

Oppression, Domination and Conflict: The Yorùbá Novel Example

Adejoke Remi Oluwaseyi-Paul

Department of Linguistics and Languages, Faculty of Arts,
Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria
Email: adejoke.faborode@fuoye.edu.ng
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8350-8245>

Abstract

The constancy of human interaction predisposes them to the inevitability of conflict, arising as a result of misunderstanding or misconception of ideas, opinions and the need to contest and break free from all unpleasant situations. Such realities find representation in literary writings, particularly as they seek to document social experiences. Existing studies on fictional Yorubá novels have interrogated issues relating to historical development, classification, stylistic devices, violence and crimes, albeit, with inadequate attention to issues related to conflict. In filling this lacuna, the present study therefore examines Fágúnwà's *Ògbójú Ode Nínú Igbó Irúnmalè* and Fálétí's *Ogun Àwítélè* with a view to identify and discuss the representation of conflicts alongside the factors generating conflicts in the novels. Subsequent analysis is anchored on the Marxist approach to sociology of literature as this helps to reveal the roles social class played in the creation of conflicts in the society. Marxism is supported with the mirror image approach to sociology of literature which sees literature as the direct reflection of the human society. The emanating discussions are invigorated with reliance on qualitative research approach and interpretive design which have the dual functions of revealing the factors creating conflict and its consequences in the selected novels as well as the extent to which conflicts manifest hegemonies and dominance. The study concludes by projecting the quest for liberation from oppressions, domination and exploitations as rendered in the novels.

Keywords: Conflict, Domination, Liberation, Oppression, Yorùbá novels.

Introduction

In every society, the existence, interaction and relationship between and within persons and groups bring about rivalry, enmity, alliances, the need to dominate, and equally the need to secure one's life and properties from oppression. The history of man's unending thirsts for domination, control of available resources, oppression and infringement on others result into conflicts and war. Many studies have been carried out on conflict, warfare and class struggle such as Afegbua (2010) who examines causes and prospects of conflicts and political instability in Nigeria. He observes that the occurrence of conflicts

in any society could be more than violence which would lead to wanton destruction of lives and properties that can hinder sustainable national development.

Arároba (2018) dwells on warfare and politics in Yorùbá land by examining the effects that warfare has on the Yorùbá society in the olden days and also the lessons embedded in the traditional Yorùbá politics which resides in storytelling. His work also portrays how cooperation can stem the tide of misuse of power which is caused by how powerful people in the society use their powers to oppress and suppress less powerful people. He then concludes that Yorùbá folktales is one of the archives where ancient Yorùbá culture and customs could be found. Lastly, Fábóròdé (2016) sees man as an entity that has created classes for itself, these classes are divided into upper, middle, working class and lower (Moffitt, 2015) which continue to contend with one another. Social class is the status in which individuals and groups are classified based on the prestige they have through accumulation of wealth and economic success. Class of interest, tension between what is and what some groups feel should be, conflict between vested interests and the demands of groups for share of status, interest and power lead to class struggle. In the scholarly views above, conflict, warfare and class struggle have oppression, and contention in common which shows how powerful class suppresses or eliminates less powerful class in the society.

Earlier scholars like Bámgbósé (1974), Ìsolá (1978), Ajíbólá (1980), Ògúnsínà (1992), Adébòwálé (1994), Aládésanmí (2012), Fábóròdé (2022) and Olúwásèyí-Paul (2022) preoccupied themselves with historical development, classification, role of culture and customs, crimes, Yorùbá philosophy, violence, as well as the issues of vengeance and punishment in Yorùbá novels, however, they did not establish the relationship their works have with conflict in the society. Bólárinwá (2013) who examines conflict management strategies in selected Yorùbá novels focuses more on religious, cultural and political conflicts. She suggests traditional and western strategies as the strategies useful for managing conflicts in Yorùbá novels without establishing link between man's influence, social class and conflict. Despite the remarkable works on Yorùbá novels, there is no work that shows how man's unjust treatment by other men, and the quest for liberation from oppressions, domination and exploitations lead to conflict. This serves as the catalyst that helps this study to probe into the causes and effects of conflict in the society. This work analyses conflict in selected novels which are: Fágúnwà's *Ògbójú Ode Nínú Igbó Irúnmalè* (1950) and Fálétí's *Ogun Àwítélè* (1985) with a view to identifying the representations of conflict as well as determining the factors generating conflicts in the novels. To achieve this aim, the study examines the concept of conflict, types and causes of conflict and how the Yorùbá society reacts to classism and domination as portrayed in the selected novels.

