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Direct all enquiries to:
The Editor in-Chief
Prof. Àrìnpé G. Adéjùmọ̀
Head, Department of Linguistics and African Languages
University of Ibadan
Ibadan

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Yorùbá Playwrights and the Spirit of *Ọmọlúàbí*: Discourse in Archetypal Theory

Láyọ̀ Ògúnlọlá
Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages
University of Ìlọrin, Ìlọrin, Nigeria
Email: layoogunlola@yahoo.com

Abstract

The level of moral degeneration globally and among the Yorùbá in particular, calls for concern. The emergence of colonialism, with its attendant civilization, brought numerous changes to Yorùbá moral life. Efforts at rejuvenating the low moral standard of the Yorùbá society should involve everybody and not religious leaders alone. This paper discusses the expectations of playwrights in helping to rejuvenate the dwindling moral standard of the Yorùbá society. This paper discusses the spirit of *ọmọlúàbí* as portrayed in selected Yorùbá written plays, namely: Adébáyọ̀ Fálétí's *Wọ́n rò pé wèrè ni* (1965), Olú Owólabí's *Àgbà tí ń yó□lẹ̀ dà* (2005) and Akínwùmí Ìṣọ̀lá's *Ayé yẹ wọ́n tán* (2009). This is aimed at re-positioning the Yorùbá society morally. The methodology is descriptive, using archetypal theory, as postulated by Carl Jung (1967), to see where they give ideas relating to the principles reflected in archetypal theory which states that whatever behaviour one puts up, it is rooted

from somewhere. It is an archetype of somebody or something. This is justified by the fact that good character *(ọmọlúàbí)* is an archetype because it is a phenomenon that has been in existence since creation. It is an age-old practice in every society. Our findings reveal that contrary to the belief in some quarters, the society is not folding its arms; rather, it is prepared to fight against anything contrary to the spirit of *ọmọlúàbí*. The selected authors have demonstrated that the society sets and controls the peoples' moral, unless this is strictly observed, the society cannot move forward. No matter the level of civilization, and political, economic and social situations, people who are morally blameworthy cannot survive the wrath of the society. The paper, therefore, recommends that African artists in general, and *Yorùbá* artists, in particular, should no longer see myths and oral materials as inferior. There is the need to propagandize the publication and the use of didactic works of art and make them accessible to educational levels lower than the tertiary level.

Introduction

Before the coming of the Europeans to the shores of Nigeria, each ethnic group had its own philosophy, the Yorùbá people inclusive. One of the major philosophies of the Yorùbá is moral philosophy, which is basically based on good character

training (the spirit of *ọmọlúàbí*), that is, the mind frame of good behaviour in all its ramifications. To the Yorùbá people, being an *ọmọlúàbí* means being of good morals and morality means ìwà. Hence, good moral is *ìwà rere* and bad moral is *iwà búburú* or *ìwà ọmọlángidi*. The goodness or badness of a person is often determined by the extent of his good character *(ìwà rere)*. A person who possesses this is known as an *ọmọlúàbí*, meaning a person with good character. *Ọmọlúàbí* is that person who exhibits the right character at the appropriate time. In the views of Abímbọ́lá (1975), Òjó (1978), and Awóníyì (1973, 1978), *ìwà* is the most valuable among all other things in the Yorùbá value system. According to them, good character (*ìwà ọmọlúàbí*) forms the basis for the Yorùbá traditional educational system known as *ètò ẹ̀kọ́ ìbílẹ̀*.

In the pre-colonial period, good moral values were highly cherished by the Yorùbá, and they endeavoured to train their young ones to imbibe the spirit of *ọmọlúàbí* from the day they were born. Such training was the joint responsibility of the entire people of the society. This is why the Yorùbá will say, *ẹnìkan níí bímọ, gbogbo ènìyàn níí tọ́ ọ* which literally means that the training of the child is not left to the biological parents alone. Today, however, things have fallen apart; the centre can no longer hold. A lot of changes are brought into the social,

political, economic, moral and religious lives of the people. This has resulted in lawlessness and complete disregard for people's traditions. The causes have been attributed to different factors. In the opinion of Adéyẹmí (2008, p.124),

> ... the encroachment of foreign aesthetics into African literature generally is having a devastating effect on the morality of the youths. The foreign literary factor is gradually, steadily and forcefully supplanting and submerging the traditional literary traditions thereby making cultural socialization of the youths difficult.

Awoníyì (1975, p.365), avers that people have changed their traditional ways of living, and "if a man does away with his traditional way of living, and throws away his good customs, he had better first make certain that he has something of value to replace them". It is doubtful, however, if Africans, in general and the Yorùbá society, in particular are conscious of this. The purpose of this paper is to critically examine the contributions of the selected playwrights to efforts at revamping Yorùbá good character (*ọmọlúàbí*) values.

Three of the didactic plays written between 1960 and 2009 are selected based on the moral themes they address. The methodology is descriptive, using archetypal theory to see where they give ideas relating to the principles of archetypal theory.

Existing works on morality and archetypal theory are reviewed to ascertain how the selected authors present the moral issues contained in their works.

Theoretical Framework: Archetypal theory

Many scholarly works exist on morality, written plays and even archetypal theory. Aróhunmọ́làṣe (1997) works on class struggle in Yorùbá historical and protest plays. He observes that, for revolution to be effective, the masses need to be educated and carried along. Ọlárewájú (1999) examines oracle consultation and the theme of conspiracy in selected Yorùbá written plays. He argues that the practice of consulting the oracle before embarking on any project by the Yorùbá is being ignored, and this is doing the society no good. Ògúndèjì (2009) examines the Yorùbá language as pilot for good character training. Fálétí (2009) investigates good character (*ọmọlúàbí*) as the golden attribute of a Yorùbá man. Adéyẹmí (2008) discusses the portrayal of moral philosophy in Yorùbá literature. He notes that the infiltration of foreign ideals has tremendous negative effects on the Yorùbá cultural values. All the works cited above agree that Yorùbá morality has been dastardly affected by foreign ideas, and they all proffer solutions.

