



# Vengeance as Corollary of Social Injustice: A Thematic and Character Analysis of Selected Yorubá Novels

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**Abstract:** Vengeance has constantly manifested across human social existence and continues to find depiction in many creative productions, Yorubá novels inclusive. Because of its nature of recycling conflict and violence causing issues, vengeance has contributed immensely to generating social malady. Earlier researchers have focused more on the issues of crime, violence and conflict management aspects of the Yorubá novels thereby paying lesser attention to issues of vengeance which is the gap this work tends to fill. This work therefore uses Hippolyte Taine's mirror image approach of sociology of literature. This study applied the qualitative research approach and the interpretive design to examine the cause and implications of vengeance in the three purposively selected Yorubá novels due to their thematic concern with vengeance which is intended to helping in stemming the tide of vengeance in the society. The novels are: Ojuádé's *Taa L'Qdaran*, Adébo's *Qdó Iwòyí*, and Owolabi's *Ejòo Taa ni?*. This study establishes that injustice is the major cause of vengeance as portrayed by the novelists of the selected novels which is acting as the direct reflection of the human society. Implication of vengeance in this paper includes loss of lives, insecurity and poor health.

**Keywords:** Yorubá novels; vengeance; human society; injustice

## I. Introduction

The ubiquitous nature and human obsession with vengeance have greatly affected human existence Faborode (2022). Vengeance is often confused as the suitable way of solving problems and is also seen as means of satisfying one's emotional state because it seem to disguise as the only reliable way of seeking justice which ended up raising justifiable concern in human society. Vengeance has been an old theme in Yorubá literature; it surfaces in their proverbs.

“Bí adíyè bá dàní loògùn nù, mǎǎ fọ léyín”  
“If the fowl pours away my medication, I will break its eggs”

It is also portrayed in the Yorubá history which was re-enacted in the Mainframe film, *Àfọnjá*, when Alaafin Aólẹ was warned against vengeance, but he refused, stating the fact that he was wrongfully treated and humiliated as a young prince and was also sold into slavery which he saw as injustice. He then felt the need to save his own face and image from the shame and injustice from his past. The need to avenge, therefore led him straight to his doom.

Human societies have always been visited with conflicts and violence of different degrees that degenerated into loss of lives and total annihilation of a particular people leaving them with the search for justice against and for one another, thereby embracing various means of instilling pain on one's opposition or oppressor. This hurtful vengeance seeking nature of human beings is buttressed by Beauvoir (2004:248):

French society embraced 'rage and hate' when their country was occupied by German forces during the Second World War "one does not hate hailstorm or a plague, one hate only man, not because they are causes of material damage, but because they are conscious orchestrator of genuine evil. When the French heard about the degree of evil perpetrated against their fellow compatriots they sworn to take revenge on the Germans with the assurance that the Germans will pay.

This expression simply means that there is an immanent instantaneous response and expression of human desire to exact revenge and a more hazardous evil on their aggressor which would be equal if not more than the horror or brutality they have earlier experienced. At a particular point, human beings see vengeance as the only way out of oppression and every unpleasant occurrences orchestrated by fellow men.

As criminal and violent activities are continuously perpetrated in the society, vengeance continues the trend by turning an oppressed individual who avenges into an aggressor; the chain never ends because of humans' unending thirst for vengeance as no one is ready or patient enough to wait for a judicial sitting that would preside on the type of punishment that befits an offender, in that, when there is a great pain, there is an immediate thirst and need to avenge, to justify and to expunge the horror of dehumanisation from one's memory and restore a balance or peace where evil-thoughts and intentions once dominated.

However, it should be noted that vengeful acts by no means can restore peace or harmony because they have emotional backing and lack of judicial power which would dictate the suitable punishment for the crime committed. This study therefore recognises the inevitable nature of vengeance by viewing injustice as the major cause of vengeance in the society as mirrored by the selected Yoruba novels.

## **II. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Existing Works on Yoruba Novels and Vengeance**

There have been several scholarly works on Yoruba novels. These works span through the rise and development of the Yoruba novels to several criticisms on the creativity of the Yoruba novel. Bamgbosé's (1974) work, the first major attempt, focuses on Fagunwa. He discusses all the aspects of Fagunwa's works. His work sheds light on some of the remote background sources of Fagunwa's inspirations, narrative techniques of the novelist, his thematic preoccupations, characterisations and creative use of language. The study establishes that although there are several encounters with weird characters and incidents in Fagunwa's novels; however, they do not prevent the readers from seeing the deeper level of realism in Fagunwa's novels.