Conflict, War and Human Society

Fábóròdé (2016, p. 26) takes conflict as disagreement over social issues, ideas, beliefs, needs, aspirations and interest by people or group. Conflict has been one of the fundamental challenges confronting human society. The inevitable nature of conflict due to disagreement in human relationship has resulted into social malady especially when

such conflict is mismanaged. Like every other human actions and reactions, conflict processes its stages. Lund (2001) presents 5 stages of conflict as (a) war (b) crisis (c) unstable peace (d) stable peace (e) durable peace. Brien (2008) presents a diagrammatic cycle of conflict thus:

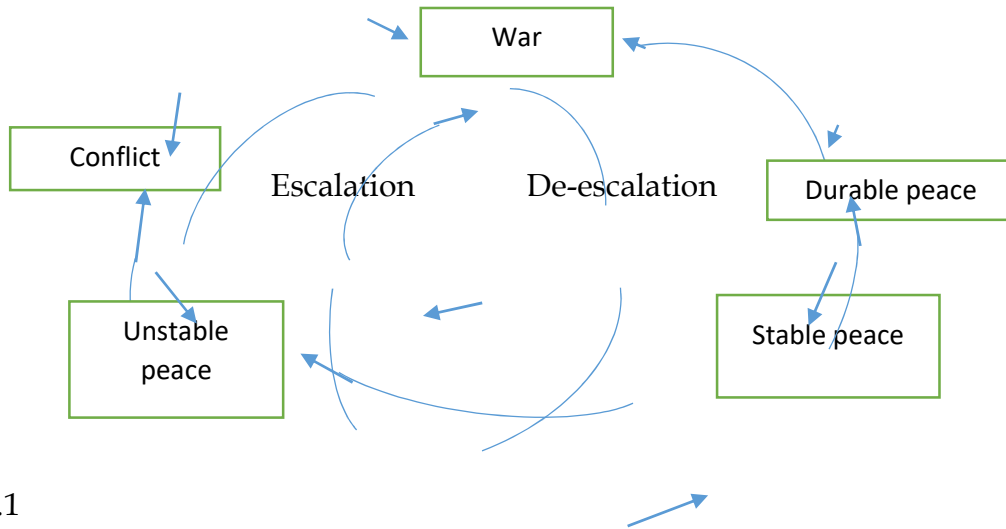


Fig.1

From the above stages of conflict, it is crystal clear that there are thin lines between conflict and war which implies that if conflict is not well managed it will escalate into war which is disastrous for the human society. The human society is filled with records of conflicts and war at various levels of human relations. For instance, the Yorùbá society have experienced conflicts that have escalated into war within itself, such wars include: Ìjèsà and Ìbàdàn war, Èkitì parapò and Òwu war among others (Johnson, 1921). Àjàyí (1971) describes Yorùbá wars as those that have extended slave raiding or mere internecine conflicts. The fundamental causes of most war was the desire of more powerful neighbours to extend their territories and their ardent wish to exercise some measures of physical check over their weak or powerless neighbours. This extension is hinged on occupation and targeted at dominance. Conflict is constantly escalating into war which has started to spread rapidly like wild fire, it has become cancer that has eaten deep into the core of human society, it is a fragile, yet, difficult activity that is negatively affecting the peace that is binding the human race. Adeoye (2014) opines that there are two types of war namely (a) personal war, which happens to a person. It could also be in form of premature death, incurable diseases and all other challenges that are personal and (b) fierce battle, which is the type of war involving more than a person. It includes conflict or disagreement where powerful people rise against one another within a particular town or a town against another town or enmity between countries with the use of destructive weapons that can annihilate anyone around such war zone.