Afọláyan (2010) investigates conflict in selected poetry of Wọlé Sóyínká. Balógun (1999) uses the archetypal theory to examine two African epics: the *Ozidi Saga* and *Emperor Saka the great*. Ògúndèjì (1988) concentrates on mythio-historical plays using the semiotic approach, with emphasis on general structure common to the texts analysed. He identifies two major categories of Yorùbá drama, namely: the unscripted and the scripted. He speaks on the development of conflict through direct confrontation and/or open antagonism between the protagonist and the imperialist superior power. He opines that the inability of the protagonists to effectively defend their actions against the imperialists lead to their tragedy. Ògúndèjì (1988) concludes that the protagonists and the antagonists in the mythico-historical are archetypal characters. They represent the collective values of the Yorùbá, namely the *òrìṣàs* (gods) and the ancestors (semi-gods) with patriotism as the highest heroic value.

The application of the archetypal theory to Yorùbá literary works is an innovation, as not much research, if any, has been attempted by any scholar known to the author. This makes the difference between this work and the existing ones.

Schramm (1963) describes theory as "crap-detector" which enables us to separate scientific statements from

unscientific ones". McLean (1972) refers to theory as our understanding of the ways things work according to Severin and Tankard (Jnr) (1982), such 'ways' must be tested and verified. They define theory as "a set of systematic generalizations based on scientific observation leading to further empirical observation". McQuail (1983) asserts that "a theory consists of a set of ideas of varying status and origin which seek to explain or interpret some phenomenon" (see Babátúndé, 1998).

From the above, a theory can be described as an instrument in the hands of a literary critic used to analyze the content and form of a literary work. It gives an insight into the hidden agenda of a literary artist. Adéyẹmí (2007, p.4) says: *ọ̀tẹ̀ tí lítírẹ́ṣọ̀ bá dì, lámèyítọ́ níí tú u sí gbangba*, (the secret in a literary work is exposed by a literary critic – a theorist). This implies that the thoughts of a literary artist are best understood through the application of a literary theory.

Several theories are available to literary critics. They include: Formalism, Structuralism, Feminism, Post-colonialism, Marxism, New Historicism, Arhetypal, and others. For the purpose of this work, we adopt the Archetypal theory, especially Carl Jung's (1967) approach. By archetype we mean a typical example or an original model of something. Archetypal theory originated from discussions on myth.

The idea of archetypal theory emanates from Carl Jung, a disciple of Sigmund Freud, who, in 1967, argues that a situation of morality cannot be determined by dreams as claimed by Feud. Dreams, according to Jung, cannot explain similar occurrences of mythical patterns and behaviours. He uses myths to explain the similarities between stories, such as that of the creation of the world under the caption of personal and collective/universal unconscious. Jung avers argued that personal unconscious contains experiences that were either fully conscious or those that have been painfully repressed in order to maintain a personal image. The collective/universal unconscious contains interrelated primordial images drawn from a collective memory. This explains why myths are related from one group to another.

Jung tries to link archetype to heredity and regards it as a natural ability or an inborn tendency. He claims that we are born with these patterns which structure our imagination and make it distinctly human. This implies that archetypes are closely linked with our bodies. Jung notes that anytime a person is born into a particular culture, such a person is likely to behave in a way similar to that of his or her people. A person cannot behave anyhow except he has experienced such behaviour or that such behaviour has been with his forefather (*a priori*). This is like saying that behaviours are hereditary. Explaining further, the

connection of archetypal idea to myths, Jung (1967 p.392) observes that;

> The concept of archetype is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myth and the fairy tales of world literature contain definite motives which crop up everywhere. We meet such motives in the imagination dreams, deliria and delusions of individuals living today.

The instinctive nature of archetype, according to Jung, is paramount because the archetype is an unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can, therefore, manifest itself anywhere.

According to Jung, human beings are subjected to certain patterns of functions. These patterns could be defined as images. The images are primordial since they are pre-existent. He opines that archetypes could occur spontaneously without respect to time and place. This implies that present in all psychic structures are unnoticed but active living disposition and ideas. Human thoughts, feelings and actions are subject to this disposition. Among the Yorùbá and even the world over, being of good character (an *ọmọlúàbí*) is subject to behaving in an ideal manner. An archetype, therefore, is not determined by its content or subject, but rather, by its form and structure (Afọláyan 2010, pp.96-102). Today, however, modern man

fancies that he has escaped the myth through his conscious repudiation of revealed religion in favour of a purely natural religion.

Archetypal theory argues that human beings have a preconscious psychic disposition that enables man to react in a human manner, while animals also react in an animal manner. When these potentialities are actualized, they enter consciousness as images. This, however, may be in various forms.

The theory also concerns itself with the conviction that nothing exists without something. In other words, nothing exists in a vacuum but, rather, in a continuum of something that had existed somewhere. The theory states that the whole essence of life itself is a source of ideology, a source of knowledge and a source of whatever could be imagined. This implies that archetypal concepts had been in existence before the classical age. The theory holds that the human mind is rooted in the unconscious just as the plant is rooted in the ground. Whatever behaviour a man puts up is rooted from somewhere. That is, there is nothing new under the sun. Therefore, whatever we do is an archetype of what somebody or a group of persons have done earlier. This implies that archetypal theory deals with the image of humanness.

In summary, the principles of archetypal theory include the following:

(i) Human beings have a pre-conscious psychic disposition that enables man to react in human manner.

(ii) When these potentialities are actualized, it enter unconscious as imagas.

(iii) The conviction that nothing exists without something that had existed somewhere or sometimes.

(iv) Human mind is rooted in the unconscious just as the plant is rooted in the ground.

(v) Whatever behaviour a man puts up, it is rooted somewhere.

Justification for the adoption of the theory

The issues connected with *ọmọlúàbi* as an archetypal phenomenon, are enormous but two of them are crucial. Firstly, *ọmọlúàbí* itself is predominantly personified in human beings. Secondly, *ọmọlúàbí* is a mirror of a person's adherence to and observance of social norms. It is in the context of the above that the concept of *ọmọlúàbí* is being critically explored in this paper. *Ọmọlúàbi* itself is an archetype of life and existence. It

operates and flourishes within the framework of social structure, especially among the Yorùbá people of Nigeria.

Our choice of Jung's approach to archetypal theory is not only because it points to the fact that myths have functional hidden codes which could be explored, but also because the approach rests on the fulcrum of similar characteristic functioning of the human mind. Those characteristics are not docile features of the mind, because, according to Radcliffe, in Righter (1975, p.16), they regulate and determine social function in a given community:

> A society depends for its existence on the presence in the mind of its members of a certain (myth) system of sentiments by which the conduct of the individual is regulated in conformity with the need of the society.