Isola (1978) opines that for an artist to be called a good artist, such an artist must exhaust his artistic resources of presentation to ensure effective delivery. He identifies two different types of detective Yoruba novels- the tender and the tough. His observation and narrative presentation, characterisation and language use in detective novels makes him conclude that Okediji's novels are more relevant to the society than those of Akinlade. He asserts that no novel can be great if the novelist is careless about his art. He then concludes by examining the techniques used by writers in modern Yoruba novels.

Adéboṣálé (1994) in her doctoral thesis investigates style in Yorubá crime fiction. She demonstrates in her study that style is not ornamental or something separate from or subordinate to the action, presentation and ideas expressed in the novels. She also emphasises that the way the writers of Yorubá crime fiction present every aspect of their stories and the artistry with which the stories are told renew reader's interest in wanting to read the stories all over again. In Adéboṣálé's analyses of the works of Òkédíjí and Akínládé, she examines the narrative presentational style, characterisational style and their use of language she then submits that the works of the two novelists serve the same purpose despite their differences.

## **2.2 Conceptualising Vengeance**

There is no smoke without fire; vengeance does not just spring forth from oblivion. These scholars agree that vengeance is the unlawful payment of evil or painful debt; that is, it happens when someone personally returns the suffering or evil he/she has passed through to those who made such person pass through it. Elster (1990) defines revenge as the attempt at some cost or risk to oneself to impose suffering upon those who have made one suffer because they have made one suffer.

Stuckless and Goranson (1994:803) define revenge as the infliction of harm in righteous response to perceived harm or injustice. Uniacke (2000) claims that revenge is personal and non-instrumental: with revenge, we seek to make people suffer because they have made us suffer, not because their actions or values require us to bring them down. He also sees revenge as payback for an injury qua injury. Govier (2002) believes that when people seek revenge, we seek satisfaction by attempting to harm the other (or associated persons) as a retaliatory measure. Vengeance is the act of doing something to hurt someone because that person did something that hurt you or someone else.

It could be deduced from the definitions of the scholars above that vengeance has to do with the payment of evil with evil. Vengeance is bound to happen when those that have been hurt by a person or group of people decide to play the role of a judge over their own personal issues without involving the appropriate institution that is meant to provide justice. For the purpose of this research, vengeance is the deliberate exchange or payment of harm with harm which aims at satisfying one's emotional state. Vengeance is deemed personal because it is always carried out by a hurtful person without a legal/judicial backing. The aim of vengeance from the above definition is the trade of harm with harm.

## **2.3 Mirror Image approach of Sociology of Literature**

Sociology of literature is a theoretical approach, which is conceived with the relationship between a literary work and the social structure in which it is created. It reveals that the existence of a literary creation is determined by the social situations around the literary artiste, because no work of art stands out of the attitudes, morals and values of its society, since no literary artiste has been brought up unexposed to his society and the immediate world around him/her. From the foregoing, therefore, we could infer that no literary work can stand without the influence of the society that produces it. (Olofinsao et al, 2021) There is a great relationship between literature and the society; this is because literature and human society depend on each other due to the fact that literature uses language as its medium of social creation. This paper is anchored on the 'mirror image approach of sociology of literature'. The approach is suitable for this study as it portrays literature as the direct reflection of the various facets of social structure that reflect human society and culture which make it regarded as the mirror of the society. The early proponent of this approach, such as Madame de Stale (1766-1817), H.A. Taine (1828-1893), Louis de Bonald (1754-1840) argue that through the careful reading of any nation's literature, one can tell the identity of that nation. This implies

that when a literary creation of a nation or a society such as Yorùbá literature is carefully studied the way of life of such people would be known. Ògúnṣíná (2006:10) expresses his view on the mirror approach thus:

Thus, from the point of view of the mirror image approach, a literary piece is a veritable mine of information characters are representations of distinct social situations. Events and situations in a work of art are not just figments of the writer's imagination; they have direct relationship to specific historical periods in a society. The themes of a literary work have to be interpreted in relation to definite social facts of the society where the artifact takes its root. The narration technique and stylistic devices employed by an artist is not an end in themselves, they all have social implications. It is therefore the duty of the literary sociologist to transform the private world of literature to specific social meanings.

