

Environmental Activism in Akinwumi Isola's *Saworo Idę* (The Brass Drum): A Study in Ecocriticism

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Abstract

Critics of indigenous literature have over the years examined the relationship between literature and various forms of social consciousness, including morality, politics, religion, economy, culture, migration, wars, gender, health, crime, and globalization. However, environmental activism has not received adequate attention in Yorùbá literature. Although many traditional Yorùbá hunters and chanters were very close to nature and composed numerous ijálá chants and other poetic forms reflecting the divine relationship between humanity and the environment, a more conscious insertion of environmental studies in Yorùbá literary criticism is very recent. This study examines the theme of environmental activism through the literary lens of Akinwumi Isola's "Saworo Idę". The novel was purposively selected because no other contemporary Yorùbá novel engages environmental activism as effectively as "Saworo Idę". The study employs a qualitative research methodology and the theoretical framework of ecocriticism for contextual analysis of themes in the novel. Findings show that economic determinism and climate change lead to deforestation and the suffering of the people as consequences of environmental crisis, ultimately resulting in violent activism. The study concludes that environmental crises and the resultant activism should be blamed on humans due to their violations of cosmic order. It recommends traditional methods of managing environmental crisis, such as afforestation and the preservation of heritage sites, as portrayed in the selected text, to mitigate environmental disasters in contemporary societies.

Keywords: environment, environmental activism, deforestation, afforestation, ecocriticism

1. Introduction

Indigenous literary critics have over the years examined the relationship between literature and other forms of social consciousness, such as morality, politics, crimes, philosophy, and psychology among others. However, a more conscious insertion of the study of environmental crisis and activism in literary criticism seem to be very recent. Slaymaker observes that anthologies, reviews, and summaries of Black African literature and criticism reflect the general absence of eco-criticism and literature of the environment and that despite the rapid and global environmentalist literary growth in the 1990s, literary criticism of nature is notoriously behind the time in Africa. He explains further that: the period 1987 – 89 may be considered to mark only the inception of interest in ecolit and ecocrit in Black African literary circles and “that Niyi Osundare is the best example of a writer, critic and academic whose creative energy is focused on environmental and ecological themes, which are evident in his 1986 collections of poems *The Eyes of the Earth*” (690).

While we do not dispute the greatness of Niyi Osundare as a prolific writer, a critic of high standard and an activist in environmental issues, he is not the first poet of nature in Yorùbá society. The themes that have to do with the physical environment had been in African oral and written literature since time immemorial, long before 1987 which Slaymaker located as the inception of nature literature or literature of the environment in Africa. Bellarsi has stated correctly in my view that “no human society has historically existed completely independently from nature, be it at the material level or the one of cultural representation” (78-84).

The Yoruba people have voiced their concerns about the natural world in their oral literature from ancient times to the present. What is recent is the literary analysis of Yorùbá novel and environmental activism within the theory of eco-criticism in Yorùbá literary scholarship. Apparently, Yoruba literary scholars are yet to focus their critical attention on environmental activism and the Yorùbá novel. This effort is set out to fill that gap. The study would throw light on the influence of literature on the peoples’ perception on the environmental activism. An ecosensitive or ecocritical reading of literature, according to Ragaisiene, would “expand the role of literature to include not only aesthetic/moral but also social and political and perhaps environmental functions” (101).

The objectives of this study therefore are: to examine the theme of environmental activism in selected novel of Akinwumi Iṣola and how

he uses the novel in shaping nature-related perception and practices in the management of the highly polluted physical environment. The research methodology is qualitative. Saworo Idę was purposively selected being the novel of actions against environmental degradation and pollution. The data collected from the text through close reading were subjected to content analysis using ecocriticism as the theoretical framework.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The concept of environment has been viewed from different perspectives and defined in various ways depending on the academic discipline of the definers. Porteous asserts that:

The multiplicity of the usage and concept of the Term environment have resulted in a variety of adjectival forms which include social environment, molar environment, physical environment, home environment, psychological environment, behavioural environment, geographical environment (99).

