

**Indigenous Storytelling as Decolonial Praxis: Reclaiming Voice
and Land in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road***

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This research explores the pivotal role of indigenous storytelling as a decolonial strategy in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*. Drawing on postcolonial theory as articulated by Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Edward Said, and contemporary critics such as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, the study situates Okri's novel within the broader context of Africa's ongoing struggle to reclaim voice, land, and cultural identity in the aftermath of colonialism. The analysis foregrounds how Okri employs Yoruba cosmology, oral narrative forms, and mythic structures to resist colonial epistemologies and assert indigenous worldviews. By engaging with the works of scholars like Marnta Rani, Nasta Shushella, Simon Gikandi, and Ato Quayson, the research demonstrates that storytelling in *The Famished Road* is not merely a literary device but a dynamic force for cultural survival, resistance, and renewal. Through close textual analysis and critical engagement with historical and theoretical sources, the study reveals how Okri's narrative practices challenge neocolonial power structures, amplify marginalized voices, and contribute to the ongoing project of decolonization in African literature.

INTRODUCTION

The struggle to reclaim voice and land in the wake of colonial domination remains a central concern in contemporary African literature, where indigenous storytelling emerges as a profound act of resistance and cultural renewal. Decolonization, as Marnta Rani asserts, is not merely a historical event but an ongoing process that involves “a critical examination of the ways in which colonialism continues to impact contemporary politics, economics, and culture, and a commitment to creating more just and equitable societies” (Marnta, p.8). This process is multifaceted, encompassing political, social, and cultural transformations aimed at undoing the deep-rooted legacies of colonialism and restoring the sovereignty and dignity of formerly colonized peoples (Marnta, p.5). As Nasta Shushella notes, decolonization requires a range of strategies, from armed resistance to the development of new cultural forms, yet it is often marked by tensions and new forms of inequality even after the end of formal colonial rule (Shushella, p.10).

Within this context, indigenous storytelling stands as one of the oldest and most resilient methods of knowledge transmission and cultural preservation in African societies. Long before the advent of written language, oral narratives served as the primary means of conveying history, values, and collective memory across generations (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 1982). Storytelling is not merely entertainment; it is a vital social and cultural activity that mediates knowledge, preserves identity, and instills communal values. Ford Smith eloquently describes this tradition: “The storytelling tradition contains its most poetically true about our struggles. The tales are one place where the most subversive element of our history can be safely lodged” (Ford Smith, p.3). Indigenous stories thus function as acts of reclamation—of voice, land, and sovereignty—serving both to deconstruct colonial epistemologies and to construct alternatives grounded in relationality and rootedness (Sium & Ritskes, p.VIII).

The significance of indigenous storytelling in the decolonization process is further underscored by postcolonial theorists such as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin,

who argue that “postcolonial writing defines itself by seizing the language of the centre and replacing it in a discourse fully adapted to local realities” (Ashcroft et al., p.37). This act of “writing back” is a central feature of postcolonial literary resistance, as African authors reconstruct historical narratives from indigenous perspectives and challenge colonial historiography (Bryce, 2008; Ashcroft et al., 1989). Wole Soyinka’s dramatization of Yoruba customs in *Death and the King’s Horseman* and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s use of oral storytelling in *A Grain of Wheat* exemplify how literature becomes a vehicle for intellectual and cultural resistance.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s seminal work, *Decolonising the Mind*, foregrounds the constructive role of language in national culture, history, and identity, advocating for the rejection of imposed colonial languages and the reclamation of indigenous tongues as a means to restore cultural autonomy (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 1986). He famously declared, “This book, *Decolonising the Mind*, is my farewell to English as a vehicle for any of my writings. From now on it is Gikuyu and Kiswahili all the way” (Ngũgĩ, p.xiii). For Ngũgĩ, language is not merely a tool of communication but a carrier of culture, and any attack on language is an attack on cultural identity itself. This perspective aligns with the broader postcolonial critique of linguistic imperialism and the call for a renaissance in African cultures through the reassertion of indigenous epistemologies.

Among the most prominent literary figures engaging with these themes is Ben Okri. Okri’s *The Famished Road* employs Yoruba cosmology and oral narrative structures to explore the complexities of postcolonial Nigerian society. His work exemplifies how storytelling can serve as a decolonial praxis, enabling the reclamation of voice, the critique of neocolonial power structures, and the envisioning of alternative futures.

