



The Voice of Africans' Journey of Culture and their Historical Evidence through Literature

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ABSTRACT

Women authors from Africa have been and continue to be able to assert themselves as writers on a national and international scale. African-American women's voices are among the most potent literary voices of the latter half of the 20th century. However, regarding the literary tradition, particularly in the middle of the 19th century, there has always been a connection between white supremacy and male superiority throughout the history of the United States. The masculinization of the literary field at the time meant that the male perspective, whether black or white, seemed to speak for both genders and yet could not fully manifest female oppression in a patriarchal society. Women were not only racial outcasts; they were also oppressed due to their gender. Even though race issues have always played a significant role in everyday life, there has always been a divide between white people and black people; However, within this last group was a smaller group of women who had been subjected to not only racial prejudice but also sexist customs, slavery, and other forms of marginalization, including within their own culture.

Keywords: Literature, Culture, Language, African Writings.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women's writing in Africa was born out of the need to add a feminine perspective to the male writers' sociopolitical vision of Africa. They also wanted to talk about issues related to female subjectivity to show how cultural barriers to women's agency prevent them from acting on their own. Activist feminism is more prominent in the writings of contemporary female African authors like Chimamanda Adichie, Chika Unigwe, and Helen Oyeyemi. Through their prose fiction, women writers have shown women that a part of them should speak up and not drown in the patriarchal abyss as society expects. They have also taught women to stand up for themselves and what they believe in. It is difficult to comprehend the contrast between the identities of African women and Western women. The term "feminism" is only viewed from the perspective of the Western world. The reality of feminism is that different people in different parts of the world have different ideas about what feminism should be and how it should be defined. However, there is a recurring theme that applies to all feminists: a feminist is someone who challenges conventional gender roles to advance gender equality.

II. THE VICTIMIZATION IN WRITINGS

Until the publication of works launched by Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, the female African American voice had been suppressed. Writers like Ralph Ellison had already broken through barriers to look at the black consciousness. However, it was thought that while the black male voice could say what it felt like to be "black," it couldn't really say "femaleness" or what women went through. Walker and Morrison attempt to reconstruct the negative socialization that was once associated with being black through novels like *The Color Purple* and *Beloved*; by ignoring and rejecting everything that had shattered black identity, including slavery, which both narratives, implicitly or explicitly, discuss. These novels not only serve as an illustration of the

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oppression and victimization of black women, but they also set out to reclaim their cultural heritage and free themselves from the oppression of men. In a real sense, they are also written to all women, white and black, suggesting that communication gaps between the two groups must be bridged. 'Black women's experiences with both racial and gender oppression results in needs and problems distinct from white women and black men, and black women must struggle for equality both as women and as African-Americans' (Collins 20).

In Walker's *The Color Purple* and Morrison's *Beloved*, women's victimhood is portrayed in very different ways; However, they both provide us with a deeper understanding of the psychological responses that the main characters exhibit in the situations they are put in. By doing so, both authors draw attention to how African-American literature has progressed since such harrowing issues would have been completely ignored. Even though it appeared that black people had survived the difficult encounters with racism and were able to write about them, the issues surrounding the diminished fear of black sexism had not yet been addressed. In their novels, Walker and Morrison question this and speculate that the pattern of black servitude for African-American men and women may not have been completely broken; women were still trying to find their identities away from violence and slavery. 'In the *Color Purple*, walker envisages human progress in terms of transformation made possible by the rejection of attitudes founded upon assumed superiority, whether it is of sex, race or nationality' (Birch 222).

The discontent of Western women led to the development of feminism. Even though African women have always been sensitive to any kind of discrimination in African society, the rise of feminism and feminist consciousness-raising made them more aware of how they were oppressed by social inequality, which was made worse by patriarchal culture and tradition. Despite all odds, many African women have aligned themselves with feminism and the feminist cause achieved respectable acceptance and recognition from even the most obstinate resistance to male dominance. African women writers have captured this trend in their works of literature, which highlight the progress African women have made in moving from the margins to the center and making contributions to social change. In Walker's *The Color Purple* and Morrison's *Beloved*, women's victimhood is portrayed in very different ways; However, they both provide us with a deeper understanding of the psychological responses that the main characters exhibit in the situations they are put in. By doing so, both authors draw attention to how African-American literature has progressed since such harrowing issues would have been completely ignored. Even though it appeared that black people had survived the difficult encounters with racism and were able to write about them, the issues surrounding the diminished fear of black sexism had not yet been addressed. In their novels, Walker and Morrison question this and speculate that the pattern of black servitude for African-American men and women may not have been completely broken; women were still trying to find their identities away from violence and slavery. 'In the *Color Purple*, walker envisages human progress in terms of transformation made possible by the rejection of attitudes founded upon assumed superiority, whether it is of sex, race or nationality' (Birch 222).