The application of this theory helps us to establish the fact that the society's demand controls the people's moral behaviour. It establishes the fact that individuals have some inborn tendencies (personal unconscious) which are controlled by the universal/collective unconscious. The individual ego is controlled by the ideal, while the super-ego forces man to do the ideal except for some factors within and outside that militate against following the ideal path. However, only those who allow

the universal unconscious to prevail over the personal unconscious are recognized by society.

There is a correlation among *ọmọlúàbí*, the archetype and society. *Ọmọlúàbí* is a phenomenon found among the people in any society; it is an archetype on its own because it is a phenomenon that has been in existence since creation. It is an age-old practice in every human society. This is to say that it is a universal phenomenon. The Hausa refer to it as *mutumi kirki*; the Igbo will say of a well-behaved person, *amu ru n'ala* or *nwa amala*; the White refer to the morally upright person, (*ọmọlúàbí*), as a decent person. The Holy Bible, in 1 Corinthians 14 v.40 (King James' Version) says: "let all things be done decently and in order". When the Yorùbá say *báyìí kọ́ là á ṣe é*, meaning (it is not usually done this way), it means you have deviated from tradition, and such deviation may spell doom for the society.

Archetypal theory will help us to determine why people behave the way they do. For instance, why would Bàbá Rámọ́ (Ládépò) in *Wọ́n rò pé wèrè ni* agree to sacrifice his friend's only daughter for money rituals? Why should Dúrójayé in *Àgbà tí ń yọ̀lẹ̀ dà* kill his brother in order to take possession of his brother's property? Why would he not play the game of inheritance sharing according to the rules?

Yorùbá Concept of *Ọmọlúàbí*

Ọmọlúàbí in the Yorùbá language is synonymous with good morals, ethics, morality or good character. Simply put, *ọmọlúàbí* refers to a code of conduct concerning what is moral or immoral or an ideal code of conduct which could be preferred by the same 'moral' person under special conditions. Ethics is the systematic study of the moral domain. It seeks to address questions such as how a moral outcome can be achieved in a specific situation, how moral values should be determined (normative ethics), and what moral people actually abide by (descriptive ethics). This implies that morality (good character) refers to a collection of beliefs as to what constitute a good life.

The fact that each society decides what is moral or immoral does not rule out the fact that there are universal morals. These include; respect for elders; hard work; shunning acts like murder, stealing, and incest. In this paper, we refer to *ọmọlúàbí* as morality, good character or even as *ìwàpẹ̀lẹ́*.

The Yorùbá people cherish good morals and do not compromise it for any other thing. They teach good morals through their oral literature which includes songs, poems proverbs and the like. Examples are the following. In support of hospitality,for instance, they say: *ẹnikẹ́ni tí ìwọ bá nipa, láti ràn lọ́wọ́, láti yọ nínú ìbànújẹ́, ẹnìkéjì rẹ ni*, whosoever you have the

strength to assist/help, to bring out of his troubled mind, is your partner. In support of respect for the elders, they say *àìfàgbà fẹ́nìkan kò jẹ́ kí ayé ó gún* (failure to respect the elders spell trouble on the society). The need to be faithful and sincere is stressed by the saying, *Ká sòtítọ́ kí a kú, ó sàn jù ká purọ́ kí a wà láàyè lọ*, (to die for saying the truth is better than to live on telling lies). To an idle person, the Yorùbás sing:

Alápá má sisẹ́	the lazy one who doesn't work with his hands.
Baba òkú òlẹ	chief of the lazy people
Àkísà rẹ jìngbìnnì	your rags are plenty
Ní'lé aláró	in the dyer's house

To applaud forgiveness as a virtue, the Yorùbá say: *bí a kò bá gbàgbé ọ̀rọ̀ àná, a kò níí rẹ́ni bá ṣeré* (if you don't overlook or forget the past, you will not be friendly with anybody), and the like.

Anyone who is morally blameworthy is not accorded any respect by the people. Awoníyì (1978, p.2) asserts that an *ọmọlúàbí* is a person who combines all good characters and is regarded as good by everybody in his society". Yọ̀lóyè (2009, p.31) describes an *ọmọlúàbí* as "a person born and raised by someone with good character and, by implication, a person with good characters himself or herself". Before colonization, there

was a Yorùbá traditonal system of education known as *ètò èkọ́ ìbílẹ̀*, the main objective of which was to make the individual an *ọmọlúàbí*. The said system was divided into home training (*èkó ilé*), vocational training (*ẹ̀kọ́ isẹ́*) and community training (*ẹ̀kọ́ ìlú*).

Good character (*omọlúàbí)*, among the Yorùbá, includes: chastity in marriage, hospitality, selflessness, generousity, kindness and shunning acts such as stealing, murder, backsliding, and incest. Anyone who goes against these qualities is not considered an *ọmọlúàbí*. Therefore, all parents strive to make their children *ọmọlúàbí*. Fáfúnwá (1974, p.4) states that "in traditional Yorùbá society, all parents want their children to be upright, honest, kind and helpful to others and will spare no pain to instill these qualities". The Yorùbá prefer childlessness to having a child who is morally bankrupt and can bring shame to the family.

Abímbọ́lá (1975, p.394) states that:

> *Ìwà* is regarded by the Yorùbá as one *of* the aims of human existence. Every individual must strive to have *ìwàpẹ̀lẹ́ in* order to be able to lead a good life in a belief system dominated by many supernatural powers and a social structure controlled by a hierarchy of authorities.

There is a Yorùbá saying that:

Ẹni tó lówo, tí ò níwà, owó olówó ló ní
Ẹni tó bí'mọ tí ò níwà, ọmọ ọlọ́mọ ló bí
Ẹni tó kọ́lé tí ò níwà, ilé onílé ló kọ́.....

He who has noney/ bares children build houses
but has no good character, all those things are
not his own.

In *Odù Ògbè-òyèkú méjì* of the ifá literary corpus, *Òrúnmìlà* emphasizes the importance of good character (*ìwà ọmọlúàbí*). It reads:

Ìwà nìkàn ló sọ̀rọ̀
Orí kan kìí burú lótù Ifẹ̀
Ìwà nìkàn ló sọ̀rọ̀

Character is all that speaks
There is no bad destiny in Ifè city
Character is all that speaks

This implies that whatever a man has, or whatever he becomes, he is nothing without good character (*ìwà ọmọlúàbí*).