Recent examples of the world's records of mismanaged conflict that have resulted into war are those between Russia and Ukraine which Welt (2023, p.1) termed as "unprovoked" and "unjustified", Israel and Palestine (Hamas) war which started as a response to October 7, 2023 attacks by Hamas which made Israel launched aerial and

ground war on Gaza that claimed the lives of not less than 31000 Palestinians in Gaza (Zanotti and Sharp, 2024). They are valid exemplifications of what conflict looks like. However, if the said wars continue not to receive timely intervention, it could result into 3rd world war because continuous attacks from one country against the other will charge other hostile countries all over the world to carry out their hostilities, it could also strengthen the weak to face their aggressors. North (1968) sees conflict as a situation that emerges wherever two or more persons or groups intend to possess same object, take over same position, play incompatible roles, and undertake mutually incompatible means of achieving their desires. While this notion implies that unnecessary competition leads to conflict, Nnoli (2003:1) views conflict from a different angle as he asserts that conflict is that contradiction arising from perceptions, behaviour, tendencies and phenomenon. Asobie (2004) believes that conflict is not an alien phenomenon in the human society as he opines that it is a normal part of human healthy relationship, he sees it as normal because he believes that human beings are not expected to agree on the same thing every time. The above notions have successfully defined conflict because of their portrayal of human influence.

Methodology

Fágúnwà's *Ògbójú Ode Nínú Igbó Irúnmalè* (1950) and Fálétí's *Ogun Àwítélè* (1985) constitutes the primary texts of this study. This study adopts qualitative research approach so as to critically view the factors creating conflict in the two purposively selected novels. The interpretive analysis of the novels shows that human's desire to oppress, dominate and exploit fellow human and other creature cause conflict and war. By paying attention to the interactions between the fictional characters in the selected novels, this approach helps in knowing and interpreting how the writers portray causes of conflict and how far people can go to liberate themselves from unpleasant situations hampering their safety and freedom.

Theoretical Underpinnings from Mirror Image Approach of the Sociology of Literature to the Marxist Approach

Literature is concerned with man in line with his way of life and the society that produces him. It seeks to investigate man, his behaviour, in the society, his knowledge of himself and the universe with which he finds himself (Ògúnsínà, 2006, p. 6). Literature focuses on social life; it penetrates deep into the affairs of man and the challenges they face. Literature uses language as a tool to explain the events and happening in the society this is why (Dasylyva, 1995) opines that literature uses language to reflect happenings and events in a particular society at a certain period of time. A literary artist as a product of a society relies on the society to make use of its traditional phenomenon. Sociology in itself sees the relationship between human being and the society, which shows that there is a close relationship between sociology and literature.

Sociology interprets the fact that no work of art is independent of the society that gave birth to it. Literature is that tool uses to correct the anomaly in the society, this is why literary artistes use literature to expose; condemn and correct the ill in the society.

They also use this tool to elevate and praise a certain idea that could bring peace and growth to the society. This means literature as a tool does not only condemn bad things, it also commends good doings. Sociology is said to concern itself with all that happens to human beings as a result of their relationship with one another in the society; like social sciences, it deals with man's experiences, man's behaviour with regard to his fellow, but its main focus is a larger entity (Barber, 1978).

On the other hand, Marxism as a method of societal analysis that focuses on the relationship between class and societal conflict which uses materialistic interpretation for social transformation. Marxist applies economic and socio-political enquiry to the critique and analysis of development of capitalism and the implication of class struggle in systemic economic change. This theory shows that conflict is the function of exploitative tendencies and unjust nature of human being in a given society which has led to the emergence of classes thereby leading to the domination of one class by another. As a social theory, the growth of sociology of literature owes its baseline to Marxism. This is due to the fact that Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) German philosophers who were considered fathers of Marxism propagated the discussion on the relationship between literature and the society. Marx and Engels had earlier arrived individually at a conclusion that resulted to a concept that was known as 'dialectal materialism'. By the concept of 'dialectical materialism' Marx and Engels argue that societal beliefs and institutions are largely controlled by means of production (Dobie, 2012). This means of production leads to acquisition of economic power by a few, leading to the creation of an elite class known in Marxists terminology as the bourgeoisie (dominant class) and leaving the majority of others as proletariat (subdued) who live in dissatisfactory conditions while working for the benefit of the dominant class (Tyson, 2006).

In the consideration of various societal problems identified and written about by Yorùbá literary artistes, I apply to this work, Mirror image approach of the sociology of literature that sees work of arts as direct reflection of real-life societal happenings which links this work to the real life human society as no work of art is exclusive of the society. Marxism approach to sociology of literature is equally employed to show that conflict spring off due to oppressive, unjust and domination nature of men in the society which has triggered the repressed to vehemently battle with their aggressors so as to liberate themselves from every unjust treatments as portrayed in the selected novels.

