji (2014: 4) reveal that before selection of the king, Ifá oracle has to be consulted to know the right person to the throne, and before the installation, the King is empowered with various kinds of supernatural power, which transform him beyond an ordinary man. This is exactly what Akinwùmi Ìṣòla reveals in *Ṣaworoidè* about the king of Jogbo town. Just like Yorùbá traditional coronation rites, Ifa oracle is consulted before anyone is brought to the throne of Onijogbo, also anyone who wants to be crowned as Onijogbo must go through a ritual rite before ascending the throne. When it is king Lápitè's turn to ascend the throne of his father, coronation rites which takes months to complete is observed:

Léyìn bí oṣù méta tí wọn ti n ṣorìṣirìṣi orò fún
Lápitè, oḅa tuntun, oḵó pé tí wọn yóó ṣe orò
ìgbèyìn tí sọ ni di oḅa. Amawomárò àti Àyàngalú
ti n dúró de oḅa nínú yàrá orò náà. Wọn ti kó gbogbo
ohun orò sílè. o.i 20-21

After about three months that they have started various rites to the throne, for Lápitè, the new king, the day for the final ritual for the king is here. Amawomárò and Àyàngalú is waiting for the king in the ritual room

All the items for the ritual have been on ground.

King Lápité, is a modern-day king, yet he has to undergo the mandatory ritual for the coronation based on Ifá oracle's ordinance mandated for the ancestors of Oníjogbo's dynasty. Although Oníjogbo refuses to undergo the ritual, he later faces the bitter consequences. The issue of ritual performance for Yorùbá king is an open secret, everyone knows it is customary for a king in most Yorùbá towns to be chosen by the oracle, and the ritual for the ascension to the throne must be carried out. A typical example is the coronation rites of Ọ̀ni of Ilé-Ife and Alááfin of Ọ̀yó.

As part of resilience, Yorùbá monarchs, have gained international recognition for their cultural significance and authority. They serve as symbols of Yorùbá identity, harmony, and pride. They are revered for their roles in spiritual matters; thus, they are recognised as divine rulers. Many Yorùbá monarchs are actively working to revitalise traditional practices, language and customs. A notable example is the annual Sàngó Day in Ọ̀yó town and Ojúde Ọ̀ba festival in Ijebu-Òde, which attract people from all over the globe. Example of this is seen in Isola's *Saworoide* when King Lapite wants to celebrate his tenth year on the throne, so many social activities are organized for the day, such as dancing competition, and poem rendition as revealed below:

Mo gbó kiní kan lóri rédíò, wón ní kí gbogbo àwọn
Omódé tó bá mò ọ̀n jó wá fún ìdíje, wón fẹ́ mú díẹ́
nínú wón tí yóò jó nígbà àjòdún ọ̀ba.....
Wón ní àwọn tó bá mò ọ̀n jó yóó gba èbùn tó jọjú o.
o.i 95

I heard something over the radio, that all the teenagers
who knows how to dance should come for dancing
competition, the best dancer would be picked to dance
during the king's anniversary.....
All the best dancers shall be bountifully rewarded.

The Yorùbá monarchs are demonstrating the ability to evolve and innovate, by embracing modernity while preserving traditions. This fact is always captured in the works of the literary artistes who are working assiduously to embrace, preserve and revitalize Yorùbá culture through their fictional works.

Traditional Wedding Resilience

Yorùbá traditional wedding is an event that is full of glamour right from the olden days until the present age. Yorùbá people consider marriage to be a sacred institution; with this they emphasise their religious beliefs when contracting a relationship, such as marriage. Apparently, religion and marriage are intertwined. There is no way we can tie conjugal knots without involving the spiritual. It is customary for both families to go and consult the Ifá oracle to inquire about the

fate of the would-be couple and the union. This is a cultural practice of the people. Traditionally, several steps are involved in Yorùbá traditional wedding starting from seeking the bride (*Ifojúsóde*); seeking the hands of the bride (*Ìtọrọ ọmọ*); getting response (*Ìjọhẹn*) and the rest, to the point where the knot is tied. All these make Yorùbá marriage a process rather than an event. It is pertinent to note that there are some aspects of marriage in the olden days that are no longer in practice, for example, carrying the bride's calabash (*igbá iyàwó gbígbé*) by the groom's family. The groom's family is obliged to take a white covered big, neat calabash, white cloth and two thousand cowries to the bride's family. The bride's family would keep the white cloth for the bride to cover her head on the day she is taken to her husband's house. Also, the "Làári" ritual for the bride, when it is five days to the wedding. Even, the common nuptial chant (*ẹkún iyàwó*) is rarely practiced in the contemporary era.

