

About the Book

The book is a reminder of the functionality and dysfunctionality of the society. It also discusses the role of art and the artist in identifying and correcting the various ills and vices therein. However, this book is recommended for everybody.

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Indeed, all the scholarly contributions are convincing enough for us to assume that this critical work is part of the growing trends of scholarly explorations that are artistically crafted to address socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural challenges that are confronting Africans, and the world at large.

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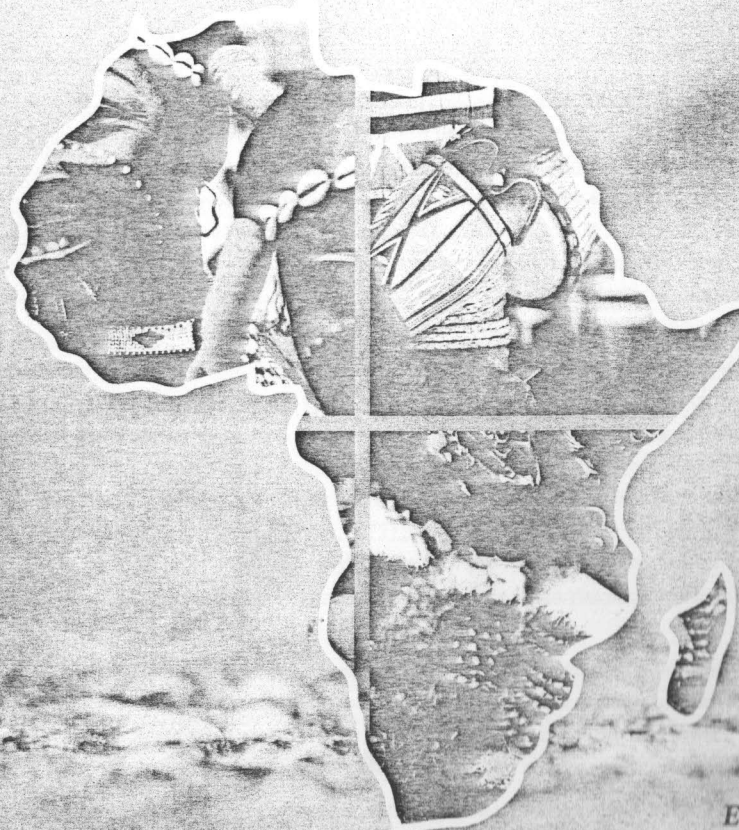
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African Culture and Performance Dynamics in the Dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye



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Character and Characterization of *Omoluàbí* in Adeoye's *The Killers*



Layo Ogunlola

Introduction

Moral issues have always been a topic of concern in most human discussions. Wilson (1995, p. vii) gives credence to this observation when he states that: "Virtue has acquired a bad name and yet the daily discourse of ordinary people is filled with oblique reference to morality". Looking at this from the Post-colonial discourse, there are disturbing evidences of serious moral decadence in the contemporary societies. There is a negative change in the people's attitude towards the observance and preservation of moral values which has precipitated a downward degeneration of such values, hitherto esteemed. Unfortunately, this is not peculiar to a particular society.

'*Omoluàbí*', is the nearest Yorùbá word for good character. Good character is cherished worldwide. However, it varies from one society to another. This is to say that what makes a good character in one society may not be regarded so in another society. This view raises a question as to whether this could be taken to mean that there is no universally accepted moral behaviour. Evidence abounds, that there are universally accepted and unaccepted behaviours. Wilson (1995, p. 17) has this to say on universal morals: "For murder not to be a universal wrong, one would have to imagine a society in which murder were subject to no general rule other than, perhaps, "only do it when you feel you can go away with it". He goes further to say that:

Sexual intercourse between brothers and sisters or between mothers and sons is universally condemned.....For incest not to be a universal wrong, one would have to imagine a society in which sex between brothers and sisters was approved of, or at worst, a matter of indifference.

We want to state that even among the Yorùbá incest is a crime not a taboo. Anyone who involves in such act is excommunicated from the town/village in some Yorùbá

communities. Such a person is said to give his family a bad name. The importance of morality to the entire human race cannot be overemphasized as the major components of its worldview are driven by moral philosophy. The Yorùbá people for example, regard good moral, (*iwà rere*) as of more importance to bad moral as (*iwà búburú*). Infact, the good or bad nature of a person is often determined by the extent of his or her closeness to or departure from "*iwà rere*". Abimbólá (1975, p.394) clarifies this point when he writes:

A man's "*iwà*" is what can be used to characterize his life; especially in ethical terms ... "*iwà*" is regarded by the Yorùbá as one of the very aims of human existence... This is why the Yorùbá regard "*iwàpèlè*" as the most important of all moral values.