Despite the growing scholarly attention to the role of indigenous storytelling in African literature, there remains a notable gap in studies that specifically examine how these narrative strategies function as tools for decolonization in the works of Ben Okri. Scholars such as Simon Gikandi (2013) and Ato Quayson (2015) have explored the socio-political dimensions of postcolonial literature and the

intersections of culture, power, and resistance. However, there is a need for focused research on *The Famished Road* with an emphasis on indigenous storytelling as decolonial praxis.

This study seeks to address this gap by conducting a detailed analysis of indigenous storytelling in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*. The primary aim is to underscore the role of indigenous storytelling in decolonization by identifying and analyzing the narrative techniques employed in the novel, examining how these techniques function as tools for resistance, and discussing how the novel portrays the impact of colonialism on indigenous culture. The research will employ a qualitative literary analysis methodology, drawing on close readings of selected passages and engaging with critical essays and historical texts to contextualize the findings.

Decolonization represents one of the most significant and complex processes in modern history, encompassing the multifaceted efforts by colonized nations and peoples to regain autonomy, restore sovereignty, and reconstruct their cultural identities in the aftermath of colonial domination. Far from being a singular event, decolonization is a protracted and ongoing struggle, involving intricate political, social, cultural, and economic transformations designed to undo the enduring legacies of colonialism and restore the dignity of formerly subjugated societies. The emergence of the term in the mid-twentieth century was closely tied to the fervent independence movements that swept across Africa, Asia, and other colonized regions, as oppressed populations mobilized to assert their rights, reclaim their lands, and challenge the structures of exploitation and oppression imposed by colonial powers (Marnta, p.5).

As Nasta Shushella (2020) observes, decolonization has never been a linear or straightforward process. Rather, it has entailed a spectrum of strategies and tactics ranging from armed resistance and nonviolent protest to diplomatic negotiations and international advocacy. The process also necessitated the establishment of new political institutions, the creation of innovative cultural forms, and the reconfiguration of economic relationships (Shushella, p.10). Yet, even as

former colonies achieved formal independence, the residue of colonialism persisted in new forms of domination and inequality. The tensions between the quest for national self-determination and the formidable challenges of building stable, equitable postcolonial states have been a defining feature of the post-independence era.

Crucially, as Marnta Rani (2022) asserts, decolonization remains an unfinished project. The legacies of colonialism continue to shape contemporary politics, economics, and cultures, manifesting in ongoing struggles for land rights, cultural autonomy, and economic justice. Decolonization, therefore, demands a sustained critical engagement with the ways in which colonial structures and ideologies persist, as well as a commitment to constructing more just and equitable societies (Marnta, p.8). This recognition has fueled a global movement in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as formerly colonized nations and marginalized communities continue to contest the deep-rooted impacts of colonialism and assert their agency in the face of ongoing neocolonial pressures.

Within this broader context, the reclamation of indigenous voice and heritage emerges as a central imperative in the decolonial project. One of the most profound and enduring means by which societies have preserved and transmitted their histories, values, and worldviews is through storytelling. Long before the advent of the written word, storytelling functioned as a primary mode of communication and knowledge transfer, enabling communities to pass down their collective memory, cultural practices, and moral frameworks across generations (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1967). Storytelling is not merely an act of entertainment; it is a vital social and cultural activity that mediates knowledge, shapes identity, and fosters communal cohesion. As Ford Smith (1997) eloquently states, “the storytelling tradition contains its most poetically true about our struggles. The tales are one place where the most subversive element of our history can be safely lodged” (p.3).

In African societies, storytelling has historically played a foundational role in the preservation of indigenous knowledge, the reinforcement of communal

values, and the articulation of collective aspirations. Storytellers-whether as healers, spiritual guides, teachers, or cultural custodians-have been revered as the keepers of cultural secrets and the transmitters of ancestral wisdom. Through oral narratives, African communities have been able to resist erasure, maintain continuity, and adapt to changing historical circumstances. Storytelling, therefore, is not only a repository of tradition but also a dynamic force for cultural survival and transformation.

In the context of decolonization, indigenous storytelling assumes an even greater significance. It becomes a vital tool for the reclamation of indigenous voice, land, and sovereignty. As Sium and Ritskes (2013) argue, indigenous stories are “living resistance, theory, and practice,” serving to deconstruct colonial epistemologies while simultaneously constructing alternatives grounded in rootedness and relationality (p. VIII). Storytelling enables the articulation of indigenous perspectives, the affirmation of local worldviews, and the contestation of imposed narratives. In this way, it becomes a creative force for decolonization-challenging the dominance of colonial knowledge systems and asserting the legitimacy of indigenous ways of knowing and being.