Yorùbá playwrights are not left out in the crusade for moral diligence. In fact, most literary writers are conscious of the importance of good moral values to society. In Awóníyì's *Ayé Kòótọ́* (1973), for example, a passenger, who is busy going through a newspaper is fed up with news of moral decadence engulfing Yorùbá society. He says:

> *È é ṣe tó fi jẹ́ pé òní olè, ọ̀la dánàdanà, ọ̀tunla Gbọ́mọgbọ́mọ sáà ni ayé yìí dà?... Gbogbo ohun tí a ń rí nínú ìwé ìròyìn kò ju bíi: "àwọn olè gba àpò mẹ́ẹ̀ẹ́dọ́gbọ̀n lọ́wọ́ onòwò kan.* (o.i.54)
>
> Why is it that today, it is stealing, tomorrow, it is highway robbery, next day, it is kidnapping. What has this world turned to...? All we read inside the newspapers is nothing but how robbers snatch five thousand naira from a trader (p.54).

Responding to this statement, another passenger says:

> *Kò sí olóòótọ́ kankan mó láyé. Àti ọlọ́pàá o, àti olè o, àti ọ̀mọ̀wé o, àti ọlọ́sà o, àti òṣèlú o, ẹlẹ̀tàn ni gbogbo wa dà pátápátá.* (o.i.54)
>
> There is no truthful person again on earth. The police, the thieves, the educated, the robbers and the politicians, we have all turned liars. (p.54).

The excerpts above describe the moral situation among the *Yorùbá* people within the period in discussion. The selected authors are opposed to this kind of situation, as we shall see latter in this paper.

Moral themes in *Wọ́n rò pé wèrè ni, Àgbà tí ń yọ́lẹ̀ dà* and *Ayé yẹ̀ wọ́n tán*

In this section of the paper, the moral themes addressed by the selected authors are carefully examined and discussed using the archetypal theory. The moral themes addressed in all the selected plays are many and cannot be exhausted here. However, we are able to address virtues which include hospitality/helpfulness and service to others, obedience/humility, hard work, forgiveness, honesty/integrity, selflessness and faithfulness.

(i) Hospitality, Helpfulness and Service to others

Hospitality is equated with kindness. Being hospitable is one of the moral standards set by the Yorùbá. The need to be kind and show love is always emphasized in their culture. The Yorùbá people believe that it is good to be kind to one's fellow men. This is believed to be one of the important moral tenets for peaceful living. Adébọ̀wálé (1999, p.122) describes hospitality as kindness or helpfulness. This means helping others to live successfully, giving others a hand in order to enable them realize their goals, giving a helping hand to retrieve others from their besetting woes and difficulties.

This can be viewed from the perspective of being generous, faithful or showing love to one another. It is a situation whereby one feels affected by the distress or pleasure of another. This is what Wilson (1995) refers to as sympathy. Helpfulness is not expectation of gain or reward of any kind; It is for the sake of a person or situation needing help. The natural law of compensation will return good deeds in kind and in quality.

Hospitality or helpfulness is a kind of sentiment that most people, including the Yorùbá, would always want to encourage among one another. It is highly valued. They wish to affirm the importance of this disposition by rewarding its apparent display; hence they say *ẹni tó fi tiẹ̀ sílẹ̀ gbọ́ tẹni ẹlẹ́ni, Ọlọ́run níí bá a gbọ́ tirẹ̀*, (God heps he who devotes his time to attend to other people's problem, God helps him to solve his own problem). They practise it in part because it is useful in attracting more friends and better opportunities than do skinflints, or because they think such motives are good in themselves.

In *Wọ́n rò pé wèrè ni,* Fálétí addresses hospitality/helpfulness as one of the virtues that portray one as an *ọmọlúàbí*. The extravagant spending of Bàbá Rámọ́ (Ládépò) puts him in a very precarious financial position. Àrẹ̀mú, his friend, however stands by him during this period despite the fact

that he is the cause of his woes. Àrẹ̀mú provides for all his needs (food, money and clothing). This is evident in Àyọ̀ká's statement when she visits Ládépò to deliver her father's message. She says:

> *Wón ni ki n gbé ìsu yìí fún yin, pèlú gàárí yìí.*
> *Wọ́n ní kí n kówó yìí náà fún yin, nítorí báwọn*
> *olówó kékèké yóó baà fẹ́ yóó yín lẹ́nu.* (o.i.59)
>
> I was asked to give you these yam tubers, and "gàárí". I was also asked to give you this money for the settlement of your petty debts. (p.59).

Bàbá Rámọ́ himself confesses Àrẹ̀mú's high level of hospitality and generosity by appreciating his friend's good gesture before Àwáwù his wife. He testifies to it that the love Àrẹ̀mú has for him is a genuine. Àrẹ̀mú's action is an archetype of *Ilé*, one of Rírí's three sons in the àmúlù-odù Ọ̀yẹ̀kú-Ìká of the *Ifá* literary corpus. Rírí approached her three sons, *Ọ̀nà*, *Ọjà* and *Ilé*, for assistance on pressing issues to ease herself. Only *Ilé* assisted her. For *Ilé's* spirit of helpfulness and generosity, *Ilé* became wealthy and, in fact, the most prosperous of the three sons of Riri.

Despite the helpfulness and hospitality of Àrẹ̀mú towards Ládépò his friend, we see the forces of betrayal that work against the spirit of *omolúàbí* in *Wọ́n rò pé wèrè ni.* In response to an act of hospitality, the Yorùbá expect the recipient to show

gratitude. Hence, they say *ẹni a ṣe lóore tí ò dúpẹ́, bí ọlọ́ṣà kó'ni lẹ́rù lọ ni*, (ingratitude is as cruel and painful as being robbed of one's belongings). Apart from being a sacred duty to God, gratitude is also an important social value. Bàbá Rámọ́ is ungrateful for accepting his wife's advice that he offers Àyọ̀ká his friend's only daughter for money ritual. Ládépò's action is an archetype of the tortoise in the folk story of Tortoise (*Ìjàpá*) and *kamọ̀dù*, where *jàpá* failed to appreciate *kamọ̀dù* for saving his life. *Ìkamọ̀dù* got angry and left *Ìjàpá* in his sorry state (*Babalọlá*, 1979, p.100).