This statement is not applicable to the Yorùbá alone but to other ethnic groups the world over. It is literature that presents the picture of the society to human minds, the life-style of a society, which includes their mode of dressing, eating habits, social interaction, mode of worships, beliefs and so on. Bámidélé (2000, pp.3-4) explains that: "the literary artists cannot do without the society so that his work will have direct bearing with the society". To do this effectively, a literary artist uses language which is the property of the society.

Eze (2005, p.2) asserts that literary texts speak to us in a mediated form known as literary techniques, metaphor, images, plot, scenes and so on. Stories are always meditated since what we experience in the text is already a reflected experience of the other (the narrator) and the author. This view is supported by Ísòlá (1998, p.37) who states that: "Language is the flesh and blood of any culture. When language is removed, it remains dry bone which symbolizes death". The Marxists see literature as a tool and solicitor on issues concerning politics, religion and laws for the people that own it. This implies that one cannot talk about a society without having a clear knowledge of its literature. It is literature that shows the exact picture of a society or group of people. This includes the entire lifestyle of such society or group.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the major function of literature is to depict the society that owns it. It is therefore not an overstatement to say that literature has very important roles to play in the moral life of the people in any society. As a custodian of cultural values and moral codes of the society, literature is one of the best means of transmitting the cultural values of any society. This is to say that literature as an art has the duty to expose the weaknesses of the society. This study examines the extent to which the selected work has performed these roles of literature.

This paper examines anti-*ompluàbí* behaviour as presented in Adeoye's play text, *The Killers*. For example, murder is a social ill and one of the acts grouped under societal vices by most if not all the societies of the world. The Yorùbá of Southwestern Nigeria for example

describes it as one of the behaviours that an '*ompluàbí*' should not be known for. As earlier mentioned, '*ompluàbí*' in Yorùbá context is that person known for good behaviours (virtues) as approved by the societal laws. On the other hand, a person known for unapproved societal laws (vices) is referred to as '*omplangidi*' meaning "a good-for-nothing person.

Culler (2007, p.32) states that:

Literature works towards social justice. It is an equalizer.... Literature draws attention to misery and focuses our attention on the individual, treating characters not as dreams but as figures whose experience and vision it may be possible to participate.

Most literatures of the world have always emphasized the principle of '*ompluàbí*' which, interestingly, has been one of the philosophies of the Yorùbá people of Southwestern Nigeria. Diverse expositions emanate in the quest to unravel the philosophical dispositions of a people. Adéyemí (2008, p.117), quoting Russell (1961, p.11) opines, "To understand an age or a nation, one must understand their philosophy". In other words, the philosophy of a people does much to determine the circumstances of their lives. This opinion is in line with Oládipò's (1998, p.34) view that, "to understand a people through their cultural expressions, one must judge each culture both in terms of the basic assumptions about reality in terms of its goals".

The philosophy of a society, therefore, is a guide to life and it varies from one culture to another. Omoregbe's (2001, p.3) addition to this is that: "Through the ages, philosophy has played a vital role in the development of the society. The philosophy of each society influences the people of that society". We support Omoregbe's view that the philosophy of a people largely influences the social, economic, political and religious life of the people. The philosophy of this study is that of morality ('*ompluàbí*'), the status of its degeneration which is having negative impact on the essences of life in the contemporary societies of the world at large. This paper examines A.A. Adeoye's play entitled *The Killers*. The aim is to examine the author's view about the vices rocking our societies nowadays. At the end, suggestions are made as to what can be done to rid our societies of the vices.

The objectives of this study therefore are to:

- (i). analyse the moral theme discussed in the selected play text.
- (ii). analyse the representation of forces against the spirit of '*Ompluàbí*' in the selected play text;
- (iii). critically examine the style of the playwright especially the use of language, characterization among others; and
- (iv). examine how the playwright uses his text to contribute to the revival of the '*Ompluàbí*' philosophy in the global society.

Experience has shown that globally today, cases of moral pollution are on daily increase. Cases of embezzlement, misappropriation of public funds, armed robbery, assassination and murder of political rivals, denial of people's rights and the likes are on daily increase. These behaviours are contrary to the ideals symbolized in the philosophy of "*omolúàbí*". This paper will also help to realize why it is very important to resuscitate the society's moral values especially now that most nations of the world are fighting against social ills by establishing different bodies to take charge of all cases of unethical behaviour in the society, with the lofty intention of transformation.