However, despite the transformation, Yorùbá traditional wedding continues to uphold some parts of the ancient customs and practices. Though not for several months as it used to take place in the ancient days but less than a week or even two days in recent time. In our contemporary society, traditional wedding remains a glamorous and lively celebration of culture, with the roles of the wedding spokespersons (*alága idúró* and *alága ijókòó*), the engagement items (*ẹrù iyàwó*), with wearing of the iconic *aṣọ òfi* (the traditional weaved cloth) by the couples and their families, with friends wearing uniformed Yorùbá attire (*aṣọ ẹbí*). All these continue to be an integral part of Yorùbá traditional wedding, preserving Yorùbá cultural heritage. In Iṣọla's *Ó Le Kú*, Àjàní decides to hold his wedding in a traditional way, using traditional attire with his fiancée's family wearing uniform Yorùbá attire. Iṣọlá presents it thus:

Wón pinnu láti máso iyàwó. Sányán kan tó pawó
ni iyàwó àti ọkọ yóó lò. Àwon ọmọ iyàwó lókùnrin
lóbìnrin náà ti dá aso tiwon. o.i 114

They decide to buy uniform attire for the wedding
A very beautiful *Sányán* for the couple. The bridal
train has theirs too

The above excerpt reveals that Yorùbá attire during wedding is still in vogue, even, in the face of westernisation. Àjàní insists on using Yorùbá attire during his wedding. He also brings all the engagement items to the bride's family as the custom requires. Yorùbá has adapted to modern time by exposing the traditional wedding culture to other culture, by integrating western elements while preserving the spirit of the traditional wedding culture. Among the engagement items brought to the bride's family there are evident of western culture items, for instance, Bible or Quran representing the modern religion, drinks like Fanta and beer, also the wedding ring which is not part of the traditional items requested

from the groom's family in the olden days. Below is the list of the items Ajani brought to his bride's family:

Obì m̀erínlélógórin, orógbó m̀erínlélógórin, oguń
ataare, ìgò oyin méjì, otí bià ìgò méjilá, Sítáòtù ìgò
méjilá, Fántà méjilá, otí wáinì ìgò kan.....
Bíbélì, òrùka ìgbéyàwó, bàtà.....

o.i 114

Eighty-four pieces of kolanut, eighty-fourpieces of
bitterkola, twenty, two bottles of honey, twelve bottles
of Beer, twelve bottles of Stout, twelve bottles of Fanta,
one bottle of Wain, Bible.....
wedding ring and shoe.....

The above excerpt apparently shows that, there is integration of westernization with the traditional culture of the Yorùbá, considering the items like, Beer, Fanta, Wine, wedding rings and Bible the book of the Christian faith representing the religion of the couple, presented alongside traditional items brought for the engagement. In the same vein, in Gbenro's *Lofurufu*, Omoḍéere and Adesíná's wedding takes place in United States of America. The wedding is conducted exactly the way it is done in Yorùbá traditional setting in Nigeria. The couple also put on the Yorùbá cultural attire. It is worth mentioning that, so many interracial marriages of Yorùbá ladies and European whites are conducted in traditional Yorùbá way, with the grooms and the grooms' families wearing the Yorùbá native wears of b̀ùbá, ṣòkòtò and agbádá for men, ìró, b̀ùbá and gèlè for women. It is very common to see such wedding in our contemporary time. This is to prove that Yorùbá traditional marriage is resilient globally.

Yorùbá Naming Ceremony Resilience

In Yorùbá culture, naming ceremony is an important event. It is very significant in Yorùbá culture because Yorùbá places high premium on children. They believe children are special gifts from God, and so should be valued more as a special gift Ladélé, Oyebamiji, Aworinde, Oyerinde & Oladapo (2006). Therefore, when a child is born, they give the child a name that can symbolically secure the future and destiny of the child, name that has connection with the ancestors of the child and name that is connected to the divinities in the child's clan or lineage. During the child's naming, prayers are offered to God and the ancestors, using some symbolic items representing good wishes, safety and prosperity to offer the prayers. Yorùbá names are chosen carefully based on meaning, the occurrences that surround the birth, and the events or the happenings at the time of birth. During the slave trade, Yorùbá slaves, like other Africans were forced to change their names, and were given names, that have no cultural significance. Washington (2013) asserts that, Africans were renamed to suit the purpose of making life easier for the enslavers and to dehumanise the