The Yorùbá believe that the righteous shall not die in place of the wicked. The authors seriously condemn ingratitude which is anti-social in nature. Àrẹ̀mú's action is preferred to Ládépò's action; hence, the result is disastrous for Ládépò and his entire accomplice in the botched deal.

(ii) Obedience and Humility

The Yorùbá people have humility as one of their important moral values. In the home and indeed anywhere Yorùbá man finds himself, he is supposed to be humble and obedient to both old and young people. Obedience can be viewed from different perspectives. These include: obedience to one's parent's orders and instructions, obedience to constituted

authorities, obedience to societal myths and taboos, obedience to the voice of *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*; the Yorùbá divinity in charge of man's destiny. The Yorùbá say: *abèrù àgbà ni yóó te-ilè yìí pé* (he who listens to the elders, lives long).

In *Wọ́n rò pé wèrè ni,* Fálétí presents Àyọ̀ká (the main character) as a girl who possesses a very high degree of humility. She displays this quality anywhere she goes and at any time too. Whenever she is around in the village, she visits Màmá Rámọ́, her mother's only friend to assist her in her domestic works. This makes it very easy for Ìyá Rámọ́ to execute her diabolic plan against Àyọ̀ká. She simply requests that Àyọ̀ká should accompany her to an undisclosed destination. Because of their respect for both Bàbá and Ìyá Rámọ́, neither Àyọ̀ká nor her parents bother to inquire about where Ìyá Rámọ́ is taking their daughter to. Instead, they simply endorse Ìyá *Rámọ́'s* request, and before they know it, Àyọ̀ká is already in the hands of kidnappers who work for Bàbá Rámọ́ and his wife.

Àyọ̀ká is exceptionally brilliant, yet she is never proud of her academic brilliance neither is she rude to her teachers, parents and elders around. Àyọ̀ká's humility makes people pity her when she suddenly appears. Bàbá Rámọ́ and his wife, on the contrary, are castigated, abused and cursed by the entire people.

Àyọ̀ká's case is not different from that of Ọ̀kánlàwọ́n in *Abínúẹ̀ni* who trusts everyone, including Adéjíṣọ́lá, his father's youngest wife who unfortunately is his most dreadful enemy. Adéjíṣọ́lá attempts to kill Ọ̀kánlàwọ́n by reporting him to her guild of witches, but for destiny, Ọ̀kánlàwọ́n would have been killed via motor accident. Àyọ̀ká is an archetype of a well-behaved child in the home. No wonder why she is an 'asset' to both her parents and her community as a whole. Her action is an archetype of the Rabbit in one Yorùbá myth story of Rabbit and Tortoise. In the story, Rabbit boasted that he could run past the tortoise. Tortoise had started the race long before Rabbit. The Rabbit overtook the Tortoise very shortly and made jest of the tortoise. Rabbit however slept on the way hoping to overtake the tortoise whenever he woke up. Unfortunately, Tortoise had won the race before the rabbit woke up.

(iii) Truthfulness, faithfulness and sincerity

Truthfulness, faithfulness and sincerity are important moral virtues in Yorùbá culture. They are not only ethical qualities of human character but they are also together with love and harmony, primary virtues which constitute the essence of *Olódùmarè*, the ultimate reality of universal existence. The Yorùbá attach much importance to telling the truth at all times.

Truthfulness is expressed by honesty, which is itself purity of heart which is substantiated by total elimination of distortion or falsehood in portraying the intrinsic nature of an aspect of the universe or life.

An English adage says "honesty is the best policy". To the Yorùbá, an honest person is an *ọmọlúàbí*. To them, a dishonest person is likely to turn a thief. From infancy, they train their young ones to imbibe the culture of honesty in everything they do. The senior Olódù Èjìogbè portrays truth as a positive directive or living:

S'òtítọ́ S'òdodo
Ẹ́ní s'òtítọ́
Ni'mọlẹ́ẹ́ gbè.

Speak the truth
Be truthful always
for the gods or divinities
favour only those who speak the truth.
(Adébọ̀wálé 1999, pp.140-141).

The Yorùbá custom stipulates that the children and younger brothers or sisters (biological) of the deceased are eligible to his/her inheritance. It is not a good thing to exclude the eligible from inheriting their deceased's property. In *Àgbà tí ń yọ́lẹ̀ dà,* Akíndélé, Ásiyanbí and Adéògún are truthful and faithful when they insist on obeying what the tradition says on inheritance sharing. This is evident in their discussion at the

meeting called to distribute or share Dúrójayé's brother's property. Akíndélé says:

> *Ṣé ọ̀rọ̀ kò jù bẹ́ẹ̀ lọ Dúró?..... Ṣe bí a ti mọ̀ pé ọmọ méta ni ẹgbọ́n rẹ bí sílẹ̀, ọ̀kan ń bẹ ní'lé, àwọn méjì yòókù ń bẹ lẹ́yìn odi. Ẹnu ká bá yín pin in bó ti yẹ náà ni.* (o.i.10)
>
> Is that all, *Dúró*? We all know that your brother left three children behind. One is at home and the other two are away. It is our duty to help you share it appropriately (p.10).

Dúrójayé is opposed to Akíndélé's reference to his brother's children who live far away in Ghana, but Ṣiyanbí and Adéògun insist on allowing the universal unconscious to come to play, hence, they leave in protest. Ìyálóde, on the other hand, gives her support for Durójayé's wish. It is evident that Dúrójayé promises Ìyálóde something if she can support his (Dúrójayé) wish as the two later attest to. Ìyálóde's action is an archetype of the modern-day chiefs who take bribe to support any candidate vying for a traditional title. The slogan today is "he who brings the biggest kola takes the title". No wonder, the late *Moshood Abíọlá*, from *Ègbáland* was given the title of Àárẹ Ọ̀nà Kánkánfò of Ìbadan.

In *Ayé yẹ wọ́n tán*, Alápinni, one of the Kingmakers, is ready to follow the path of honesty. He suggests that the names

of all prospective candidates to the stool of *Ọba* of *Ìpo* be presented to the diviner for confirmation from *Ifá*. Baṣòrun, however, insists on presenting only the name of the contentious candidate as they have earlier agreed.