The Concept of *Omolúàbí*

As earlier mentioned, '*omolúàbí*' is a Yorùbá word that is synonymous with 'good character' (*iwà rere*). Some people refer to this as 'morality' while some call it 'ethics'. For the purpose of this work, we shall refer to '*omolúàbí*' as 'morality' or 'good character' as the case may be.

Morality is from the Latin word, 'moralital' meaning manner, character, proper behaviour etc. It has three principal meanings namely:

- (1). A code of conduct or belief concerning what is moral or immoral.
- (2). An ideal code of belief and conduct which would be preferred by the same 'moral' person under specified conditions.
- (3). Synonymous with ethics. 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), what moral people actually abide by (descriptive ethics).

The statement goes further to say that:

Morality can be seen as the collection of beliefs as to what constitute a good life. Since throughout most human history, religions have provided both visions and regulations for the ideal life.

Nygren (1996) defines morality as, "the system of controlling our actions and our thoughts in order to operate in a community". Morality is a behavioural pattern by classification that qualifies to be considered moral, fulfill some rewarding purpose for the people who sit together to draw some corporate judgment over such behavioural pattern. *Omolúàbí* is used to connote good character, ethics or behaviour as the case may be. It is a term that encapsulates the code of conduct of the Yorùbá people or society. It refers to a means of pursuing virtuous life, a way of life, and a set of principles regulating attitudes or behaviour of one towards another.

Akanmidu (1995, p. 6) classifies morality into three different perspectives namely:

- (a). pattern of the sense of fairness of a people.
- (b). the attitudinal differences between people of different cultural backgrounds, and
- (c). the accepted standard for the determination of the right from the wrong.

He concludes that: "Morality is essentially the effort to distinguish between the set of behaviours acceptable to people of the same ethnic cultural background from unacceptable". (p.10). this also mirrors Òlátúnjì, (1979, p. 2) assertion that:

In most traditional African societies, the kind of dichotomy of divorce of religion and literature does not exist. Among the Yorùbá, for example, literature enshrines the theology and cosmology of the people and reflects their ethics and morale.

What Òlátúnjì is saying here is that literature reflects the moral state of a society and that within the Yorùbá society; religion has many roles to play in determining people's behaviour. In as much as we believe that religion shapes people's moral, it is also evident that a person who cannot be regarded as being religious can be morally good. It is also possible for a person who claims to be religious to be morally bankrupt.

Who is an *Omolúàbí*?

Every African society has its own moral standards already set, the Yorùbá inclusive. These may differ from those of other races. The Yorùbá for example cherish good morals and anyone who is morally bankrupt has no place in the society. This implies that such a person is not accorded any respect from the people. Good morals in the Yorùbá context are called '*omolúàbí*'. Oyèrindé, (1985, p.43) says that: "the person who exhibits the right character at the appropriate time is the one we may call an '*omolúàbí*'. In the same vein, Yòlòyè (2009, p. 31) describes an '*omolúàbí*' as "a person born and raised by someone with good character, and by implication, a person with good character himself or herself". This is not different from Awoniyi's (1978, p. 2) assertion that: "an '*omolúàbí*' is a person who combines all good character and is regarded as good by everybody in his society". He says:

To be an '*omolúàbí*' is to be of good character in all its ramification. Good character in the Yorùbá sense, includes: respect for old age, loyalty to ones parents and local traditions, honesty in all public and private dealings, devotion to duty, readiness to assist the needy and the infirm, sympathy, sociability, courage, an itching desire for work, and many other desirable

qualities.

Awóniyí explains that the Yorùbá traditional system of education before the coming of the colonial masters has its main objective as making an individual an 'omolúàbí'. He writes: "Before colonization, there was a system of education known as the Yorùbá traditional or indigenous education system (*ètò èkó ibílẹ̀*). The main objective was to make the individual an 'omolúàbí'".

'Omólúàbí' (good moral principles) among the Yorùbá include the following: chastity before marriage, selflessness, hospitality, generosity, kindness, rectitude, honesty, reliability, responsibility/trustworthiness, straight-forwardness, protection of women as weaker sex, honour (and self-respect to parents, elders and those in authority), shunning acts of violence, drug abuse, murder, cheating in any form, violence and many others. The virtues mentioned here are the products of being an 'omolúàbí'. No one who lacks these virtues is considered as an 'omolúàbí' in the Yorùbá society. The Yorùbá prefer to be childless to having a morally bankrupt one who will bring shame to the family or tarnish the image of the family. Hence they say "*àkúkuùbí, ó sán ju èyí ràiràí*" meaning "not having a child at all is better than having a good-for-nothing child".