The Yorùbá novel, just like sociology, deals with all the social, political and economic lives of the Yorùbá society. It penetrates into the deepest part of social life and expresses the experiences, emotion and attitude of Yorùbá people and society because of its long relationship to the historical development of the society. This theory is necessary because it helps to relate the work of art to its society that serves as the mirror which shows the reason human choose to use vengeance to destroy the peaceful existence of the characters in the novels and in the real life human society at large. Sociology of literature has independent values and deep faithfulness to reality. The theory will help in revealing the occurrences and manifestation of vengeance in the Yoruba society as portrayed in the selected Yoruba novels because of its influence on the novelists who are members of the Yoruba society.

### III. Discussion

#### 3.1 A Synoptic Discussion of Selected Yorùbá Novels

##### a. Taa L'Òdaran

Bánjì is a young man working in Ondó town, his wife Tóórera gave birth to Yelé and Kúnlé. In Ondó, he met Títílolá during his friend's Fólajinmí's, birthday party. Because of his lust for Títílolá, he lied to his parents about his wife Tóórera and sent her away. Tóórera took one of the twins, Kúnlé, and left Yelé with Bánjì's aged parents. Bánjì began a relationship with Títílolá.

Akínkúnmi, Fólajinmí's friend, introduced Bánjì and his friends to cocaine business, due to the huge profit in it, Bánjì decided to carry drugs to the United States. On getting to America, he was paid a sum of three million naira (#300,000), got a gift of a car and lots of other gifts. He came back to Nigeria and lied to his friends, Fólajinmí and Akínkúnmi, that the buyer paid him sixty thousand naira. His friends were upset about this, but they had no means of finding out the truth.

Bánjì became suddenly rich and got married to Títílolá in a lavished wedding party that was graced by the high and mighty, while Fólajinmí, on the other hand, had a little party for his wedding, he was even unable to entertain his few guests. Bánjì's new acquired wealth made his friends jealous and unsettled. Fólajinmí lost his job and was left with nothing to take care

of his family. This made Akínkúnmi introduce him to a robbery gang that provided his daily needs.

Folájinmi decided to take revenge on Bánjì for cheating them. This made him recruited his (Bánjì's) wife, Títìlọ́lá, to help them get rid of her husband. She agreed and Bánjì was brutally killed. Folájinmi killed everyone that could stand against Títìlọ́lá, but Yelẹ́ whom they had killed earlier went to possess his twin brother, Kúnlé. The secret was revealed by Yelẹ́'s spirit who later helped Kúnlé to kill Títìlọ́lá, Folájinmi and Akínkúnmi for the evils they had done to his father and his entire family members.

#### **b. Ọ̀dọ́ Ìwọ̀yí**

The story centers on Ọ̀báfẹ́mi, the son of Mr and Mrs Mákíndé. He is a very brilliant and upright young boy. He scored the highest mark in the University Matriculation entrance examination and got admitted into the University on scholarship. One day, in a restaurant, he met T.J. (Túnjì Bakàrẹ̀), the son of the very popular Honourable Bákàrẹ̀. T. J. became a very close friend of Ọ̀báfẹ́mi (F. M). Ọ̀báfẹ́mi fell in love with Ọ̀mọ̀wùnmí, and the love affair was constantly frustrated and threatened by Páskà, a member of Fàrí Orò fraternity.

T.J. calmed him down and persuaded him to join Mo Murá cult fraternity. Unknowing to him that T. J. and Ọ̀mọ̀wùnmí belong to the same cult group, he was initiated, and he killed Páskà his aggressor and few other members of Fàrí Orò cult group. Ọ̀báfẹ́mi later became the head of Mo Murá fraternity. T.J. called on Ọ̀báfẹ́mi and the cult members to help him collect the money his father brought home. Ọ̀báfẹ́mi and his minions went there, but the robbery was more serious than they planned. They shot T. J.'s father when he was proving too stubborn. It was the security men on the street that captured them and almost killed T. J. when they realised he was the one that orchestrated the robbery.