This dynamic is particularly evident in the field of postcolonial literature, where African writers have drawn upon indigenous storytelling traditions to resist colonial and neocolonial narratives, reclaim cultural identities, and critique socio-political injustices. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989) note that “postcolonial writing defines itself by seizing the language of the centre and replacing it in a discourse fully adapted to local realities” (p. 37). By appropriating and transforming the language and forms of the colonizer, African authors create new spaces for the articulation of indigenous experiences and worldviews.

The theoretical framework guiding this study is postcolonial theory, which emerged in the mid-twentieth century as a critical response to the enduring impacts of colonialism. Pioneered by intellectuals such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and Edward Said, postcolonial theory interrogates the dynamics of power, identity, and cultural expression in societies shaped by colonial rule. It challenges Eurocentric

narratives, foregrounds the voices of the formerly colonized, and provides a lens through which to analyze how indigenous storytelling in Okri's novel serves to reclaim cultural identities, challenge colonial legacies, and critique neocolonial power structures. Using this theoretical framework, the study aims to magnify the ways in which Okri navigates the complexities of postcolonial African societies, offering alternative perspectives that amplify indigenous voices and contribute to broader discourses on cultural resilience and social justice. This research contributes to the academic discourse on postcolonial literature by highlighting the enduring significance of indigenous storytelling as a decolonial strategy and encouraging further scholarship on indigenous epistemologies in African literature.

METHOD

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory emerged in the mid-twentieth century as a critical response to the enduring impacts of colonialism on societies that had experienced direct or indirect colonial rule. Its intellectual foundations were laid by pioneering thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and Edward Said, whose works interrogated the structures of power, identity, and cultural expression that persisted long after the formal end of colonial administrations. Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) and *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) exposed the psychological violence and alienation wrought by colonial domination, emphasizing the need for cultural and mental liberation alongside political independence. Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950) critiqued the dehumanizing logic of colonial power, while Edward Said's seminal *Orientalism* (1978) revealed how Western discourse constructed and perpetuated the "Otherness" of colonized peoples.

Postcolonial theory, as articulated by these and subsequent scholars, challenges Eurocentric narratives of progress, civilization, and development that justified and perpetuated colonial domination (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1989). It foregrounds the voices and experiences of the formerly colonized, providing a lens through which to analyze the complex dynamics of cultural negotiation, resistance, and hybridity in postcolonial societies. As Loomba (2005) notes,

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postcolonial theory is not only concerned with the historical realities of colonialism but also with their ongoing legacies in contemporary politics, economics, and culture.

Colonialism, Power, and the Construction of Identity

Colonialism, as defined by Loomba (2005), refers to the process by which a powerful country or empire takes control of a weaker territory, often imposing its own language, culture, and institutions. The Oxford English Dictionary (2024) similarly describes colonization as the establishment of colonies and the organization of their government and economy by a foreign power. In Africa, the colonial project was driven primarily by economic and political interests, with European powers seeking new markets, resources, and strategic advantages (Nkrumah, 1965; Chinweizu, 1975). The imposition of foreign rule disrupted indigenous social, cultural, and political structures, often leading to the exploitation of local populations and the erasure of traditional knowledge systems (Brown, 2005; Tyson, 2006).

The colonial encounter was also deeply ideological. Sadeghi (2017) observes that colonizers promoted notions of racial and cultural superiority, framing their presence as a civilizing mission linked to Christianity and commerce. This ideology was internalized by many colonized subjects, resulting in widespread feelings of inferiority and alienation (Tyson, 2006). The imposition of European languages, religions, and cultural norms further marginalized indigenous identities and practices, creating lasting divisions and tensions within African societies.

Decolonization

The process of decolonization, as Marnta Rani (2022) and Nasta Shushella (2020) highlight, is multifaceted and ongoing. While the twentieth century saw the formal independence of many African nations, the legacies of colonialism continue to shape contemporary realities. Decolonization involves not only political sovereignty but also the reclamation of cultural autonomy, land rights, and economic justice. It is marked by tensions between the desire for national self-

determination and the challenges of building new, equitable postcolonial states (Shushella, 2020). Postcolonial theory provides a critical lens for examining these ongoing struggles. It interrogates the ways in which colonial power structures persist in neocolonial forms, such as economic dependency, cultural imperialism, and the internalization of Western values. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989) argue, postcolonial writing “defines itself by seizing the language of the centre and replacing it in a discourse fully adapted to local realities” (p. 37). This act of “writing back” is central to the decolonial project, as it enables formerly colonized peoples to assert their own narratives and challenge the authority of colonial discourse.