Among most African societies, the Yorùbá inclusive, 'omolúàbí' principle is not compromised. There is the belief that whatever a person becomes or has, if he does not possess the 'omolúàbí' qualities, such a person is a failure in life. This implies that it is not necessarily the highly placed, the rich or popular people who are referred to as 'omolúàbí', rather it is anyone who displays good character as approved by the society he or she lives. 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". Therefore, the training of an 'omolúàbí' is the joint responsibility of every member of the society.

Characteristics of 'Omólúàbí' in *The Killers*

From the onset, the author gives us the impression that things are not rosy under the Wazobian Government. The Government is filed with anti-omolúàbí behaviours. Drummer Two talks proverbially with Drummer One, he says:

Drummer One: Thank you my celebrated Drummer. Without your sound of wisdom and your proverbial voice, this world will be a difficult place to live. I have never doubted your skills and dexterity. They make my day, revive my culture and in spite of the power of globalization, your sound swells my head and turns me into a new baby. (*The Killers*, p. 2).

This statement indicates that people take their relief from the entertainment

provided by the drummer

Violence starts when none of the dancing groups is ready to accept defeat. One is tempted to believe that this happens because the dancing has monetary reward. Some of the dancers accuse the organizers of cultural discrimination or cultural conspiracy. They insist that minority rights must be guaranteed. Narrator One also confirms that the situation is nothing to rejoice for when he says in part:

Narrator One: Why must you dance in the face of agonies and crises? Yet you are already bleating like castrated animals. Why must you laugh and hiss when the nation is on fire? Are you people not aware that the avengers are on the loose? (p. 4).

Another evidence is when Narrator One tells narrator Two:

Narrator One: Talk to my people about the evil called violence. Let them know that peace radiates progress and prosperity while violence is a noxious stench of destruction, the last call to death. (*The Killers*, p. 5).

Narrator Two makes the people to understand that the news about kidnapping, bombing, looting which they read in the newspapers and watch in films are turning to reality. Knowingly or unknowingly, the people laugh and remain indifferent to the situation. He urges the people to put on their thinking caps. He however warns against violence, instead, he advocates dialogue as the best approach to solving problems of oppression. The situation in most African societies today is not different. It is doubtful if the leaders would allow dialogue to succeed. No wonder why the Student Leaders of Wazobia flared up saying "enough is enough, we no go gree". Violence erupts to protest the anti-omolúàbí behaviours of the rulers. Students carry dangerous weapons singing solidarity songs and discussing their catalogue of woes. They started by beating up five University workers, give them raw yam to eat and force them to drink urine. They allege that:

Reasonable time have been wasted on consultation with the University Administrators. After the consideration of our position, confrontation is the only way out. We will damage vehicles and create general pandemonium in the University Community. (p. 7).

If violence is a vice, then the Parents have important roles to play in preventing Youth violence. No wonder why the Orchestra tells Narrator One that his Uncle's son and the last child of his mother were among the Students. Narrator One enjoins the Orchestra to join him to sing whenever the Students sing their *Aluta Aluta*. He believes this will cool their tension and unwarranted rascallism.

Oppression is anti-omolúàbí. The Students accuse the leaders of oppressing the led. Alade says in part:

Alaide: All rulers now and then usually promise heaven on earth and when they ascend the throne, we are easily forgotten like unripe pawpaw. In fact, there was a President who ruled the Wazobian Nation like an Estate although with so many reform programmes that eventually reform the masses to their early graves. He called us ungrateful wretch for daring to fight. He threatened to kill us and warned our leaders to learn from Saro Wiwa's political suicide (*The Killers*, p.9).

Hence, their demand for social justice without which is the tonic for the egalitarian society but the question is whether the people will cooperate to fight against oppression? Definitely, there is need for a great deal of orientation like the one Fasakin carried out in *Ìṣòlá's Aye Yẹ Wón Tán*. Fasakin visited all villages under *Ìpò* to make them see reasons why they should join the protest against *Ọba Sinmisòlá's* oppressive rule.

It is also evident that most leaders are insensitive to the people's plight. Despite the complaint against oppressive rule, the leaders are not bordered. For instance Ekpebide accuses the Government saying: "Your actions and misdeeds have clouded you people in the toga of disunity. Call a white spade a white spade and avoid unnecessary diplomatic niceties, Niger Delta stinks". (*The Killers*, p.10). Azome, one of the supporting characters says: "Omare! Do your work before I build my anger and bring one of those awaiting death out for public execution. (*The Killers*, p. 10).