The discontent of Western women led to the development of feminism. Even though African women have always been sensitive to any kind of discrimination in African society, the rise of feminism and feminist consciousness-raising made them more aware of how they were oppressed by social inequality, which was made worse by patriarchal culture and tradition. Despite all odds, many African women have aligned themselves with feminism and the feminist cause achieved respectable acceptance and recognition from even the most obstinate resistance to male dominance. African women writers have captured this trend in their works of literature, which highlight the progress African women have made in moving from the margins to the center and making contributions to social change. African American writers engage in the elusive pursuit of status, power, and identity within the context of these two separate traditions. Each writer's contribution and significance are thus influenced by his or her relationship to past and present writers as well as by the relationship of his or her texts to others in the tradition, both in the narrower Eurocentric sense of literary formalism as well as in the broader Afrocentric cultural sense. Most contemporary African American novelists, including Pulitzer Prize winner Alice Walker, John Oliver Killens, John A. Williams, Paule Marshall, Gloria Naylor, Terry McMillan, and Terry McMillan, attempt to replace personal ambivalence and social absurdity with a new order of thinking, feeling, and sharing based on self-determination, community, and human rights.

III. IGBO AND YORUBA CULTURES

The majority of African societies are as old as literature. Folktales and fables are used to pass down cultural norms and preserve histories in Igbo and Yoruba cultures. With three major ethnic groups that are somewhat similar in more ways than you can imagine, Nigeria is a culturally diverse nation. Before colonization, the two ethnic groups established trading routes. They are known to be passionate about the industry together; They are both peace-loving, welcoming, and accommodating; Despite sharing the same southern territory, the Igbo and Yoruba peoples have never been involved in a conflict. Language plays a significant role in facilitating interpersonal communication. You might wonder if the Igbo and Yoruba people came from the same place because their pronunciations of certain words are very similar. "Amen" is spelled "Ase" in Yoruba and "Ise" in Igbo. "Twin" is spelled "Ejire" in Yoruba and "Ejime/Tajima" in Igbo. "Ear" is spelled "eti" in Yoruba and "nti" in Igbo. This demonstrates how much the languages of the two cultures are alike. The majority of Igbo and Yoruba people are Christians. Muslims and traditional worshippers share a smaller number of followers, but religion is one of their primary shared characteristics. A typical Yoruba family is similar to an average Igbo family in that it is made up of devoted Christians. Both cultures are devoted to their religious beliefs and place a high value on religion and spirituality. In Yoruba and Igbo culture, the family is the most important thing, and the father is in charge of the family. Children learn to appreciate family, participate in large family gatherings, and interact with extended family and elders. In both cultures, the defining unit that teaches children about the culture, beliefs, and moral code is the family. A typical Yoruba or Igbo person prioritizes their family above all else.

IV. MYTHS OF ILLITERACY

Ngom's research revealed that people in Senegal, Guinea, Nigeria, and other parts of West Africa use a modified Arabic alphabet to write in several local languages, much in the same way that the Roman alphabet is used to write English, French, and Spanish. Some of them include Wolof,

Hausa, Fula, Mandinka, Swahili, Amharic, Tigrigna, and Berber. It was a significant discovery. The erroneous notion that a large number of communities in sub-Saharan Africa were illiterate and lacked their written languages was dispelled by this writing system, known as Ajami. On subsequent trips to the continent, Ngom discovered some documents whose authors were code-switching throughout the text: writing in its modified Ajami form and strictly Arabic. These writers could read and write in multiple languages in addition to being literate. According to Ngom, "African sources of knowledge" have been the subject of ongoing discussions, but "this component has never been taken seriously until now." Therefore, for instance, European sources have dominated African history. However, this is the first time that Africans have produced a significant number of documents that address the same issues as their history. Additionally, we at BU lead this effort: Africa has been documented in more than 30,000 pages by us.

The literature on the African continent has developed clearly through distinct stages. The oral tradition or literature of the African continent was driven by storytellers and folklorists from the earliest days of the griots when literature was more or less in its egg stage because it was contained within the shell of the ethnic, tribal, and cultural shell and remained in more ways than one unseen and unheard by the rest of the world. They also preserved this literature for the arrival of the outsider, the next stage in the metamorphosis. This outsider came in with his literature, and the pupal stage of the development of African literature on the African mainland and in the Diaspora is marked by periods of colonialism and slavery. The literature of the African continent matures fully into an image of literary diversity during the post-independence era. Even though a century has not yet passed, literature is still relatively young and possesses the curiosity of a child, so it explores the myriad avenues of expression that literature provides. It doesn't matter if the literature is written in English, French, or Lusophone; The progression has been the same, and the topics discussed are remarkably similar in that the African people's experiences have been virtually identical.

The period of colonialism and slavery had the most significant impact on African literature and had a significant impact on literary expression. From the indigenous oral tradition that is followed in the majority of continent-wide nations to the European literary writing style that was brought about by colonialism, there is a discernible shift. The African has always written, but the script has always been shaped by cultural, ethnic, and tribal interests. The Africans who came back to the village from the city brought the ideas of independence and nationalism, which weakened the colonists' existing governing structures, and a new ideology of liberation, freedom, and equality began to take root. The new wave of ideas that spread from the city to the village served as the foundation for the development of contemporary African literature, and the village chiefs had progressed beyond being merely the colonial elite's puppets. Democracy was more in demand, and the ideologies behind the movements needed to be heard; The author naturally became the people's voice. In the final years of the colonial era, the literary school of writing in Africa was to perform its first primary function: to light the flames of African liberation, equality, and freedom.