Indigenous Storytelling and the Reclamation of Voice

Within the postcolonial framework, indigenous storytelling emerges as a vital tool for decolonization. Storytelling is one of humanity’s oldest methods of communication and knowledge transmission, predating the written word and serving as a means of preserving history, values, and cosmologies across generations (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 1982). In African societies, oral narratives have functioned as repositories of cultural memory, vehicles for moral instruction, and instruments of communal cohesion. Ford Smith (1997) observes that “the storytelling tradition contains its most poetically true about our struggles. The tales are one place where the most subversive element of our history can be safely lodged” (p. 3).

Indigenous stories are not merely reflections of the past; they are active sites of resistance and creativity. Sium and Ritskes (2013) describe indigenous storytelling as “living resistance, theory, and practice,” emphasizing its capacity to deconstruct colonial epistemologies and construct alternatives rooted in local knowledge and relationality (p. VIII). By foregrounding indigenous voices and perspectives, storytelling challenges the dominance of Western literary forms and asserts the validity of African cultural practices.

Postcolonial Literature and Narrative Resistance

Contemporary African literature has played a crucial role in the decolonial project by integrating indigenous storytelling techniques into written texts. Authors such as Ben Okri have drawn on oral traditions, mythic structures, and local languages to critique colonial and neocolonial power structures and to reclaim cultural identities. Okri's *The Famished Road* employs Yoruba cosmology and narrative forms to explore the spiritual and social complexities of postcolonial Nigeria (Gikandi, 1992). Scholarly exploration of indigenous storytelling as a vehicle for decolonization in African literature has grown considerably. Gikandi (2013) examines the socio-political dimensions of postcolonial literature, focusing on how authors negotiate cultural identity and agency. Quayson (2015) analyzes the intersections of culture, power, and resistance in contemporary African literary forms. Despite this growing body of work, there remains a gap in studies that specifically address how Okri employs indigenous storytelling as a tool for decolonization.

The application of postcolonial theory to the works of Okri seeks to illuminate how indigenous storytelling serves as a decolonial strategy-reclaiming voice, challenging colonial legacies, and critiquing neocolonial power structures. Postcolonial theory contextualizes the literary strategies employed by Okri within the broader historical and sociopolitical realities of decolonization in Africa. It provides a framework for analyzing how narrative practices amplify indigenous voices, foster cultural resilience, and contribute to social justice discourses.

This research contributes to the academic discourse on postcolonial literature by highlighting the enduring importance of indigenous storytelling as a means of resistance and cultural renewal. It encourages further scholarship on indigenous epistemologies in African literature, emphasizing their relevance for understanding the complexities of postcolonial societies and the ongoing struggle for decolonization.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Indigenous Storytelling as Decolonial Praxis: Reclaiming Voice and Land in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*

The colonial encounter in Africa was not simply a matter of political domination or economic exploitation; it constituted an epistemic violence that sought to erase and supplant indigenous modes of knowing, narrating, and being. In this context, Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* stands as a paradigmatic text in the deployment of indigenous storytelling as decolonial praxis. Through its mythic structure, oral narrative techniques, and profound engagement with Yoruba cosmology, the novel not only preserves cultural memory but also enacts a radical reclamation of voice and land. This analysis examines how Okri's narrative foregrounds indigenous storytelling as a tool for decolonization, resistance, survival, and ontological renewal, with close attention to the text's deployment of myth, ritual, proverbs, and satire.

Indigenous Storytelling as a Tool for Decolonization

Okri's narrative is deeply rooted in the oral traditions of West Africa, particularly the myth of the *abiku*, or spirit child. The protagonist, Azaro, exists in a liminal space between the material and spiritual worlds, embodying the permeability of boundaries in Yoruba cosmology. Okri's use of myth is not decorative but foundational, serving as a means of cultural preservation and transmission. As the narrator observes, "There are many reasons why babies cry when they are born and one of them is the sudden separation from the world of pure dreams, where all things are made of enchantment and where there is no suffering" (p. 1). This myth, passed down through generations, functions as a living archive of indigenous knowledge, resisting the colonial imperative to render African beliefs as mere superstition.