Ọ̀báfẹ́mi and Ọ̀mọ̀wùnmí were handed over to the police. The horrendous news killed his mother, and his father was arrested but later set free. He was later released due to the corrupt nature of the police force. The D.P.O lied to everyone that Ọ̀báfẹ́mi and his cohort had been killed; meanwhile he helped to hide the dangerous couple in Àtapa, because he was also a cult member. Tọ́lání, one of Fàrí Orò fraternity members, saw the couple and informed others. On one fateful day, Fàrí Orò cult members launched a surprise attack on Ọ̀báfẹ́mi and Ọ̀mọ̀wùnmí, and killed them. There was a counter-attack by the police, but the fraternity members killed the D.P.O and few unfortunate police officers. Tọ́lání was the only one captured alive; she was sentenced to life imprisonment.

#### **c. Èjọ́p Taa Ni?**

Láníyì, the only child of his parents, was a childhood friend and lover of Sùmbò. Their parents were close friends. This closeness led to love affair. Sùmbò gained admission into The University of Lagos, but Láníyì could not secure admission. He later got a banking job in Lagos which afforded the two lovebirds to see each other every day until Fúnmiláyò, Sùmbò's roommate, introduced her to Dr. Tọ́lá Adédòkún, one of their lecturers. She brainwashed Sùmbò into dating the man.

Sùmbò did not find it difficult to take the advice because all she cared about at that time was money which made her keep collecting money from Láníyì who was a low-income earner and could no longer meet her needs. Her secret affairs with Dr. Tọ́lá Adédòkún became leaked to everyone, including Láníyì, who became heartbroken. This made him seek

the help of his friends who involved a group of activists in the fight. All efforts to stop the relationship were abortive, and Dr. Tòlá decided to marry Sùmbò.

The activists sent various letters to stop their wedding; a group of thugs also tried stopping the wedding, but police intervened. Dr. Tòlá Adédòkun ordered the arrest of Láníyì and his friends. The time he was arrested made him absent from his office, and he was sacked. After his release, his loss of job made him decide to avenge himself at all costs. He forcefully gained entrance into the couple's house through their security man, and he tried to kill the couple. On his way out of the compound, he was arrested and arraigned. He was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment, while Dr. Tòlá Adédòkun and his wife, Sùmbò, were left with physical disability through the gunshots they received from Láníyì. Everything that happened to Láníyì killed his parents.

### 3.2 Vengeance in the Selected Yorùbá Novels

Vengeance is the act of doing something to hurt someone because that person did something that hurt you or someone else. The reciprocity nature of vengeance shows in Faborode (2022) submission that vengeance is the payment of evil with evil. Vengeance is bound to happen when those that have been hurt by a person or group of people decide to play the role of a judge over their own personal issues without involving the appropriate institution that is meant to provide justice. Vengeance in this study is triggered by injustice as portrayed in the selected Yorùbá novels. Injustice is a situation in which the rights of a person or a group of people are denied and ignored. People seek vengeance when justice is unevenly distributed in the society because of the feeling that they have been cheated and that the system entrusted with justice has failed in their duties; they go rebellious and will decide to seek justice in their own way in order to satisfy their feelings. There are different types of revenge triggered by injustice, such as honour revenge, predatory/prey, fantasy, simple, collective, constructive, transformative, distributive justice and symbolic vengeance or karmic justice. Vengeance caused by injustice as observed in the selected novels are in form of honour revenge, collective revenge and predatory/prey revenge.

### 3.3 Honour Revenge

This act of revenge occurs when someone has experienced social harm, the loss of face or shame and seeks to revenge in order to restore the perceived loss of honour. This type of revenge is targeted at restoring one's self-worth and identity when one had earlier suffered a case or cases of injustice. In *Taa L'òdaràn?*, Bájí who had a business deal with his old friends Akin and Fọlá met his untimely death because he refused to share the profits evenly; he had an unfair advantage over his friends. He became very rich and his friends became very poor; they also lost their jobs due to Bájí's prideful attitude to their boss. His friends felt cheated and became hurtful and hateful because of inequality and also because Bájí kept oppressing them; they then decided to brutally murder him. Fọlá's speech at the crime scene shows they ended Bájí's life as revenge:

Ògbéni Bájí, a jo je, a jo mu, a jo mulẹ̀, iwọ̀ dalẹ̀. Bóo bá táyẹ̀ wá, bí o bá rí ilẹ̀, O kò ní í dàá mọ̀, o tún búse o fée pa Títílọ́lá tí Òdumàrẹ̀ torí tiẹ̀ fun ẹ̀ lówó. Tóo, Maa bá tiẹ̀ lọ, kí Títí maa náwó lọ ní tiẹ̀ o. (*Taa L'òdaràn?* 2002:107-108)

Mr Bájí, we ate together; we drank together; we swore to an oath together; you betrayed us. If possible you come back to the world, if you see the act of betrayal, you will never be a part of it; you also wanted to kill Títílọ́lá who was the source of

your wealth from God; anyway, you may be on your way, and Tíṭí will continue to spend the money.

Folá and Akin killed Bánjì as revenge with the help of Tíṭí, his wife and they also requested his wife to share his wealth with them. They then pledged to eliminate any family member who dares share in the property or pose any threat to Tíṭí's new inheritance. Bánjì's friends who felt oppressed and cheated resorted to taking his life because they did not get justice over their clever and trickish friend. This type of vengeance is not alien in the Yorubá society and the world at large where those who suffered injustice kill those who have cheated them and successfully boycott justice. This revenge act continues to breed trouble and also constantly destroy peace in the society. (Osadola & Adeleye, 2020)

### 3.4 Collective Revenge

This is the act of punishing an entire group for an act of one or all of its members. The goal of this type of revenge is to make the group that earlier boycotted justice suffer to same extent the victim earlier suffered. In *Ọ̀dọ̀ Ìwọ̀yí*, the members of Fáńí Orò cult group are prepared to avenge the death of Páskà whom Mo Murá cult members killed with the order of Qbáfẹmí and Qmọ̀wunmí that Páskà threatened before his pitiful death. Tólání expresses the need to take revenge on the couple who orchestrated the death of one of them in the excerpt below:

...kí ni Tólání gbọ̀ èyí sí, inú rẹ̀ ru sọkẹ̀; Ó ní àwọn gbọ̀dọ̀ tètè wá nnkán se sí ọ̀rọ̀ nàà nitorí àwọn Olólufẹ̀ méjèjì yí ni wọn wá léyìn ikú Páskà, ọ̀kàn pàtākì nínú Qmọ̀ egbẹ̀ Fáńí Orò tí wọn pa lójọ̀sí. Kò sì wá ní dára bí àwọn bá wá jẹ̀ kí Qbáfẹmí àti Qmọ̀wunmí ó wá láyẹ̀, àwọn gbọ̀dọ̀ rán wọn lọ̀ sí irin-àjò àrẹ̀mabọ̀ ni.  
(Ọ̀dọ̀ Ìwọ̀yí 2009:58)

...as Tólání heard about this, her anger was kindled; she said they needed to do something swiftly as regards the issue, because the two lovers were behind the murder of Páskà, one of the strongest members of Fáńí Orò cult that was killed long time ago. It will not be a good one if they allow Qbáfẹmí and Qmọ̀wunmí to be alive; they all have to send them to the journey of no return.

Fáńí Orò cult members organised themselves and stormed the supermarket where the love birds were. Qbáfẹmí and Qmọ̀wunmí were shot and butchered into tiny pieces. Fáńí Orò cult members succeeded in their revenge plan which was fuelled by their anger because they were unable to get justice over their departed friends, as Police refused to punish Qbáfẹmí and Qmọ̀wunmí after all they had done; so they decided to take laws into their very own hands as revealed below:

Àwọn omọ egbẹ̀ Fáńí orò kò fí àkókò sọfò rára, wọn da ibon bo àwọn olólufẹ̀ méjèjì. Àfí pàù! Pàù! Pàù! Lọtun-un lósi, níwà àti léyìn, síbẹ̀ ofuutufẹ̀tẹ̀ ni ibon yinyin wọn n ja sí; kò tilẹ̀ tu irun kan lara Qbáfẹmí àti Qmọ̀wunmí; èrin ni wọn n rín kulà. Wọn gbagbé wí pé eyẹ̀ tí n ké "Mo murá, mo mú jẹ̀" n bọ̀ wá kó sínú okun-ọ̀dẹ̀ lójọ̀ kan. Lójọ̀, àwọn omọ-egbẹ̀ FÁńÍ ORÒ