In this study, I adopt the definition given by Nigeria's Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) 1989 which states that the environment includes water, air, land, plants, animals and human beings living there in, and the inter-relationships that exist among them. In other words, the environment is viewed within this context as all physical, non-physical, living and non-living situations surrounding an organism that determine its existence, development and survival at a particular time.

In Yorùbá society until recently, environmental criticism was functional rather than being an academic discipline in literature. It has been a discipline of cultural ecology which in the opinion of Estok is more than simply the study of nature or natural things in literature, but a commitment to effecting change in order to contribute material practices in material world (220). The Yorùbá believe in Olodumare who creates the heaven and the universe. The physical and the invisible environment, the biotic and abiotic spheres are created by Olódùmarè. The responsibility of man is to maintain harmony with the Cosmos. Human beings are expected to endeavour to create harmonious relationship with fellow human beings and the physical and non-physical environment –fauna, flora, and the spirits of the ancestors in order to sustain the perfect harmony with God.

3. Ecocriticism

The term “ecocriticism” was coined by William Rueckert in his 1978 essay “Literature and Ecology: An experiment in ecocriticism” (xxiii). His intent was to focus on the application of ecology and ecological concept to the study of literature. However, it was only in the late eighties and early nineties that a community of scholars who openly identified themselves as ecocritics became fully visible on the academic scene (Bellarsi, 73). There was a special session on ecocriticism at 1991 MLA conference followed by the foundation of the American mother-chapter of ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment).

Historically, ecocriticism emerged in response to an environmental crisis and ecological spoliation which became harder to negate in the closing decades of the twentieth century. Ecocriticism is given different designations in the literary circle today such as “green cultural studies,” “eco-critique”, “environmental criticism” and “eco-poetics”. It has become an umbrella term used to refer to the environmentally oriented study of literature and (less often) the arts more generally and to the theories that underline such critical practice (Buel, 138). The goal of ecocriticism is the same. It is the study of literature and environment from an inter-disciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyse the environment and proffer possible solutions for the correction of the present environmental challenges including the devastating climate change.

As “the study of the relationship between literature (or the Arts) and the physical environment” (Glotfelty and Fromm, Xviii), ecocriticism “seeks to ensure that nature is given as much attention within the humanities as is currently given to gender, class and race” (Coupe, 303). Buel defines ecocriticism “as a study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis” (430). Ecocriticism deals with the reasons for the present state of things and reflects on how the relationship between humans and the physical environment is envisioned. It delves into the exact meaning of nature and examines the human perception of the environment. However, the theory of ecocriticism is yet to have an organic form because according to Garrard “the movement still does not have a widely known set of assumptions, doctrines or procedures” (89).

Garrard identifies four approaches namely:

- i. the discursive construction which concentrates on nature and culture dichotomy;

- ii. aesthetic construction which places value on nature for its beauty, complexity or wildness;
- iii. the political construction which emphasizes the political interests that inform any valuation or devaluation; and
- iv. the scientific construction which aims at the description of the functioning of natural system (89).

Even though the intention of all ecocritics is to study the environment in literature, the community of ecocritical scholars is also a very broad one. Reed (2002, 149) schematizes these different but complementary articulations and models as follows:

1. conservationist;
2. ecological ecocriticism;
3. bio centric深深 ecological criticism;
4. ecofeminism; and
5. environmental justice ecocriticism.

Conservationist ecocriticism enquires into what literature nature writing and criticism (can) do to enhance appreciation and improve attitudes towards the natural environment so as to help preserve it and perhaps even strengthen the transcendent dimension of the human nature spiritual relationship. Ecological ecocriticism is more interested in how the ecosystem idea of metaphor (can) be extended to a poetic of the literary system in relation to nature (Reed, 148). It also looks into how the thought of the science of ecology can be used in the analysis of literary texts. Deep ecological ecocriticism- is concerned about how the rights of the non-human biotic and abiotic realms can be protected through literary and critical acts. Ecofeminist studies nature and women while environmental justice ecocriticism looks at environmental pollution like toxic waste and its effect on the poor. No matter the approaches and models of ecocriticism, ecocritics generally consider their intellectual work as a direct contribution to existing social, political and economic discussions regarding environmental pollution and conservation of the world (Bhagat, 2).