In the play, Ìṣòlá presents a society where truth is no more given prominence, a society where telling lies has engulfed the people. Prospective candidates into traditional positions now bribe their way; the leaders (chiefs) who are expected to uphold traditions prefer to take bribe, even when they are making the wrong choice. It is against the spirit of *ọmọlúàbí* for people to disregard the society's ideals. The author, however, makes us understand that the society is not totally rid of truthful and faithful people.

As expected, the diviner insists that he would not play politics with the choice of the candidate. He strongly warns them over the choice of Sinmisọ́lá whom he assures will misbehave. The diviner says:

> *Ifá wí báun, ó fi tì. Ni pé ẹni a dáfá fún yìí, yóó fẹ́ máa ṣe nǹkan èèwọ̀, bí nǹkan tó lè bayé jẹ. Kí ó ṣọra.....* (o.i.15)
>
> Ifá oracle says so and concludes. That the person so divined for, would want to engage in bad habits, like those habits capable of

destroying the people. We should be careful. (p.15).

Abọrẹ̀ also displays a sense of truthfulness by refusing to prevent Ọba Sinmisọ́lá from swearing before the oracle. Prior to the swearing ceremony, Ẹ̀dá Kìíní tells the Aborẹ̀:

> Ohun tí a ń wí ni pé, ẹ̀yin ni ẹ o sọ fún àwọn ará ìlú pé Ọba ti yege éyí. Ẹ ó sì tún sọ fún wọn pé òòsà yìí ní kí a má ṣe búra mọ́ lẹ́yìn èyí... (o,i,186).
>
> What we are saying is that you are to tell the people that *Kábíyèsí* has successfully done this. You will also tell them that the oracle forbids future swearing after this exercise (p.186).

Abọrẹ̀ throws the request to Babaláwo (diviner). Babaláwo divines and says:

> *A ò gbọ́dọ̀ pa irọ́ rè o. Òbàrà méjì ló jade yìí. Ṣé ká kì í...Lákọ̀ọ́kọ́, ifá ni kí a ní sùúrù lórí ọ̀rọ̀ yìí, kí a má fi ìbínú ṣe ohunkóhun kí a má baà rí ohun tó tún wá burú ju èyí tó wà nílè lọ.* (o.i.189)
>
> We must not tell lie. *Òbàrà Méjì* is the '*Odù*' that appears. Can we recite it? Firstly, *Ifá* urges us to be patient. If we do anything in annoyance, terrible things are likely to follow (p.189).

In the same play, Fáṣakin stands by the truth throughout. Even when his life is threatened and he is beaten to a state of coma, he fails to succumb to intimidation from *Ọba Sinmisọ́lá* and his cohorts. He spearheads the fight for freedom from oppression by launching a serious awareness campaign to neighbouring villages making them to see why they should join the protest. According to him, cheating the people is beyond compromise and keeping silent means endless suffering (*Ìṣòlá*, 2009 p.159). Fáṣakin's words of encouragement account for the success recorded in the struggle. In this regard, Fáṣakin can be described as an *ọmọlúàbí.*

The same goes with Àyàn. Despite the threat to his life by the policemen, he insists on telling the truth. He is accused of careless talks against *Ọba Sinmisọ́lá* and his chiefs, but he insists that he has not committed any offence. At the point of being brutalized, *Bello*, *Fáṣakin* and Òbí appear to save him.

All the characters mentioned above take after Ọ̀rúnmìlà, the oracle who always insists on telling the truth. Abọ̀rẹ̀ insists on allowing the universal unconscious to prevail over his personal unconscious, especially on moral issues. They are presented as archetypes of the snail in the Yorùbá myth story of "Snail and Tortoise". In the story, Snail was faithful to the Tortoise. He gave Tortoise food to eat. Because Tortoise was

lazy, he planned to inherit the Snail's farmland. Tortoise trailed and killed the king's *abuké ọsìn* whom he dropped on the Snail's farm claiming that the Snail killed the man. Snail was arrested, but he insisted on the truth even when he was to be killed. Snail suggested that the king should organize a befitting celebration for him, and when this was done, the cat was let out of the bag. Tortoise confessed and was killed.

Ọba Sinmisọ́lá on the other hand, backslides by allowing his personal unconscious to overshadow the universal unconscious. Immediately he is told of the financial benefit he will personally get, he forgets all his pre-election promises and gives out the land he has earlier promised the Alájùmọ̀ṣe group for the building of an ultra-modern hotel. When the people protest, he employs force and brutalizes them.

Sinmisọ́lá and his supporters are archetypes of politicians and the well-to-do, who employ the services of the law-enforcement agents to harass, brutalize or detain their opponents, imaginary enemies and to silence people who protest against their anti-*ọmọlúàbí* behaviours. Ìṣọ̀lá is of the view that unless people stand up and fight for their freedom, the poor and the less-privileged may continue to suffer in the hands of despotic politicians and monarchs.

(iv) Hard Work

The *Yorùbá* say: "*A kìí mú iṣẹ́ jẹ, kí a tún mú ìṣẹ́ jẹ*" meaning (if you avoid work, you cannot avoid poverty). Among the *Yorùbá*, a lazy man has no recognition. This is why they say that there should be no food for the lazy man. To avoid this situation, they engage their children in partisan apprenticeship, but with a master who is morally upright. In the home, children are encouraged to be hard working. The males help their fathers on the farm, while the females are engaged in domestic work in the home.

In *Àgbà tí ń yólẹ̀ dà*, Àjànís success is as a result of his hard-work and devotion to his studies. At the death of his father, instead of running after his father's property, he faces his studies. When Jẹnríọgbé advises him to ask for his right, he insists that he must first complete his studies.

> *Pẹ̀lẹ́pẹ̀lẹ́ la fi í pa àmúkùrù abẹ́ ẹni, bi i bẹ́ẹ̀ kọ́, ó lè lọ di ẹtikẹ. Ṣé o kúkú mọ̀ pé mo ti fẹ́rẹ̀ parí ìwé mẹ́wáà mi. Jẹ́ kí n ṣe sùúrù kí n parí rẹ̀. Lẹ́yìn ìyẹn, a lè máa tọ̀pinpin bí ogún ṣe lọ. Àbí o ò rí ọgbọ́n nínú ìyẹn ni?* (o.i.19)
>
> We just have to take things easy, if not it may boomerang. You know I am about to complete my secondary school education, let me be patient. After it, then we can be talking about

inheritance. Do you see any sense in that? (p.19).