slaves. Moreover, with the advent of the foreign religion, converts are changing their names to the names of the religion they professed, not totally, but in addition to the Yorùbá names they have. As part of resistance during a child naming ceremony, the traditional items that were used in the olden days to pray for the child are introduced into the foreign religions. This is evident in Olábímtán's *Ayànmó* when Àlàbí's wife gives birth after her husband's departure to Europe, despite the fact that they are Christians, traditional naming items such as, water, palm oil, Bitter kola, Cola nut, Catfish, are used to pray for the child

Ó ká aṣọ lẹṣẹ ọmọ tuntun, ó fí ẹṣẹ rẹ tẹlẹ, ó ní
'Ilẹ̀ ni à í tẹ kí á tó tẹ omi, bí o bá rìn nílẹ̀ kí o
Má fẹṣẹ kọ o'. Lẹyìn èyí ó fọwọ kan omi, ó tọ
ọ sí ọmọ lẹnu.... Bí o ti parí ti omi, ni ó fọwọ
ba epo tí ó fí sí ọmọ lẹnu... Lẹyìn èyí ni ó tún
mú nínú ẹja àrọ o fi kan ọmọ lẹnu. o.i 76-77

He removed the cloth from the child's leg, and
Put his leg on the floor, he said 'We step on sand
before we step on water, whenever you are walk-
ing, you will not stumble' After that, he touches
water, and put a drop in his mouth.... As soon as
he finishes with water, he touches palm oil, he put
it in the child's mouth... After this, he uses the
catfish to touch the child's mouth.

As devoted Christians, using all these traditional Yorubá naming items to pray for the child depicts, cultural resilience and resistance to western civilization. Yorùbá name is one important aspect of culture with which Yorùbá people still keep their identity in the world till today.

Yorùbá Language Resilience

Despite decades of colonisation and westernisation that endangered Yorùbá language, Yoruba language still strives to maintain its importance in the society and globally. Culture and language are interwoven; therefore, language is aiding the spread of Yorùbá culture. Apparently, Yoruba language is tied to Yoruba culture and traditions, playing a crucial role in teaching ethics and values, also helping with the promotion of traditional religion practices. To add to its richness and to avoid going into extinction, the language has incorporated loanwords from other languages of the world, such as, English and Arabic language. In Nigeria, Yoruba is taught in schools, most especially Yoruba speaking part of Nigeria, and used as a medium of instruction, in order to prevent it from going into extinction. Some schools have a day out of the week to conduct the assembly in Yorùbá to encourage passing the language to the coming generation. There are many prominent Yorùbá authors that are writing novels, drama and poetry books to be

used by schools as recommended by the government, some of which are selected for analysis in this research. Obviously, Yoruba language is stubbornly resisting language erasure. In Isola's *O Le Ku*, Ajani insists that, the church service for his wedding should be conducted in Yorùbá language instead of English language that is commonly used in some churches

Àjàní fí dandan lé e pé, aṣo Yorùbá ni àwọn
Omọ iyàwó náà gbòdò wò. Ó tún fí dandan
lé e pé Yorùbá ni kí wón ṣe ìsìn náà

o.i 144

Àjàní insists that the bridal train must wear traditional attire. He also insists that the wedding program must be conducted in Yorùbá

In recent times, Yorùbá language has spread his tentacles beyond Nigeria, even beyond Africa, for instance, Independent Newspaper of November 12th, 2021, has reported that Yorùbá language is compulsory in Brazilian primary and secondary schools, also the state government of Alagoas, Brazil, passed a law recognising Yorùbá language as the cultural heritage of the state. In the same vein, United State of America, and some European nations are offering Yorùbá language in some of their universities and colleges.