In this study, we are concerned with conservationist ecocriticism i.e. literature, nature writing and criticism that enhance appreciation and improve the attitudes towards natural environment as represented in the novel of Akínwùmí Isòlá, a Yorùbá classical novelist who write in splendid Yorùbá language. Akinwumi Isòlá portrays the modern, post-colonial

Yorùbá socio-physical environment caught in environmental crisis brought about by large scale deforestation by the multinational companies. The existence and sustenance of the world is dependent on the climate and other non-human species. This seems to be the opinion of ecocritics such as David and Holly in their book titled: *Naked Ape to Super Species* when they state that:

If all humanity disappeared, the rest of life except for domestic animals and plants would benefit enormously. On the other hand, if one of the groups of smaller creatures, such as ants were to vanish, the results would be close to catastrophic, if they (ants) were to disappear, there would be major extinctions of other species and probably partial collapse of some eco systems. The earth as a whole would suffer (1).

The point of emphasis here is that the survival of mankind depends on the survival of other non-human species, and the eco system which all depends on the climate of the earth. Any change in the climate would affect the ecosystems, which will have negative or positive effects on human beings.

4. Yorùbá Literature, Environmental Crisis and Activism

The whole world lives in the era of climate change with declining biodiversity and pollution. The question that arises is that how can literature help us to better understand our changing world and our place in it. Science can tell us and is still telling us how the ecology of the planet is changing and why, but it does not address important cultural, emotional and aesthetic aspects of these changes, literary works offer alternative ways of seeing and feeling the changes. From time immemorial, the Yorùbá care for every segment of the environment, the weather, pattern or climate because the harmonious relationship between man and the environment sustains the earth. The Yorùbá also believe that the wellbeing and flourishing of human and non-human life on earth have value in themselves. Humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs, thus, there were strategies put in place to avoid or curtail environmental crisis in the traditional Yorùbá society. For example, oral poetry such as ifá literary corpus, praise poetry, ijálá chant and proverbs were used to inculcate the consciousness of one's responsibility to maintain harmony with the cosmos in the traditional

Yorùbá society; oral poetry connects the people with their natural environment; and the creation of sanctuary forest preserved biological diversity, ecosystem interactions and protected endangered fauna species. Nothing exists in the Yorùbá environment without its own *oríkì*, all elements of nature such as water, air, fire, wind, hills, rivers, and other living and non-living things have their own *oríkì*. In fact, names of significant trees, birds, or animals are used as praise names and converted to surnames e.g. *Àlùkò* (crimson Touraco; *àjànàkú* (Elephant) *Irókò* (*Irókò* tree; *chlorophera excelsa*) (Adeboye and Alaba, 100 – 111). The Yorùbá are so close to their environment that some names given to their children have derivation from the natural environment: hills, rivers, and even animals. For example, *Omisèyí* (River has done this), *Òkètúyì* (the hill has honour), *Òkèwándé* (the hill has come to me), *Òkésèyí* (the hill has done this), *Igbókòyí* (the bush rejects this), *Òṣuntókun* (Òṣun river is up to the ocean), *Ewéjé* (Leaf has medicinal potency) and *Ekùngbà* (lion has agreed).

Lineage *oríkì* is used to preserve the family from one generation to the other. There are chants put in place to remind the subjects of the need to protect the heritage site. The sanctuary forest is forbidden to those who are not members of the lineage or town. Even if the “Sons of the Soil” want to use some medicinal plants or flowers in the forest, they must get the express permission of the elders. Visitors are not allowed access to the site. Accessibility to the forest is either once in a year or twice depending on the time of the festival attached to the forest, however, things have changed in the post-colonial Yorùbá society. Environmental issues such as water pollution, land and soil degradations to global warming affect every person, animal, community and nations on the planet, everyone is looking for solution, Yorùbá literary works that reflect on environmental crisis inspire people to take steps to protect the environment and educate others about environmental concerns. I have selected one Yorùbá classical novelist, Akinwumi Iṣòla who uses his novel to prompt more concern, provoke attitude and inspire actions in defense of the physical environment. Readers can get better understanding and can now care more deeply about environmental damage at all scales. Such environmental literature can even transform our values and behaviour vis-à-vis the environment. For example, when the oil spillage that destroys the landscape of the Niger Delta is portrayed in films, novels or plays, even the most ruthless leader becomes sober!