In the novel, *Ogun Àwítélè*, the armed robbers see themselves as superior to those they wanted to attack, this boosts their confidence in oppressing and attacking their victims. This domination idea afforded them the opportunity to give prior notices to their victims in order to weaken their morale and instil panic. So also in *Ògbójú Ode Nínú Igbó Irúnmalè*, Àkàrà-Oògùn believes in his superiority and dominating powers over the spirit world thereby making him intrude into the spirit world every time he desires to oppress them; this led to conflict between him and the mysterious beings. Marx sees man as the maker of conflict and often at the centre of conflict because of individual differences and also in terms of the life they lived, the pursuance of varied interests and motivation to act in a way different from others in pursuit of own aims and objectives. Hence, the main

message of Marxism is the struggle for the transformation of the human society so that man can be liberated from exploitation and oppression in all its forms and ramifications (Ògúnsínà, 2006). Man's quests for liberation from exploitation and oppression could lead to conflict and war.

Warfare and Yorùbá Literature

Literature as a tool is used by literary artistes to showcase things around them. Language is the greatest tool a literary artiste uses to create work of arts. War is not an alien issue in the history of Yorùbáland, Yorùbá literature as portrayed in their novels and the world in general. War reflects in Yorùbá thoughts, way of lives, it also reflects in their culture and tradition. It shows in Yorùbá proverb 'm'òjà m'òsá là ñ mo akínkanjú' meaning 'to fight and retreats makes a great warrior', it also reflects in the Yorùbá names like Arógundádé, Balógun and also in chieftaincy titles like Balógun, Asípa and Sàrùmi to mention but a few. Yorùbáland went through complicated political and economic changes. The dramatic collapse of Oyo kingdom and the balance of power among the Yorùbá kingdoms resulted in endless warfare, increased slave-raiding and population shift. They believe in the existence of war because during the course of existing and living in the same society there is bound to be conflict and war, this inspired the creative writers of the novels under observation to showcase this theme in their work of arts. Ògúnsínà (2006:115) is of the opinion that Fágúnwà sees Àkàrà Oògùn's encounter in *Ògbójú Ode Nínú Igbó Irúnmalè* as a signification of great misfortune which is often beyond human powers and abilities, and from which only divine intervention can provide remedy. This view is consonant with Yorùbá maxim 'ojú ogun ni ilé ayé' meaning 'life is a war front' and 'eni tí kò gbójú gbóyà kò le jayé pé' 'he who is not courageous cannot enjoy the world for long'. Conflicts in the novels come in shades of domination and security.

Synoptic Presentations of the Texts: From *Ògbójú Ode Nínú Igbó Irúnmalè* to *Ogun Àwítélé*

Ògbójú Ode Nínú Igbó Irúnmalè is an adventure novel. Àkàrà Oògùn is the hero and he descended from a brave hunter and a wicked witch. He lost his mother to his father's gun and later his father died. After the loss of his parents, he decided to explore his world by launching into Igbó Irúnmalè, where he battles with series of strange spirits and wicked creatures, he went stranded and was rescued by Ìrànláwó, he later found himself in Ìlú Èèmò, a despicable town full of dirt, diseases and deaths where he met Ìwàpèlé. He got frustrated and enters a forbidden room in Ìwàpèlé's house which mysteriously landed him in his own home.

He made another journey to the forest after one year; he encountered and fought with different types of creatures and spirits. He also met a king who became his friend; he saved the king from his own wife and exposes the plot the towns' people had against the king in the town of the spirit. The townspeople got angry and framed him with his own best friend: he felt betrayed and killed his friend and the elders. This got the youths angry and they buried him vertically but he was later rescued by the heavy rain that fell that day. He met a beautiful lady who treated him, shortly after, there was trouble and

his dead mother came to his aid. During the course of this journey, he met his long lost friend; Lámurín, and then he later got married to a beautiful girl. Lámunrín's life ended suddenly when he strayed into Tèmbèlèkun (conspiracy)'s cave. Àkàrà Oògun was weakened by his friend's sudden pitiful death, this made him return home but without his wife who could not live among woman because she is a spirit.