yí yí ojú ibon padà: wón kò ọ sí ara wón, wón sì yí idí ibon sí Qbáfemi àti Qmówunmí. Pàù! Pàù! Pàù! tí wón bèrè sí í yín ibon wón bayí, ilẹ̀ nì Qbáfemi àti Qmówunmí lọ tààràtà; wón kú tẹyinteyín. Awón omọ egbẹ̀ okunkun yí kò wá fí mọ̀ bẹ̀ẹ̀ ọ, wón fa àáké yọ, wón sì bèrèsí í sá okú Qbáfemi àti Qmówunmí sàkàsàkà. (Ọdọ̀ Iwòyí 2006: 59-61)

Fárí orò cult members did not waste time; they shot at the couples; the shot was fired from right, left, front and back, but it was futile; it did not touch a strand of Qbáfemi and Qmówunmí's hair, and they began to laugh continuously. They forgot that the bird that sings the song of invincibility will get caught in the web of the fowler one day. Suddenly, Fárí orò cult members pointed the guns at themselves, while pointing the back of the gun to Qbáfemi and Qmówunmí. As they began to shoot, Qbáfemi and Qmówunmí fell to the ground; they died. These secret cult members did not stop at that; they brought out their axes and started to dismember the lifeless bodies of Qbáfemi and Qmówunmí.

The incident quickly got to the ears of the law as Fárí Orò cult members were apprehended by the Police officers who luckily found them at the crime scene after they had already carried out their evil mission over their aggressors and innocent citizens. Fárí Orò cult members were duly punished by the law court. This event mirrors the aftermath effect of injustice in the society. The inability of cheated members of the society to get justice leads to vengeance.

### 3.5 Predatory/Prey revenge

This involves the act of retaliation for real or perceived harm, usually physically or social. The motive of the avenger is to put an end to the victimisation, real or perceived. This type of revenge is one that is predominantly emotional; it has a certain selfish quality to it. It is by nature personal because the reason for revenge is to get even, to carry out personal hatred and personal justice. Vengeance triggered by injustice, at this point is an act of vindictiveness; it is about cycles and retaliation.

Láńyì who was constantly cheated and oppressed by Dr Adédòkún, who snatched his lover became embittered. His loss of job due to his illegal arrest add insult to his injury which made him swear to take vengeance. His ardent desire to hurt his oppressor and his quest for vengeance because of the pain of injustice in his heart made him decide to kill Dr Adédòkún and Sùmbò in *Ejò Taa ni?*. He expressed his thoughts as he captured the couples in their house before he shot at them in the excerpt below:

Adédòkún, Sùmbò, ilẹ̀ mọ̀ ọ yín, ọ kú ibi tí ẹ má a gbà, sèbí mo tí sọ fun un yín pé àkọdà oró kò tó àdàgbeyìn. Ẹ wọlẹ̀ kẹ̀ ẹ̀ wọkẹ̀; ọpin dé sí ohun gbogbo lónú (Ejò Taa ni? 2006: 128)  
Adédòkún, Sùmbò, time up! There is no way of escape for you; I told you earlier that the earlier perpetrated crime is not as bad as the vengeance that finally followed. Now, look downwards and upwards; the end has come to everything today.

Láńíyì avenged Sùmbò's betrayal and Dr. Adédòkun's oppression by making an attempt to terminate the couple's lives. Though they survived, they will not enjoy the rest of their lives in good health because the incident has left them permanently disabled. Láńíyì was apprehended by the guards who handed him over to the Police after the attack, and he confessed to all of his crimes and was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment with hard labour, without the opportunity for a fine:

Léyìn ọ̀pọ̀lọ̀pọ̀ iwádíí àwọn ọ̀lọ̀páá gbé Láńíyì lọ ilẹ́ẹ́jọ, nígbà tí onitohun sì tí lẹ́ jẹwọ̀ pé loòtọ́ loun wúwà tí wọn fẹ́sún rẹ kan oun látàrí iwa ifowọ́ ọlá gbá ní lóju tí Ọmọwé Adédòkun hù tí ó gbà iyawó oun tí iṣẹ́ sì tún bó lówó oun lórí ọ̀rọ́ nàà. Sẹ́ bélejọ bá tí mejọ́ rẹ́ lébi kò ní pé lórí ikúnlẹ́. Adájọ́ dájọ́ ewọn ogun ọ̀dún pẹ̀lú iṣẹ́ àsekára fun Láńíyì láì fí àyè sílẹ́ fun owó ìtanràn (Ejoo Taa ni? 2006: 131-132)