Àjàní sees his educational career as his priority. He values education more than inheritance. His determination to work hard accounts for the successes he records. Àjàní completes his secondary education with good grades. He is offered appointment in a bank, and he is posted to Gbáremú.

The story of Àyọ̀ká, in *Wọ́n rò pé wèrè ni,* is not different. Her teachers testify that she is hard working. This earns her love and affection from her teachers and her parents. This also accounts for why she emerges as one of the three best pupils who gain admission into a high school in Lagos under government scholarship. Àjàní's and Àyọ̀ká's actions are archetypes of the farmer in the Yorùbá myth story of "Tortoise and Farmer". They both had farmlands where they planted various kinds of crops. Farmer worked very hard, and his harvest was very good. Tortoise failed to work had, so, he had a very poor harvest. Tortoise resorted to stealing the farmer's farm products until he was caught and severely disciplined.

(v) Home Training

The Yorùbá believe that the untrained child will eventually sell the house one builds. An aspect of this kind of

training is referred to as *ẹ̀kọ́-ilé* by Akínjógbìn (2009, p.117). According to him, the child, from infancy, is taught the language used for greeting, respect for elders. He learns about myths and taboos, from where he brings out different moral lessons.

The essence of home training is displayed in Owolabi's *Àgbà tí ń yọ́lẹ̀ dà*. A *Yorùbá* adage says; *àgbà kìí wà lójà kí orí omo tuntun wó*, (the young ones do not go astray where there are elders). When Àjànì is assured that Dúrójayé, his uncle, will hand over his fathers' property to him when he is ripe in age, (when he is mature), he responds by saying:

> *Ẹ ṣeun, n kò ní àṣẹ kan lẹ́yìn èyí tí bàbá bá ti ṣe. Ṣe bí àwọn náà ni wọ́n sá kù ní bàbá fún wa? O ti parí. Ibi ẹ bá parí rẹ̀ sí náà ló parí sí.* (o.i. 14)
>
> Thank you. I don't have any authority apart from whatever uncle says. After all, he is now the only father we know. That is alright. Whatever agreement you reach, it is okay by me (p.14).

Even when Àjànì is aware that Dúrójayé, his supposed father, and Ìyálóde have no good intention for him and his family through Jẹnrío-gbé, his father's house keeper, he insists on not fighting the battle alone. As he says:

> *Bọ́mọdé kò bá tó ìyà kọ̀ tí ó ní òun fẹ́ kọ̀ ọ́, àjẹkún ìyà ni yóó jẹ. Bí ìyà kò bá sì kárí, ẹnìkan*

kìí kọ́ ọ́. Báwọn èbgbọ́n mi bá dé, ṣebí a ó dìjọ bèèrè ogún baba wa. (o.i. 27-28).

But if the time is not ripe to protest, if one does, one will further regret it.... Whenever my brothers come back, we will collectively demand for our father's inheritance). (pp. 27-28)

It is evident that Àjàní knows his right. Even when Dúrójayé's wives are worried about what people say about the inheritance, Àjàní says:

Ẹ jẹ n sọ fún yin, ìyàwó ni ẹyin mẹ́tẹ̀ẹ̀ta, ẹ sọ́ra níbi ọ̀rọ̀ ẹbí, nítorí bí ẹbí bá parí ìjà tán, orí ìyàwó ilé ni wọ́n ó fàbọ̀ sí. N kò tîì fẹ́ kí a talu Ìyálóde. Ẹyin náà mọ ẹni tó jẹ́, ẹni tí ò bá sì fẹ́ràn ara rẹ̀ nílẹ̀ yìí, gbọ́dọ̀ sá fún un ni. Ẹ má jẹ́ kí ó rí tiyín mú mọ́ ẹnu. (o.i.20)

Let me tell you, the three of you are wives. You must be careful over family issues because when the family disputes are settled, they bounce back on the house wives. I don't want us to confront *Ìyálóde*. You also know who she is, anyone who doesn't like her in this town must run away.
Don't allow her to shout your name all around. (p. 20).

Although Àjàní's utterance may portray him as a coward, he is more of an archetype of a child who hails from a good family, a family of people who are morally blameless. The author gives the impression that this accounts for why he

succeeds in all his endeavours. Àjàní has been trained to be patient in taking decisions in whatever situation he finds himself. His patience may account for why Dúrójayé is exposed without Àjàní losing his life.

Furthermore, Àjàní's gentle reaction to the news that Dúrójayé (his supposed father) sleeps with Àríké, his wife, testifies to our claim that Àjàní was given proper home training. On hearing the news, he simply expresses his disappointment in both Durojaye and his wife softly saying: This should not be taken to mean that he is foolish; rather he should be seen as an example of a boy who has been trained not to look at his elders in the face. He is not an untrained child (*àbîkọ́*) or a child who refuses to accept training (*àkọ́ọ̀gbà*). Dúrójayé, on the other hand, is outright condemned. The Judge sentences him to jail, but because he (Dúrójayé) cannot withstand the shame, he poisons himself even when he is still in police custody.

(vi) Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a virtue the Yorùbá highly respect. The Yorùbá believe that retaliation or vengeance is a vice. The teach that instead of avenging an evil done to someone, we should commit our enemies into the hands of the Almighty for vengeance. To them, *Olódùmarè* (God) is the impartial Judge

who will judge man accordingly and appropriately too. Hence, he is called *Adákẹ́dájọ́* (the silent judge), "*Ègbè lẹ́yìn ọmọ òrukàn*" (the defender of the orphan) and the like.

Forgiveness is a virtue addressed by Fáléti, in *Wọ́n rò pé wèrè ni,* and Owólabí, in *Àgbà tí ń yó-lẹ̀ dà.* In *Wọ́n rò pé wèrè ni,* despite the seriousness of the offence committed by Ládépò against Àrẹ̀mú his friend, we are not told of any attempt by Àrẹ̀mú to avenge his friend's offence by himself. Ládépò is an ingrate. Instead of reciprocating Àrẹ̀mú's hospitality to him, He listens to his wife's suggestion to use *Àyọ̀ká*, his friend's only daughter, for money rituals (Fálétí, 1965, p.81). Rather than avenging his friend's offence himself, Àrẹ̀mú decides to report Ládépò and his collaborators to the law-enforcement agency for legal action.