5. Theme of Environmental Activism in Isolá's *Şaworo Idę*

Professor Akinwùmí Oròjídé-Isolá has contributed immensely to the development and internationalization of Yorùbá literary works. He was a renowned Professor of Yorùbá literature and culture, a prolific writer of all genres of literature namely: Yorùbá poetry, written play/film and prose fiction. He has used his pool of intellectual resources not only to project the good image of Yorùbá cultural heritage through production of Yorùbá classical novels, drama and poetry, but he was also an encourager, iconic actor and producer of African creative films in indigenous languages. He is popular for social novels such as *Ó Le Kú* and *Ogún Omòdé*, historical plays such as *Olú Omo*, *Efúnṣetán Aníwúrà* and *Abé Ààbò* a religious play. The only novel that portrays the current environmental crisis and activism in the South-west Nigeria out of Isolá's literary works is *Şaworo Idę* and it is purposively selected for this study.

Professor Pamela Smith, a distinguished Professor of English language has translated the literary works of Professor Akinwumi Isola into English language namely: *Efúnṣetán Aníwúrà*, *Ìyálóde Ìbàdàn* and *Tinúbú Ìyálóde Ègbá: Two Yorùbá Historical Dramas* (2006), *Ogún Omòdé* as *Treasury of Childhood Memories* (2016) and *Şaworo Idę* as *The Brass-Bells Drum* in (2021). The translation of these literary works into English had fostered the advancement of the spoken language of the Yorùbá and spreads it to the nooks and crannies of the world.

Şaworo Idę was firstly released as a film in 1999 by Mainframe Productions. It was directed by Tunde Kelani, a very talented and skillful film producer. The film was widely regarded as a masterpiece and well accepted by large film lovers. The duration of the film was 98 minutes. However, it was published in 2008 by University Press PLC in Ibadan as a novel with 194 pages. *Şaworo Idę* is set against the backdrop of a Yorùbá post-colonial community seeking to create checks and balances to prevent the excesses of the king and his aides. It is the story of the pact between Jogbo, an ancient town, and the kings that rule over it. The first king of the community, *Oba Odejídé*, the *Oníjogbo* of *Jogbo* with the help of *Amawomárò* the chief priest of the community performed the rituals and sealed the pact. *Oba Lápíté* refused to partake in the traditional rites at his ascension because he knew he would not be able to accumulate wealth or indulge in corrupt practices if he did. He muzzled all oppositions into submission, induced the chiefs with financial gifts in order to remain in power. He realized that there is money in the forest and allowed the multinational wood companies to chop down trees for export which

eventually destroys the biotic and abiotic environments leading to environmental crisis, hunger and poverty.

Farmers could no longer produce enough foods for the community. While the king and the chiefs swim in luxury and opulence, the masses wallow in abject poverty. The farmers, hunters and the youths of the community team up together to become activists that fight against the comprador capitalists. In the process, *Saworo Idę*, the insignia of authority in Jogbo was violently taken away by the activists which eventually led to the dethronement of Lapite through a military coup led by Lagata fully backed by the hypocritical multinational companies' executives. Lagata's reign was, uncultured, brief and disastrous because he was ignorant of the rituals involved in wearing the brass crown, *Adéidę* on his head without oath-taking and incision of the pact.