After the police conducted series of investigations, Láńíyì was arraigned; he then confessed to all his crimes as charged, and that he did all he had done because of how Dr. Adédòkun cheated him by coveting his wife and how the issue made him lose his job. Justice was sped up without further delay because of his confession. The judge sentenced Láńíyì to twenty years' imprisonment without a fine.

If the Police had not showed partiality by choosing Dr. Adédòkun who is very rich and influential in passing their judgments, Láńíyì would have no reason to carry out revenge because he would have got the justice he deserved. His unjust arrest and that of his friends is a form of injustice which he did everything within his power to avenge. This type of vengeance is common in the Yorubá and human society in general when lovers suffer injustice due to the betrayal of their partner. Most of the time, such vengeful acts lead to loss of lives, insecurity and poor health as portrayed in the selected novels.

#### IV. Conclusion

The novels we have examined in this paper have revealed that vengeance is present in human relationship as they live with each other in the society. The events in the selected Yorubá novels mirror the issue of vengeance in the human society as those who feel cheated by any member of the society employ every dangerous plans in order to get justice and also satisfy their bruised and damaged emotions. Just as it is in the society, if anyone upsets the natural balance by taking unfair advantage where others did not, such a person deserves to be punished. In case such a person escapes or boycotts justice, those who are affected by such injustice as a natural human being who would not accept to be cheated would opt for the easy, satisfying, yet painful, ways out, which is vengeance, until they get their satisfaction or captured by the law. Mirror image approach has helped realised that what we have in the selected novels are also in reality in Yorubá history which was evidence in the reign of the vengeful, rage-filled and curse inflicting Yorubá monarch Qba Aólẹ́ who reigned in the ancient Oyo Empire. After he suffered a great injustice and betrayal from his chiefs and towns' people who wanted him to open the calabash (die), he was said to have vengefully placed curses on the Yorubá nation and people. This is buttressed by Johnson (1921:192) as cited below:

His Majesty set his house in order: but before he committed suicide, he stepped out into the palace quadrangle with face stern and resolute, carrying in his hands an earth ware dish and three arrows. He shot one to the North, one to the South, and one to the West uttering those ever-memorable imprecations, “My curse be on ye for your disloyalty and disobedience, so let your children disobey you. If you send them on an errand, let them never return to bring you word again. To all the points I shot my arrows will ye be carried as slaves. My curse will carry you to the sea and beyond he seas, slaves will rule over you, and you their masters will become slaves.

The excerpt above shows the level of vengeance perpetrated by a king who had experienced injustice. The curses he placed on the Yoruba race is assumed to be in operation till today, which is why Yorubá people are said to hate and fight each other. This example establishes the fact that literature is an experience of reality.

Lastly, one example that mirrors the issue of vengeance which ended up claiming lives of lots of people is seen in the case of Al-Qaeda’s attack on the world Trade Center in September 11, 2001, which killed thousands of people and was intended as revenge against the United States for insulting Islam and for its presence in Saudi Arabia. This attack was avenged within a month by the United States by bombing of Afghanistan, and ten years later (May 1st 2011) by the killing of Al-Qaeda’s founder and leader Osama Bin Laden. This later event was followed eleven days later by a deadly suicide bombing in Pakistan by the Taliban, whose spokesman stated: “We have done this to avenge the Abbottabad incident”, referring to the killing of Osama Bin Laden. (Asadi, 2011; Frijda, 2007; Khan, 2011).

This paper has showed that vengeance results when members of the society are denied justice over events and happenings in the society. Literature portrays reality. Hence, it mirrors the society. The novelists whose novels are examined in this paper have re-enacted how injustice lead to vengeance. This work also established that vengeance has disastrous effects in the society which include loss of lives, insecurity and poor health as portrayed by the novelists of the selected Yorubá novels.

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