The novel is replete with references to ritual and ancestral communication, further underscoring the continuity of indigenous practices: "his spirit had the odors of one who has been making ritual offerings, talking to his ancestors, trying to

communicate with the gods” (p. 357). The act of offering libation-“He offered libation to his ancestors” (p. 37)-is emblematic of the resilience of indigenous spirituality, even as colonial authorities attempt to delegitimize such practices as “fetish.”

Okri’s invocation of the multiplicity of African histories is encapsulated in the statement, “inside a cat, there are many histories and many books” (p. 363). This metaphor not only affirms the depth and complexity of African experience but also insists on the necessity of engaging indigenous narratives to apprehend the continent’s realities: “Therefore in order to know about Africa or our indigenous land, we must be able to know about our pains, struggle and also we must read Africa books because everything about it is contain there.”

Identity, Belonging, and Cultural Dislocation

The theme of identity and belonging is intricately woven into the fabric of indigenous storytelling in *The Famished Road*. Azaro’s status as an abiku-“apart from a mark on my palm, I had managed to avoid being discovered. It may simply have been that I had grown tired of coming and going. It is terrible to forever remain in-between” (p. 5)-serves as a powerful metaphor for the postcolonial subject’s negotiation between indigenous and colonial worlds. The narrative’s polyvocality, incorporating the voices of spirits, ancestors, and the community, resists the homogenizing tendencies of colonial discourse and affirms the plurality of Nigerian identity. The sense of temporal dislocation is further articulated in Azaro’s confession, “I don’t remember how old I was at the time” (p. 4), suggesting the disruption of traditional modes of self-understanding under the pressures of modernity and colonialism.

Okri’s prose is marked by vivid imagery and sensory detail, drawing from Nigerian folklore and mythology to create a narrative of remarkable cultural density. The novel features multiple narrative voices, including those of spirits and the community, resulting in a polyphonic structure that reflects the diversity and complexity of Nigerian culture. As Okri writes, “These are the myth of beginnings. These are stories and moods deep in those who are seeded in rich lands, who still

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believes in mysteries” (p. 3). Here, the text asserts the richness of indigenous worldviews and the persistence of mystery as a legitimate mode of knowing.

The celebration of indigenous music is also significant: “Songs of seductive purity, with music perfect like light and diamond” (p. 350). Okri valorizes traditional folk song, positioning it as central to cultural identity and as a means of decolonizing the mind from colonial representations of African art as archaic or primitive.

Indigenous Storytelling as Resistance and Decolonization

Indigenous storytelling in *The Famished Road* is not merely preservative but insurgent, constituting a praxis of resistance against colonial domination. The novel explicitly addresses the violence and exploitation of colonial rule: “they fell on us and flogged us with whips and cracked our skull with batons. We fought them back. We beat them with sticks and ropes. We tore their colonial uniform and sent them packing” (p. 6). Here, storytelling functions as both a record of suffering and a chronicle of resistance, subverting the dominant colonial discourse and reclaiming the dignity of the colonized.

Okri’s narrative also enacts a decolonization of consciousness, challenging the epistemic authority of Western knowledge systems and urging a re-centering of African perspectives: “We must look at the world with new eyes. We must look at ourselves differently. We are freer than we think” (p. 363). By foregrounding indigenous cosmologies and philosophies, the novel promotes a decolonized understanding of Nigerian culture and history.

Storytelling is further positioned as a means of empowerment, providing marginalized subjects with a platform for self-expression and agency. Okri writes, “The mind is powerful thing Azaro. It can create world, destroy worlds and remake worlds” (p. 147). This assertion underscores the capacity of narrative to shape reality, foster resilience, and envision alternative futures. The mind’s creative potential is further highlighted: “Our minds are invaded by images of the future”

(p. 2). Storytelling, in this context, is not only a means of survival but a catalyst for transformation.

The Impact of Colonialism on Indigenous Cultures and Community

Okri's narrative documents the profound dislocations wrought by colonial modernity, "The roads brought change, and the change brought destruction to our life" (p. 123). The construction of infrastructure—"The clearing was the beginning of an expressway. Building companies had leveled the trees" (p. 16)—is emblematic of the violence inflicted upon both nature and culture. The lament, "Our history and achievement rigged out of existence" (p. 359), speaks to the systematic erasure of indigenous histories and accomplishments.