Yorùbá Cuisine Resilience

Yorùbá traditional food has shown notable resilience in the global culinary scene, surviving in the global culinary landscape, despite centuries of colonisation and modernisation. Yorùbá cuisine is deeply entrenched in cultural and spiritual practices, as some of the Yorùbá foods are related to Yorùbá divinities, making it an integral part of identity and heritage. Furthermore, Yorùbá cuisine are functional diets, most of which is targeted at improving certain health conditions. For example, Yorùbá vegetable known as ewédú (Jute leaves) is rich in vitamins C, A, and K, with Gbègìrì (Beans Soup) which is rich in protein when taken with Amàlà (Yam flour meal). Yorùbá Jute leaves have been used in traditional medicine to treat various ailments such as indigestion, fever and rheumatism. The medicinal relevance of some Yorùbá diets, as well as cooking skills and richness makes it significantly famous globally. The resilience of Yorùbá cuisine is represented in Gbénró *Lófúrufú*, when Omódéere invites Oládélé to her room in order to explain some aspect of their course that seems difficult to her. Omódéere asks him what does he want to eat? Oládélé without mincing words asks for Amàlà and Ewédú, which Omódéere quickly prepares for him as evident in the excerpt below:

Ìgbà tí Omódéere bi Oládélé léèrè pé ṣé oúnjẹ
alákòwé ni ó n fẹ ni tàbí ti ìbílẹ̀, orin ni Olád-
élé mú bọ ẹnu tó n kọ pé...omọ oko kii sunkún

búrédì, kíá, Omódéere ti gbé omi àmàlà kaná
Ó kọ ó bí òkè, ó fi ọbè ewédú sí i, Ọládélé sì
Sọ òkè àmàlà nàà dilẹ o.i 5-6

When Omódéere ask Ọládélé if she should
Prepare a local or foreign food, he responds
with song that, ‘a local boy does not cry for
bread’ Omódéere quickly prepares Amàlà
and Ewédú for him, which he finishes without
waisting time.

Even as a university student, Ọládélé does not joke with traditional food, Omódéere also has the mastery and the cooking skill, as a Yorùbá lady, she does not allow western life to rub on her, she has all it takes to prepare a native food. Both of them being youths, the author portrays them as custodians of culture. This is showing the resilience and continuity of Yorùbá food as one of Yorùbá cultural strength with which cultural erasure is being resisted.

Ethical resilience

Ethics is the collection of values, philosophy, principles and standard that guide behaviour and decision making in human society. It helps to differentiate good from bad and also right from wrong, thereby fostering harmonious and healthy community relationship. According to Akanle and Adejare (2018) Yorùbá is a particular people with a particular way of life, going by this assertion, Yorùbá has a set of ethical values that guides their way of life. Yorùbá has a word that captures every virtue that is needed to make an upright individual, this is called virtue of Ọmọ̀lúàbí, this is based on culture. Ọmọ̀lúàbí in Yorùbá means good morals and virtuous conducts Ogunlola (2013:139). One important virtue of Yorùbá worth mentioning is showing respect to elders or those in position of authority. The easiest means to notice a person that is respectful in Yorùbá society is by his or her mode of greetings. Greeting is a good gesture of respect visible in Yoruba land, a man would prostrate while a woman would kneel down. Anyone who does not know how to do this is termed to be disrespectful. Gbenro, showcase this in his novel, with the aim of projecting the importance and relevance of Yorùbá mode of greetings as a required virtue of Ọmọ̀lúàbí. Omódéere in *Lófurufú* wins the heart of her mother in-law because of her mode of greeting. The very first time she sees her; her mother-in-law notices it. She has this to say about Omódéere

Ọmọ tí wọn bí nílẹ̀ ire ni tí ó sì gbèkòò, orúnkún ẹ̀sẹ̀
Mẹ́jẹ̀jẹ̀ni ni ó fí n kí ẹ̀niyàn.

o.i 72

She is from a good home, and she is well brought up
She kneels down on her two knees to greet people

Gbenro portray this in his novel, with the aim of projecting the importance and relevance of Yorùbá mode of greetings as a required virtue of Ọmọ̀lúàbí, also as an identity that makes Yorùbá people stand out globally.

Conclusion

Yorùbá novels offer a powerful lens through which social and cultural resistance are examined, also they illuminate the ways in which the Yorùbá people have consistently asserted their identity and resilience in the face of colonialism, oppression and cultural erasure. Yorùbá literary artistes, especially novelists through their fictional works have skillfully woven together themes of cultural preservation, language revitalisation, and political resistance, creating a literary landscape that reflects the community unwavering commitment to their heritage. By exploring the complexities of Yorùbá identity and experience, these novels do not only provide a window into the past but also serve as testament to the enduring power of cultural resistance, ensuring that the rich values and traditions of the Yorùbá people continue to thrive for generations to come. Ultimately, the literary reflections of identity and resilience in Yorùbá novels stands as a beacon of hope and inspiration, reminding us that even in the darkest of times, the human spirit can persevere and flourish

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