Isola in *Saworo Idę* shows his creative interpretation of the place of oath-taking as an agency of accountability, good governance and the keeping of the physical environment from pollution as a divine directive to be kept by all and sundry in Yorùbá land. Through the plot construct and story lines of the novel, the novelist portrays the significance of traditions in preserving the physical environment especially forests. In the fictional Jogbo community, just like other typical Yorùbá communities, a forest is a large area of land with trees, rivers, streams and other living and non-living things. The Jogbo forest acts as sanctuary for rare and wild animals. Forests generally act as storm breaks, thereby protecting the towns and village from destruction. Jogbo forests are habitats of animals, erosion checks and sources of food for both living and non-living things but the wood industries invade the community and start felling economic trees, the farmers of Jogbo cry out:

Àwọn oníṣòwò kan dé tí wọn ò tilè ra nàkan lówó ẹni kan.
Wón kàn ná bó sórí ilè, wón ná mú ohun tí Olórun ti dá sibè,
wón sì ná lọ tā á. Àwọn wònyí ni agbégilódò
tí wón ná gé gbogbo igi nílánlá inú igbó tí wón sì ná lọ tā á ní
ilè òkèèrè. Ilè òkèèrè!
... Àwọn agbégilódò wònyí kò mọ igi kan la kí í gé. Wọn ò
sì mọ igbó kan la kí í wò. (*Saworo Idę*, 41)

Some business men arrived but do not care for anybody. They just bounced to the forest. They started removing what God has planted in the forest and sell them. These people are sawyers the caught big trees and sold them in foreign lands,

foreign lands! These sawyers do not spare any tree. They do not even respect our sacred forests. (*Saworo Ide*, 41)

In Yorùbá land, sacred forests are kept as heritage sites. They are neither cultivated for farming nor used for other commercial purposes. They are used as groves and shrines for some deities and usually forbidden for non-initiates. Only the priests and elderly members of the adherents of the deity could enter the forest at a specific time of the year to offer sacrifice or perform specific rituals. From the ecological point of view, such forests constitute nature reserves whose vegetation is primary and where the ecosystem has not been disturbed by human interference. The *igbó irókò* phenomenon is an unmitigated effort at environmental conservation and protection but now completely destroyed by indiscriminate felling of trees.

After series of wood cutting by the workers of various companies, deforestation begins to set in. Deforestation is a process whereby trees are felled for several reasons without replacing or replanting the trees. When forests are cleared, the soil are exposed to erosion of the soil and storms, floods happen, rivers are polluted and become impure for mankind. The farmers' Association led by Fadiya make a protest to the king and plead for the king's intervention. He states:

Ejó àwọn agbégilódò, àwọn onisé pagbórun ni a wáá fi sùn yín o. Èyin níkan lè sì lè gbà wá o! Fádíyà ní È éjèrè. Àwọn agégedú ní ba oko wa jé! Wón ní fi ọkó tí wón fi ní gbégi tẹ àwọn ohun ọgbìn wa mólè. Gbogbo igi tí kò tñ tó gé ni wón ní gé. Wón ò rántí èyìn òla. Wón ti ba gbogbo àkùrò àto odò wa jé. Gbogbo igbó nílá tí a tí ní rí oyin ré ni wón ti gé tán. Wón kí i sì gbin igi mìfràn pààrò. Èyí tó tilè wá burú jâi ni pé wón ti féé máa wó inú igbórò gégi! Èèwò! (*Saworo Ide*, 45)

We have come to make complaints against the sawyers, the forest destroyers. It is only Your Royal Majesty that can rescue us!" Fádíyà said, it shall be well with you. The sawyers are destroying our farms! They are using their vehicles to destroy our farm products. Tender trees are caught. They do not care for tomorrow. They have destroyed the swampy land and polluted the rivers. All the big economic trees have been caught. They do not plant new

trees in place of the removed ones. The worst thing is that they trespassed to the sacred forests! It is an abomination!) (*Saworo Ide*, 45)

One of the chiefs, Òtún confirms the reason for the agitations of the youths led by Fadiya thus:

A kúkú ti mọ ohun tí wón ní bò wáá sọ ... hẹn, àwọn agbégilódò ní biko jé; Igbó ní parun lọ... Hówù, kò burú. A ti gbó, a ó tètè sè nñkan kan nipa rẹ. Kò tán? Ogbón loba á lò, Oba kì í lo agídí o" (*Saworo Ide*, 43)

We already knew what they are coming to report...yes, the sawyers are destroying the farms. The forest is gradually being destroyed. It is well, we have heard your complaints. We shall do something about it. Is that not it? It is wisdom that the king uses and not iron-fists.