The third trip was orchestrated by the king of his town who heard of his successful adventures into the forest, sent him to a more dangerous forest, closer to heaven after Igbó Irúnmolè. The king sent him in company of other brave hunters to get him something he heard existed only in Òkè lángbòdó. They embarked on the dangerous journey and fought a more dangerous fight and crossed several huddles. The hunters finally reached their destination and were received by the king who sent them to a sage that gave them series of lessons on wisdom and God. After their lessons they set out on their journey home but only the hero and two others made it home.

On the other hand, *Ogun Àwítélè* centres on a town that received a letter from Àjàní the head of an audacious armed robbery gang who informed them of his impending attack. This made the Baálè panic and then sent for Olúóde (The head hunter), on getting to the palace; he reads the shocking letter and then informs his deputy Ìkólàbà, they began to deliberate on the way to go about the war with the mysterious daring group of robbers. Baálè informed the prominent people in the society, and he enjoyed them to support the war with everything they have. Few days after, the hunters, the courageous and powerful people in the town gathered together with their weapons and charms that would be needed to secure their town from the scary robbers, they also made sacrifice to Ògún. Their curiosity about how and when the robbers will attack made them consult Ifá who informed them that the robbers will attack in nine days. This helped the hunters to prepare and strategize on how to defeat the daring thieves.

It was fierce offensives as the rubbers gave them a surprise attack appearing in mass with their weapons and charms. Their expectation was cut short as the hunters launch a fierce counter attack against them, the need to defend and secure their lives, families, properties and land made them win the battle thereby causing the robbery group to suffer resounding defeat. The leader of the group was captured and killed, while the surviving criminals were arraigned before a court for adequate judgment. Peace was restored into the once tormented town.

Punctured Peace, Brimming Conflict: Examining Conflict and War in the Selected Novels

Peace is not the absence of war, it is a state of mind for benevolence, confidence and justice (Jean, 1970). Kathleen (2008) asserts that peace is simply not the absence of war. It must include freedom from fear and end to impunity. From the submission of the scholars above, a society might not be at war, yet not at peace. The society is made up of human with different temperaments, ideas, class and culture. As human interact daily, there is always contact that affects the peaceful existence which might not lead to war but far away from peace. This is what Brien (2008) in fig.1 above described between unstable peace and war, which is tagged as conflict. The inevitable nature of conflict in the human

society is due to the innate instinct that triggers aggression in human as affirmed by Fábòròdé (2016). The novels in this paper have to do with the peace of the society, the peace is being disturbed. There is the need for the rise of hunters who can fight, battle, wrestle and wage war against oppression in order to restore peace by using their powers to liberate themselves and their towns from their aggressors as prescribed by Karl Marx's Marxism theory. The preparedness of hunters to liberate themselves and their town from their audacious aggressor in *Ogun Àwítélè* goes thus:

àwa ni ó kù fún láti múra sílè (Fálétí, 1985, p.8)

It is left for us to prepare beforehand (Fálétí, 1985, p. 8)

This excerpt shows that the strength, might and boldness of their aggressors did not discourage the oppressed townspeople, it only motivates them to prepare for retaliation. An understanding of the selected novels reveals that there are lots of things causing war during the cause of interaction between the characters. Causes of war as observed in the novels include oppression, safety, and exploitation as discussed below.

Oppression

This is the act of subjugating by cruelty (Russel and Clarkson 1996). Olújìnmí (2004, p.205) describes oppression as a social system that denies people's room to breathe and live like human beings. In everyday life, if a person or group of people is constantly oppressed there is bound to be a response or an action from the oppressed which can lead to conflict or war. Human beings are bound to react when an atom of oppression is sensed. The rich and powerful always oppress the poor and powerless or those that are not as powerful as they are.