In *Àgbà tí ń yó-lẹ̀ dà,* we are not told of any attempt by Àjàní to personally avenge the offence committed against Àríkẹ́ his wife by *Dúrójayé*. When *Àjàní* hears that *Dúrójayé*, his supposed father, sleeps with *Àríkẹ́* his wife, he says:

> *Ẹ wo àbúrò bàbá tó l'óun ó sojú sẹ̀yìn bí bàbá ò sí. Ẹ wo ẹni ń lérí fún'ni bó ti wá ṣe. Ẹni bá sápamọ́ tafà sókè ń kọ́? Bó pẹ́ bó yá, Elédùwà á gbẹ̀san lára irú wọn ni. Òsìkà kò níí lọ láláìjìyà.* (o.i.116)

> Look at the father's junior who promises to represent the father when the father is no more. Look at what the person who boasts do... he who hid himself to shoot an arrow, no matter how late, God will avenge his sins. No evil doer will go unpunished (p. 116).

We are not told either that Àjànì makes any attempt to avenge the sins of Àríkẹ́ his wife. All we are told is the expression of his disappointment over Aríkẹ́'s action. He says:

> *...Ìwọ Àríkẹ́ tí mo fi'fẹ́ hàn sí pátápátá, ó di'hun mo lọ tán, o ń ṣe bó se rí kiri. Kò sí lówó re o, kò sí lówó tísà tó jàmàlà tí ò ṣíwọ́, Mísîsì tó fègúsí ṣe námọ̀ ni kò ṣeun...Èmi ni mo dẹ pàkúté tí n kò fi yẹ̀pẹ̀ sí o*...(o.i.116).

> ...As for you, *Àríkẹ́* to whom I showed my genuine love you behaved as you like soon after I had left. You have no fault. The teacher who refuses to let the yam flower go has no fault, the mistress who cooks the beef with the melon is to blame ...I am the one who set a trap without covering it with the sand.... (p.116).

The virtue of forgiveness displayed by the characters mentioned above is an archetype of the teachings of *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*. It is an archytype of *Ọ̀rúnmìlà's* reaction in *Odù Òtúrá Méjì* of the Ifá corpus to his friend's who betrayed the trust he had in them. The *Odù* reveals that *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* travelled, leaving his wife, *Onípupa*, behind. Soon after his departure, his close friends, the

Ìwàrẹ̀fàs of his home town, disregarded the sacrosanct taboo and thus seduced *Onípupa* perfidiously and conspired to have affairs with her, boasting that *Òrúnmìlà* could not do anything against them, notwithstanding *Onípupa's* resistance and the fact that *Òrúnmìlà* was a far more powerful potentate than any of them. They later became afraid of their friend; they sold *Onípupa* into slavery in a far off land and prepared a grave claiming that the woman was dead. They believed that this would cover up their perfidy whenever *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* arrived. They allowed their personal unconscious to prevail over the universal unconscious. The wife later appeared, and the secret was unveiled. The perfidious friends prostrated themselves, begged *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* for forgiveness. *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*, in a classically exemplary manner, forgave them all, thus laying the foundation for forgiveness.

The actions of Àyọ̀ká in *Wón rò pé wèrè ni,* and Àjàní, in *Àgbà tí ń yọ́lẹ̀ dà* are desirous. As earlier pointed out, the Yorùbá believe that vengeance is of God, not of man. The characters mentioned above actually propagate the Yorùbá spirit of *ọmọlúàbí*. No wonder; they are all rewarded in the end.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has established the fact that observing the spirit of *ọmọlúàbí* is a prerequisite for peaceful co-existence.

The Yorùba myths present us with the kind of moral behaviours that the society wants. The characters involved in the selected texts who allow their personal unconscious to have dominion over the universal unconscious get their negative rewards, while those who allow the universal unconscious to prevail are positively rewarded. Dúrójayé's actions and utterances in *Àgbà tí ń yólẹ̀ dà* confirm the suspicion that he is responsible for his brother's death. His intention to take possession of his brother's entire property makes him to kill his brother. He is arrested, tried and sentenced to jail.

In *Wọ́n rò pé wèrè ni,* it is evident that Bàbá Rámọ́, although worried about his deteriorated financial position, does not intend to seek the assistance of any cult group; he is persuaded by his wife (Àwáwù), and when he is asked to present a virgin for money ritual, Ládépò initially objects to his wife's suggestion to use Àyọ̀ká, his friend's only daughter, for the money ritual. After persuasion and assurance that the secret will not leak, he heed the suggestion. The Yorùbá say in that context *ó gun ẹṣin obìnrin*, meaning (he rode the woman's horse). Bàbá Rámọ́ eventually allows his personal unconscious to have pre-eminence over the universal unconscious. As expected, Bàbá Rámọ́ and Àwáwù his wife regret their actions in the end.

The same goes with Ọba Sinmisọ́lá in *Ayé yẹ wọ́n tán*. There is an English saying that: "Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely". Ọba Sinmisọ́lá intends to do the ideal but for the influence of his corrupt subjects. He is attracted by the material and financial benefits he will personally get from the hotel building project. Ọba Sinmisọ́lá eventually turns a tyrant. He oppresses and brutalizes his people, but the importance of maintaining the spirit of *ọmọlúàbí* is upheld when he is forced to observe the seven yearly sacrifices and oath taking which no tyrant ever survived.

Furthermore, we are made to understand that contrary to the belief that the society is handicapped to fight anti-social behaviours, the people are always prepared to do this. Fásakin and his people in *Ayé ye wọ́n tán* can be described as radicals who will always defy any attempt to stop them from fighting for justice, equity and fair play.

We recommend that for Africans in general, myths and indeed, oral materials should no longer be seen as inferior. African artists, in general, and the Yorùbá artists, in particular, who wish to use them in their works should seek universal relevance for them.

Furthermore, literary artists need to be more engaged in the overlapping use of African oral forms to generate new

aesthetics. Similarly, all stakeholders in the education industry need to propagandize the publication and use of didactic works of art that will be useful even to the semi-illiterates. Writers should come up with literary works of social engagement accessible to educational levels lower than the tertiary level. There is the need to review educational curricula to accommodate this from time to time. There is the need to publish short moral stories for the kindergarten pupils in order to boost their moral education.

In conclusion, the authors have demonstrated that the society sets and controls the people's morals, and unless these are strictly observed, the society cannot move forward. They also make it clear that no matter the level of civilization, no person with anti-societal behaviour can survive the wrath of the society.

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