The council of the king through Balógun diplomatically appeals to the Farmers' Association while the king in his characteristic deceitful manner makes the following rules to checkmate the multinational companies from indiscriminate felling of trees in Jogbo forests. Lápité asks the council secretary to write the laws and pass the information round the town:

1. Agbégilódò kan kò gbodò rìn inú oko olóko mó
2. Bí agbégilódò bá gé igi kan, ó nílátí gbin òmíràn pààrò.
3. Agbégilódò kan kò gbodò wọ igbórò gégi. Wón te àwọn òfin náà jade. Wón kéde rẹ, wón si há a fún gbogbo àwọn onísòwò agbégilódò. (*Saworo Ide*, 47)

No sawyer must trespass and enter the lands of farmers;

If a tree is caught in a farm, it must be replaced by planting another tree;

No sawyer must enter the sacred forest. The secretary typed the laws and spreads the news. They distributed the laws to the businessmen involved in wood business.

Environmental Activism ...

The eco-consciousness in the content of the law given by the king is clear. It is in consonant with the tradition of the Yorùbá people, but the directives were ignored by the sawyers.

The Yoruba environment is spiritual, economic and political. The forest serves as the sanctuary for spiritual growth. However, the king deceives the farmers through his new laws and mortgage the lives of his people because of financial gains. Even though the multinational wood fellers have destroyed the forest, the king and his chiefs look other way and allow the pollution of their environment to continue. The felling of economic trees leads to the acceleration in the loss of the topsoil and deforestation, loss of habitats, species and biodiversity and degradation of wetlands. In fact, the king, after receiving bribes from the companies through Olókótó, tells them to ignore the laws and continue their business as long as his own interest and benefits are assured and preserved. In the text, the secrecy and the mystery surrounding the hills, mountains, rivers, forests and wild animals have been demystified to a great extent, thus, instead of preserving the environment, they are exposed to degradation. The actions of both king and his corrupt chiefs open up the ground for violent activism by the poor farmers under the able leadership of Fadiya, a prominent youth leader in the community.

The writer creatively used names as a characterization technique to assert that the large-scale deforestation in Jogbo has to do with economic interests of the imperialists and their comprador capitalists fully represented by Lápité, Lagata, (Kings), Balogun, Òtún ànd Bada (Chiefs). The novelist deliberately assigns descriptive names to them such as ‘alejò (foreigners), agbégilódò (wood-carrier from the rivers). Their leaders are called: Olókótó (the owner of cone), Aláyùn (sawyer), Dágilékun (killer of trees), Jágilégbò (destroyer of trees up to the roots). They are agents of imperialism which “has always brought with it deforestation and the consuming of natural resources” (Barry, 242). The people of Jogbo are mostly described as farmers, fishermen, palm wine tappers, hawkers, woodcarvers, hunters whose lives are tied to the soil and the forest are more than anything to them. Their lives depend on the forest and its resources. It is the land that empowers them. They eat from the produce of the forest. The destruction of their farms and other economic trees, their rivers polluted and source of livelihood are in ruins, they are ready to die for the land, thus, their activism is for the survival and the preservation of their environment.