In *Ogun Àwítélè*, because of the gang's strength, tactics and powers, the leader oppresses the members of the town they wanted to attack. This belief made them write a letter to the head of their targeted town so as to put fear and panic on the townspeople. This oppression tactics fulfill the desired goal as Alákànsé, the richest man in the town decide to leave his home and wealth behind so as to preserve his own life due to the letter the group of robbers pasted in his house as seen below:

Alákànsé yí, olówó gbá ni, ó kó ilé òlákànsé kan sí àrinilú, ó sì ní dúkiá jojo. Nígbàtí ó dé tí ó kí Baálè tánó bèrè sí òrò í so, ó ní òn ní láti kó kúro ní ilú ní alé ojó náà nítorípé, àwon olè ti fi iwé mó ojúde òn, nwón sì e ilé àti kó ilé òn. Nítorínáà, òn yíò palè erù mó kúrò ní ilú bíilè bá sù (Faleti, 1985, p. 12)

Alákànsé is very rich, he built a very big house in the town centre, and he also possesses lot of properties. As he arrived, he greeted the village head, and started to speak, he said he needed to move out of the town that night because the armed robbers pasted a letter at his front yard, promising to pack all

his properties. As such, he is packing out in the night (Faleti, 1985, p. 12)

Karl Marx believes that misuse of power is the root of oppression. Robbery in the society is not a strange happening, but sending letters to the town that would be under attack shows that the robbers are confidence and very powerful thereby flaunting their powers in the faces of their prey, making the affluence in the town scared. This audacious act of misuse of power by the robbers is oppressive to the town's people. In order to fight this oppression, the hunters persuaded Alákànsè not to move out of the town and promised to protect him and his properties. The promise they made helped them double their preparation for the war which is their way of retaliating the robbers affront and also to liberate themselves from oppression which is in line with Marxism theory.

Also in *Ògbójú Ode Nínú Igbó Irúnmolè*, the people in Ìlú àwon iwin were oppressed by Àkàrà-oògùn's perfectionist attitude and his unnecessary closeness to their king which makes them overwhelmed in their own town. They got a wind of his plan to expose all their plans to kill their king which made them set a trap for him using his best friend. Àkàrà-oògun witnesses the false testimony his best friend gave against him concerning the king's mysterious dog, he gets furious and kill his friend for lying against him and the chiefs who disapprove of his actions. This move infuriates the youth, they then stormed his house in retaliation. His words below show the townspeople's displeasure with him:

Àsé gbogbo bí mo ti ní se ni inú ní bí àwon òdómokùrin ìlú nàà sùgbón nítorí ilè ní sù lo ní ojó nàà won kò se nkankan pèlú mi, wón lo sí ilé won èmi nàà sì lo sí tèmí. Ó pé kí ntó jí ní òwúrò ojó kejì: òrùn ti yo; bí mo sì ti dide lórí ení nàà njé kí nbó sí òde ni mo rí òké àimoye àwon ará ìlú yí ti kùmò ti idà, ñwón ñbò ní òdò mi (Fágúnwà, 1950, pp. 36-37)

Alas, all I have been doing has made the youth angry but they could not do anything to me because it was already getting dark, we all departed to our various houses. I woke up late the next morning; it was already sunny; as I rose from the mat, on my way out, I saw large numbers of town people with cudgel and sword; they were approaching me (Fágúnwà, 1950, pp. 36-37)

Àkàrà Ogùn did not have it easy with the people. They stormed his house, packed all his belongings, tied him up and gave him the beaten of his life. When they got to the market square, they finally buried him vertically while he was surrounded by his belongings. He was left alone to die, however, he was rescued by a heavy rain that moistened the ground for him. In the two novels the issue of oppression was not overlooked. The writers overtly portray unfriendly and life threatening reactions their characters show their perceived aggressor. The oppressed reactions to oppression ended

in war as people came out in mass to free themselves from powerful grip and also put a permanent end to all forms of oppression.

Safety and its Absence

Karl Marx and his disciples expect the society to be prepared to liberate themselves from their aggressors. People in different society have the need to be free from all forms of fears and anxiety concerning safety. People employ all tools that will make them secure and safe. When we make decisions about our lives, we try our best to secure ourselves from unexpected occurrence. When we meet all our needs, safety needs dominate our behaviour. These needs have to do with our natural desire for a predictable, orderly world that is within our control. War and conflict spring forth when one's safety and security is interrupted. In *ògbójú ode nínú igbó irúnmale*, the birds in ilú àwon eye (town of the birds) who had earlier accommodated and celebrated Àkàrà Ogùn and his fellow hunters' success after overcoming the three tasks they were given, lunched a fierce battle on them when Kàkó disrupted their security by hitting their king, Ògòngò on the head; when he went drunk during the feast hosted by the birds. This is shown in the excerpt thus:

Olúkúlùkù wa je ó yó, Kàkó je tó ti eni méfà ó sì mu tó akèngbè otí kan; sùgbón nígbàtí ó mu otí yó tánó súnmo Oba ó fi owó gbá a lórí ó wípé; Orí re yíí n' dano'. Ìwà rẹ̀ yí bí àwon eiye nínú nwón sì bá wa fi ijà pa éta. (Fagunwa, 1950, p. 65)

Each of us ate till satisfaction, Kàkó ate like six persons and drank a gourd of wine, when he became drunk, he moved closer to the king and hit his head, he said: 'this head of yours is shiny' this affront of his annoyed the birds so they launched a fierce battle against us. (Fagunwa, 1950, p. 65)

The once peaceful and accommodating birds suddenly attacked the over joyous hunters in order to reject Kàkó's disrespectful act and also defended their king whose safety and security has been tampered with. Their swift attack shows how far they can go in order to protect their kingdom and liberate themselves from the influence of their disrespectful over joyous guests. This attack claim lives of many of the birds and two hunters. The hunters narrowly escaped when they knew they were losing the battle. The need for safety and security made the hunters in *Ogun Àwítélé* prepare for war against the rude, arrogant and daring armed robbers who derived pleasure in sending prior notifications to their future victims so as to weaken and demoralise them. This audacious prior notification and the second letter which was sent so as to serve as reminder and also to announce the change in the date of their impending attack triggered their victims to prepare more than necessary so as to secure themselves and their town. Their wish to secure themselves in preparation for the audacious gang of robbers is seen in the excerpt below:

A ní kò sí èbi nínú ohun tí àwon olè náà se, sùgbón àwa ni ó kù fún láti múra síle gégébi nwón ti wí. (Fálétí, 1985, p. 8)

We said the armed robbers were not to blame, but it is left for us to prepare beforehand as they said. (Fálétí, 1985, p.8)

Their preparation supports the Yorùbá proverb “ogun àwítelè kì í pa aro tó bá gbón” meaning preannounced war does not kill the wise cripple. The people put all physical and spiritual efforts together so as to return the daring robbers affronts and to secure their lives and properties.

Exploitation

Conflict is a function of exploitative tendencies and unjust nature of man in a given society. This has led to the emergence of classes thereby leading to the domination of one class by another (Fábóròdé, 2016). Human needs are the element require for survival and normal mental and physical wellbeing. Everybody has various needs we struggle to satisfy which include physical and non-physical elements needed for our growth and development either by infringing on the rights of others or not. These exploitative nature of man affords them the opportunity to manipulate and infringe on the right of others for their personal advantage. Àjàní, the head of the robbery gang; attacked the inhabitants of the town by killing the hunters at the border and fighting Olúáwo. The lives of his robbery gang do not matter to him, it appears that he only uses them for his selfish desires. The excerpt below buttresses this claim:

Nígbàtí wón rìn wá, nwón bèrèsí í dúró si ègbègbé ara won, nwon kò tò ní òpópó kan gboran mó, inú bí Olórí won fún èyí, ó ní ‘A! Àìdára bá ènyin olórí burúkú wònyí lóni! Kíni e tún rídúró sí? Kíni è nse? Orí mi ò! kí ntó séjú pé tí mbá tún fi ojú kan enikan ní idúró borogidi, eléyí kò tún f’ojú kan iyá rẹ mó! (Faleti, 1985, p. 27)

As they saw us, they started to stand side by side, and not on a file, the leader got angry about this, he explains thus, ‘Ah! Awfulness meet with you unfortunate ones today! What are you waiting for? What are you doing? Oh my head! Before I blink if I see anyone standing in a formless manner, such person will never see his mother again! (Fálétí, 1985, p. 27)

He re-appeared at Alákànsé’s compound with the wealthy man’s valuables but was unable to take his loots out of the town because he was defeated. Kàkó’s unjust

killing of his new wife on his wedding day caused problems for him and his fellow hunters who were mysteriously sieged by the bush on their way to Òkè láńgbòdó in Ògbójú ode nínú igbó Irúnmolè. In their quest to break free from the mysterious siege, Elégbèdè-Ode takes advantage of the fact that he has the ability to decode animal language. He overheard the conversation between the birds talking about the reason the hunters could not escape from the mysterious fence blocking their way and that if they did not kill it for sacrifice God will not forgive them. As cited below:

Elégbèdè-ode pàápàá yìnbón sí òkan nínú won tí ó sì pa á. Nkò fé kí e gbàgbé pé ón gbó èdè eiye àsé òrò tí nwón ríso ní ó ńgbó nígbàtí ó fi jú owó sí Kàkó kí ó dá owó ìbón rẹ̀ dúró; òkan nínú àwón eiye náa èyítí òn pàápàá wá pa níkeyìn ní ríso fún èkejì pé Kàkó ni ó kó ìyonu bá wa nítorí obìnrin aláìse tí ó pa ní Igbó-ńlá ní ijelòò, tí ó sì ké igbe rẹ̀ lo sí òrun. Eiye náà sì so pèlù pé bí kò bá jé pé a bá pa òn, tí a fi òn rúbo láti fi se ètùtù èsè burúkú tí Kàkó se ni, inú Olórun kò ní ídùn sí wa a kò sì ní le yo nínú ibi ihámó yìi láílái (Fagunwa, 1950, p. 58)

Elégbèdè-ode shot at one of the birds and killed it. I do not want you to forget that he understands bird's language, he hears their conversation which made him wave Kàkó to cease fire; one of the birds that he later killed was telling the other one that Kàkó was the one responsible for our present predicament because of the unjust killing of the innocent woman at Igbó-ńlá the other time, whom scream his name to heaven. The bird also said if it is not killed and offers as atonement for the horrible sin Kàkó committed, God will not be happy with us and that we will not be able to come out of this siege forever.

The hunters killed the bird without hesitation and offered it as sacrifice to God, however, this did not open their ways which made Àkàrà-Oògùn called on Ìrànlówó (Helper) who had earlier helped him out of trouble to help him and his friends from their present predicament. Ìrànlówó (Helper) as, her name implies, brought them out of the mysterious siege by leading the way as they follow her till they got to the road leading to Òkè láńgbòdó.

Conclusion

It is of a fact that some of the factors causing war between the characters in the novels examined include oppression, safety, security and exploitative tendency. As representations of societal realities and experiences, these identifications trigger war in real life. As the characters in the novel were faced with different life threatening challenges such as Àkàrà-Oògùn's battles with the spirit and gnomes, the battles Kàkó

and other hunters won in *Ògbójú Ode Nínú Igbó Irúnmolè* and the war between the group of rude daring robbers and the hunters in *Ogun Àwítélè* could be compared to the battle humans undergo in the society either to defend themselves or fight against and retaliate perceived oppression. It could be inferred that unity, boldness, and self-realisation enable the hunters in the two novels to win their wars. It is noteworthy that boldness, strength and weapon are not enough to win battles. The writers of the novels point it out that the need to be united and the belief in Yorùbá tradition fighting aids like charm, alligator pepper, charmed belt, incantation cannot be over-emphasised. Finally, the novelists also preach the need for adequate wisdom. For instance, Fágúnwà in *Ògbójú Ode Nínú Igbó Irúnmalè* emphasises this throughout. He posits the fact that with adequate wisdom the society will have less war. That is why he highlighted in the preface that his novel is a manual for learning wisdom as seen below:

Òrò inú ìwé mi yǐ kún fún ogbón

The words in this book is filled with wisdom

The need for adequate wisdom made the king of Òkè-Láńgbòdó send the hunters to a sage named Ìrágbèje who is termed 'wise' so as to be schooled about wisdom "Ìrágbèje jé abàmì èdá kan tí ó gbón púpò" (Ìrágbèje, an extraordinary wise man) (Fágúnwà, 1950, p. 69). The king realises that inadequate knowledge would make human seek the uncertainty in the world of the unknown as the king who sent the hunters launched them into the forest without adequate surviving skills leading to loss of many of the hunters in search of what he heard in his late Father's story; that anyone who possesses the object will have abundant peace and fame, meanwhile, the writer of the novel did not describe the town as one that lacks peace and fame. In *Ogun Àwítélè*, inadequate wisdom made Àjàní gave the townspeople prior notice by sending letters to them which enable the hunters defeat him. Unending human thirst for wealth, power and fame puts life in danger and at the risk of war. Finally, wisdom is that tool that will enable human live through life without unnecessary war. This is why Fágúnwà (1950) said 'Ogbón ni ayé gbà' 'it is wisdom that is needed in the world'.

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