This statement further confirms the anti-*omoluabi* behaviour of our leaders today. Nigerian politicians don't want the people to believe they have their own rights, even if they know this, they should not ask or fight for it. If they do, they should be prepared to lose their heads. The author is also of the view that before a protest can be successful, all stake holders must cooperate. For instance, when Mr. Wood is accused of preferential treatment of workers and he is captured describing him as the termites that has built castle in the land while the people rot away hemmed down by poverty and rejected like rags, it is a surprise to see somebody like Orchestra protesting the arrest of Mr. Wood saying: "Free him! Mr. Wood must live!! no more violence, peace must reign". (p.10). This is an indication that people are always divided when it comes to fighting for freedom from oppression. Nevertheless, the author himself can be said to give us the impression that violence itself is a vice. It is anti-*omoluabi* and should be discouraged. It is not the best answer to solving the problem of oppression especially if one goes by what transpires between Narrators One and Two.

In the view of Narrator Two, two wrongs never make a right. He asks, Is killing the White innocent workers the solution to the Niger Delta problem? Narrator One answers:

Narrator One: Has any war ever been fought and won on the battle field? We want social justice, equity and decency but can't we meet genuinely at the conference table to iron out those problems? My message is clear, violence

begets violence and we say no to violence. (*The Killers*, p.11).

What Narrator Two is suggesting here is applicable to an ideal government. Experience has shown that most African Governments today (Nigeria inclusive) do not give room for this process to succeed. We have heard of several conferences, dialogues held by labour unions with the Government but even despite signing of agreements, no positive action is taken. It appears the language most African rulers understand is protest. They are often insensitive to the peoples' plight. Another factor that causes violence is excessive love of money and material wealth. This is a vice among Africans in general and the Yorubá people in particular. This is borne out of greed. Greed is anti-*omoluabi* in African culture in general. One of the main characters in the text, the Director, feels it is better one pulls out of his job if he is not satisfied with it instead of resulting to violence. He says:

Director: You jumped up, shouting that you were my President. Mind you, I was once a Student Leader in a Foreign University and by the special grace of my living God, I remain the Director today. Be satisfied with your job. (*The Killers*, p. 21).

In our opinion, the Director may not be sincere with himself. His statement suggests that either he is not affected by the plight of the people or that as the Director, he is not allowed by law to stage or support any form of protest. For instance, the in *Aye Yẹ Wón Tán*, the Law Enforcement Agents wholeheartedly support the protesters but they could not show this openly because the law does not allow it.

The Diviner also attributes violence to insincerity, dishonesty and dissatisfaction. Major General thinks that the Diviner is not sincere with him. Major General approaches the Diviner for bullet proof charms and money ritual. He gives excess money to the Diviner but the Diviner declines saying:

Diviner: . . . but I am satisfied with the little money with me. What is in that money that people accumulated illegally? The god of money is really missing road. He is entering the house of stone-looking syndicates who have no feeling for the masses. (*The Killers*, p. 27).

Despite this advice, Major General is not satisfied. He tells the Diviner that he is eyeing Lieutenant General, then General and finally Field Marshall, which is the ultimate. There are ample evidences that Major General is greedy and loves money than any other thing. His later actions attest to this feeling.

On the Director's arrival from overseas training, he laments that the President fails to extend his car gifts to the Civilians in Government but Major General reacts saying:

Major General: What is so bad in that? What about the Civilian and the syndrome of impotent budget? Well, the Civil Servants should find ways of

settling themselves. Those cars are to cool guys' nerves in the barracks. (*The Killers*, p. 27).

As if this is not enough, Major General still expects to take kick-back from the Director. He tells the Director: "You received two letters from the caucus, you ignored them. I phoned you thrice, you did not comply. Have you deposited money into the accounts? (*The Killers*, p. 30). The Director frowns at offering bribe claiming it is against his religion and conscience. He also condemns the agencies of corruption because they loot the treasury, kill and incarcerate the people. Major General is indifferent to this observation, instead, he promises the Director saying: "In two days' time, you will give a thorough definition of religion, conscience and God". (*The Killers*, p. 30).

Major General reminds the Director of:

Major General: How they ended the first republic with ballot fraud, monumental rigging of elections which simply gave room to the selection of candidates and the squandering of our money.....? What about the illegal rice deal? The empty treasury that we have is caused by who? Can you still remember what happened in the Wazobian house of Assembly during the inconclusive Third Republic? (*The Killers*, p. 31).