The novel also foregrounds the economic dimensions of colonial domination: "They came with their money, their machines, and their madness. They took our land, our resources and our dignity" (p. 309). The imposition of Western economic systems engenders dependency, inequality, and poverty, further destabilizing indigenous communities.

Okri's narrative actively contests the legitimacy of colonial historiography, "They told us that our stories were not true, that our gods were not real, that our way of life was savage. But we know the truth. We know that our stories are the threads that weave our world together" (p. 197). Here, storytelling is recuperative, preserving indigenous heritage and subverting Western epistemology.

Storytelling also functions as a coping mechanism, fostering community solidarity and spiritual sustenance. Okri writes, "We learned to adapt, to survive, to find ways of living with the uncertainty that surround us. We learned to create our own realities, our own worlds, in the midst of chaos" (p. 289). Through narrative, individuals and communities are able to process trauma and envision paths toward healing.

Narrative Techniques

Satire

Satire is a prominent narrative strategy in *The Famished Road*, deployed to critique social and political realities. As M.H. Abrams observes, satire is “the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation” (Abrams, p. 320). Madame Koto’s ostentatious self-fashioning is rendered ridiculous: “She wore a new blouse, an expensive wrapper, coral beads round her neck and copper bangles round her wrists. She wore eye shadow which darkened her eyes and powder on her face, beneath which her sweat ran” (p. 179). The depiction of her party, with “electricians and carpenters, mechanics and sundry workers arrived on the back of a lorry...” (p. 450), satirizes the class divisions and exploitation endemic to postcolonial society.

Proverbs

The use of proverbs is another salient narrative technique. According to Abrams, a proverb is “a short, pithy statement of widely accepted truth about everyday life” (p. 10). Okri’s narrative is replete with proverbs that encapsulate communal wisdom and philosophical reflection: “An evil wind keeps a man poor” (p. 319); “whatever we sit on will one day make us fall” (p. 324); “There are many ways to be dead” (p. 329); “You need to lose all your blood before you arrive” (p. 335); “The ocean is full of songs” (p. 338); “when people keep running, something keeps pursuing them” (p. 362). These proverbs not only enrich the narrative’s aesthetic texture but also serve as vehicles for the transmission of indigenous knowledge and values.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study has interrogated the centrality of indigenous storytelling as a vehicle for decolonial praxis in Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road*. Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of Fanon, Césaire, Said, and the critical interventions of Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, and others, the research situates Okri’s novel within the broader intellectual and historical context of postcolonial African literature. The analysis foregrounds how Okri’s deployment of Yoruba cosmology, oral narrative structures, and mythic imagination constitutes more than a stylistic choice; it is a

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deliberate act of cultural reclamation and resistance. Through close textual reading and engagement with critical scholarship, the study demonstrates that *The Famished Road* exemplifies the power of narrative to contest colonial epistemologies, reassert indigenous worldviews, and articulate alternative visions of identity and community in the aftermath of colonial domination.

The research further underscores the unfinished nature of decolonization, as articulated by scholars such as Marnta Rani and Nasta Shushella. Okri's narrative is shown to operate not only as a repository of cultural memory but as an ongoing, dynamic process of negotiating the legacies of colonialism and the realities of neocolonialism. In so doing, the novel affirms the enduring relevance of indigenous knowledge systems and the necessity of narrative agency for formerly colonized societies. This study affirms that Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* stands as a paradigmatic text in the postcolonial canon, demonstrating the profound capacity of indigenous storytelling to serve as both a mode of resistance and a means of cultural renewal. Okri's narrative strategies-rooted in Yoruba oral traditions and mythic consciousness-enable a radical reimagining of African subjectivity beyond the confines of colonial discourse. As theorists such as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin have argued, the act of "writing back" is central to the decolonial project; Okri's work exemplifies this by appropriating and transforming the language and forms of the colonizer in order to re-center indigenous voices and epistemologies.

Moreover, it highlights the importance of storytelling as "living resistance, theory, and practice" capable of sustaining communal memory, fostering resilience, and envisioning emancipatory futures. The findings suggest that *The Famished Road* not only critiques the persistent structures of neocolonial power, but also offers a compelling template for the reclamation of African agency and identity through narrative. This study contributes to the ongoing scholarly discourse on postcolonial literature by elucidating the critical role of indigenous storytelling in the struggle for decolonization. It invites further inquiry into the intersections of narrative, memory, and resistance, and underscores the imperative to engage deeply

with indigenous epistemologies as vital resources for both literary and socio-political transformation in postcolonial contexts.

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