The youth movement in Jogbo especially the hunters among them realize that one of the most dangerous and unsettling effects of deforestation is the loss of animals and plant species due to their loss of habitat and team up with Fadiya to resist the felling of the trees. The trees of Jogbo forest that provides shelter for some species also provide the canopy that regulates the temperature. Trees help to control the level of water in the atmosphere by helping to regulate the water cycle, in deforested areas, there is less water in the air to be returned to the soil, this causes dryer soil and the inability to grow crops. The people live in hunger and anger because the loss of forests particularly the sacred forest has an immediate and direct effect on their lifestyles. The people depend on what the forest has to offer for food, medicine, and other cultural heritage and so when Fádítà leads other farmers and youths to raise awareness about the environmental implication of felling trees without replacement he has a large followership. He inspires the youth and other peasant farmers to rise up for change by confronting the Onítogbo and his chiefs on the consequences of deforestation through the activities of foreign sawyers which bring a great catastrophe to the community. The activists train themselves in the forest and get weapons which they use to destabilise the annual Jogbo festival to steal the crown. A king whose crown is missing has committed a taboo and if such crown is not retrieved within a specified time, the king has to vacate the throne. Lapítè enters into a session of afflictions but the wood company executives were able to recover the crown after a fierce confrontation with the activists. Deaths were recorded on both sides and the king eventually gets back the stolen crown. Lapítè commences the reign of terror, the members of the community in support of the activists are either sent to prison or killed. The community's high priest and his family were sent on exile, his first son and his wife killed and could only rescue Aréséjóbàta, his grandson. They live in the forest and supply spiritual guidance to the activists on how to terminate Lagata who replaces Lapítè after his death. Many people lost their lives in succession, the beautiful olorì commits suicide and violence reigns until the coming of Aréséjábàtá to the throne of Jogbo through the process of traditions. From the analysis of *Saworo Ide*, the following issues and recommendations emerge:

1. There are indigenous traditions which are in harmony with nature thus, the writer raises awareness about environmental issues in Nigeria;

Environmental Activism ...

2. The tradition to preserve, conserve and keep the environment entrenched in the culture of the people should be recognized and respected by all particularly public authorities irrespective of religious beliefs;
3. Indigenous eco-fiction i.e. fiction that focuses on environmental issues, often with a message or call to action like the text under analysis should be encouraged by Nigerian writers both in indigenous languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yorùbá) and English, French, Arabic languages. As seen in Saworo Ide, literature connects the people with their natural environment and language of the community can help in that respect;
4. The creation of sanctuary forest as practiced by the traditional Yorùbá society as reflected in the text has preserved biological diversity, ecosystem interactions and protected endangered fauna species before the arrival of the colonial masters represented by the wood fellers led by Olókótó in the novel. The inability of the ruling class to mitigate the environment leads to violent activism, the writer uses this novel to inspire action and call for behavioural change to our environment;
5. The cultural orientation of the Yoruba people is that the environment belongs to God and the belief that God has given humans the responsibility to maintain it makes them to develop a deep sense of ownership, thus, the novelist advocates sustainability and eco-friendly practices to avoid militancy and violent activism;
6. The modern day's attitude and general feeling of "inexhaustiveness" of the natural resources with no sense of ownership and care requires a great deal of cultural re-orientation. The idea that the environment is nobody's property leads to various forms of environmental degradation; and to avoid violent activism and militancy as witnessed in the text, Akinwumi Isola advocates and fosters empathy for human and non-human species. Governments at various levels should therefore take an inventory of such forests, animals, fauna, rivers, sites among others, recognize and protect them as representative ecosystems

6. Conclusion

From the brief analysis of *Saworo Ide*, the critical message of the novelist is that the lives of the Yorùbá people, just like those of other African people, are inseparably connected to their environment just as the forest is a life-giving natural form that sustains development and is therefore very crucial to human existence. Any attempt to destroy their environment because of financial gains will always lead to violent activism. The selected novel is loaded with images of life-giving powers of the forest but can also be a source of death and violence if exploited inappropriately. Akinwum Isola is not happy with the way and manner the physical environment is treated because of money. The major environmental crises witnessed in Isola's novel are deforestation and large-scale exploitation of the natural resources without consideration for the culture of the people and meaningful existence of poor people in their ancestral land. The novelist uses powerful oratory devices such as proverbs, idioms, simile, metaphor, repetition, hyperbole, ideophone, humour and other stylistic devices to call for protest of the farmers so that the protection of the forest, human and non-human lives can be guaranteed.

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