The fervent demand for liberation, freedom, and independence from the colonists was disrupted by the two world wars; however, after the Second World War ended, a lower middle class of mechanics, clerks, nurses, teachers, and artisans emerged in Africa. Members of the group before it was absorbed by this one; the elites' older generation. In their effort to free the continent from the control of the colonial governments, the people of the villages backed the political parties that were formed within this new group.

The first shade of African literature was the independence that was achieved through the fervent and unrelenting campaigns of political and literary writers. This independence would serve as the foundation for the majority of the themes that were explored in the poems, novels, and plays written during this time of new beginnings. In the writings of the continent during this period, the themes and paradigms of literature are nearly identical. Throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods, the literature's hues remain unchanged.

Instead, they shine like the morning sun of the post-independence era, and the facets of African literature's crystal are Negritude, Pan-Africanism, heritage writings, and writings about Black consciousness and identity. From the 1930s, Léopold Senghor and other French-speaking Africans in France, including Léon Damas and Aimé Césaire from French Guiana and Martinique, were involved in the Négritude movement. According to Parry, B., "their poetry not only denounced colonialism but also proudly asserted the validity of the cultures that the colonizers had tried to crush." Modern African literature had begun, and its various hues would continue to shimmer over the sixty or so years that followed independence.

The language used in the writing of the work and the issues or themes it addresses is the primary characteristics of African literature. Since the beginning of African literature, the issue of language has been the subject of debate. The question of which language or languages were used in the production of a work and the issues that the choice of such a language brings to light must inevitably arise during the discussion of African literature.

The discussion of the language issue has significantly changed; from Pan-Africanism and Negritude to Ngugi's defense of the native language against English usage in African writing. In the middle of the post-independence era, there was less concern about choosing a language for work, but it has returned in full force in the newly liberated Republic of South Africa. In the early days of independence, concerns about choosing a language for a literary work are debated in South Africa just as much as they were in the early days after independence. This leads to the conclusion that, during the euphoria of early independence, the choice of the medium of expression appears to be the native language; however, the need to assert oneself as a writer in one's native tongue soon fades out after the noise of the masses' newly independent voices.

In literary circles, heritage and cultural restoration only seem to be of concern in the few years before and after independence. The African author appears to return to his duties as a social trend observer after the euphoria of liberation wears off; The concern for cultural heritage appears to be diminishing, and there must be an observer of current trends. Language is the primary medium for transmitting information, and the majority of literature's behavioral shifts can be observed in its patterns. The primary factor that influences African literature in the first place is the second shade in the metamorphosis of literature politics.

V. PIONEERS OF THE LAND

Anna-Lisa Cox, a historian, examines the largely untold story of the free black people who first moved to the West in her new book, *The Bone and Sinew of the Land*. This is one of the books which carries the history but at the same, the world still remembers the great leaders of all time mentioned here. Moving beyond the norm to seize new opportunities and reap greater rewards is risk-taking. In order to improve our lives, we frequently have to

overcome our own feelings and give up time, effort, and even money. The following list showcased the first step of holding their motherland to the next level.

- The first African-American woman to earn a doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) was Dr. Shirley Jackson. Later, Dr. Jackson helped develop the portable fax machine and caller ID; both significant technological advancements that shaped modern communication.
- The first African-American woman to obtain a pilot's license and fly in public was Bessie Coleman.
- Jane Bolin became the nation's first female African-American judge and was the first Black woman to attend Yale Law School.
- Hattie McDaniel was the first African American to win an Oscar.
- The first African-American author to win the Pulitzer Prize was Gwendolyn Brooks.
- Civil rights activist Ella Baker collaborated with Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Mary Jackson, Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, and other "human computers" made significant contributions to space exploration and flight.
- Fannie Lou Hamer was an activist for women's rights and the right to vote.
- Hosea Williams became well-known as a powerful civil rights activist after assisting Martin Luther King, Jr. in running the Christian Leadership Conference.
- The first Black woman elected to Congress was Shirley Chisholm.

VI. CONCLUSION

Young people represent Africa's greatest hope for socioeconomic advancement and ethical leadership. The difficult social issues affecting young people's ability to live a dignified life and reach their full potential must be addressed now. For the future of Africa, every moment a child spends in the classroom instead of on the streets of Africa is a moment. Africa, like the rest of the world, is suffering from the pandemic. However, like any challenge, it also offers opportunities. The foundation can be laid to strengthen education, investment, employment, and trade with the right decisions made by leaders on the continent and partners like Britain. Only fools would dismiss the youth and dynamism of economies like Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Ghana, to name a few. Opportunities are a priority for young African citizens. They look to nations like Britain as an illustration of what is possible. Africa and Africans have a role to play in the digital economy, the green transition, resources, energy, and infrastructure. Britain ought not to pass up the chance to make it happen.

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