It would be recalled that the third republic in Nigeria was marred with oppression and dictatorship. The then Head of State was despotic. For the little period he used, many lives were lost. Life was very hard for the citizens. His rule ended tragically that even when he died, people took to the street celebrating the end of a 'tyranny'. This is exemplified in Qdunjo's *Agbalowoomeri Baale Jontolo* where people rejoice over the sudden death of Agbakammi, the tyrant ruler of Jontolo town. They even protest against appointing his heir as the new Qba believing that he (the heir) cannot be better in his behaviour.

By this claims, Major General makes us to believe that anti-ompluabi behaviours are everywhere in the society, none of our leaders/politicians is spared. The Director finds himself in a dilemma. He wants to be an "ompluabi" (to be honest and pure), but his society would not allow him. He exclaims:

Director: Because of political power, we have soldiers with extreme political minds and Civilians in corrupt regalia..... I see military men as vultures who now oppress the Civilian populace. (*The Killers*, p. 32).

At this point, Major General declines further argument from the Director and orders him to deposit money into the account numbers sent to him. He brags:

Major General: Enough of the riddles and jokes. Between life and death, choose one. And for the last time, Mr. Director, money must be deposited into those accounts!! I can no longer tolerate your yes and no. I am not

here for a discussion on politics. I am here because of money. (*The Killers*, p. 34).

This threat poses serious worries for the Director. He is afraid of the consequences of his failure to heed the Major General's order, yet he wants to be like an 'ompluabi' (a truthful and trusted fellow). At the end, he chose not to give in. he says:

Director: The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands at the time of comfort and convenience but where he stands at the time of challenge and controversy. No! I will not sacrifice my name to please some Generals. No! No and No (*The Killers*, p. 34).

On the other hand, Major General is being controlled by the 'id' and ego personality traits. He is desperate to make money thus he accuses President's friends of impersonation. He exonerates the President but sees his friends as stumbling blocks in his way to make money hence he vows they must be stopped. General Manager colludes with the Messenger who is also ready to do anything to get money. They are ready to terminate life to make money. This is an anti-ompluabi behavior. Even when the Messenger is told of the consequences of his action, (he will become impotent), he is ready to pursue the course.

The Messenger denies having any discussion with the Major General. The Messenger kills the Director with the gun after showing him Major General's picture, he says:

Messenger: Operation bye bye. Major General Andy is your Killer not me. I am only acting on instruction..... If you are an enemy of money, my group and I will not allow you to stop us under the guise of reformist proposition from making our millions. (*The Killers*, p. 43).

Further still, the Deputy Director laments the death of the Director despite the fact that he is likely to assume the position of Director. This is an "ompluabi" attribute. He says:

Deputy Director: Violence is a waste. It is done because of distortions and distractions. Violence deludes us of our conscience. It is a deadly judgment without trial. Violence is the relic of our unfortunate society done by vampires. The Director is gone... (*The Killers*, p. 43).

Major General on the other hand is a typical example of people that the Yoruba refer to as "omplangidi" (good-for-nothing) person. He sees nothing bad in terminating the Director's life. He sees no reason why the General Manager should cry and lament the death of the Director. The Messenger is not spared from the anti-ompluabi behaviour as he does not stop at killing the Director, but he also kills the Deputy Director, all because of money. According to the Diviner, nothingness beclouded by wickedness through heartlessness, all are anti-ompluabi behaviours. It is an irony that the General Manager later confessed that his conscience is at war with him. On the other hand, Major General is indifferent to their

actions. He wonders why the General Manager should be warned. As he counts money, he says:

Major General: Cowards! Cowards, the two of you when eventually become the Director, who will be socially elevated and be giving out contracts?..... You better forget the story of morality and a disturbed conscience. Be strong! Be courageous. ... (*The Killers*, p. 48).

The Messenger further encourages the General Manager saying that:

Messenger: You are only a collaborator. I am the one that executed our plans. Do you think that it is easy to kill? Harden up and stop behaving like a school pupil. Your fate is in your hands. If you like, expose yourself and be doomed.

Major General promises to get rid of the Chairman of the Panel of inquiry into the incidents of murder calling the Panel Chairman "a lizard". He accuses Government of complacency especially on the issue of appointments. He says:

Major General: The era of meritocracy is gone. The period we are now, is a period of social pretensions. For corruption is now a stigma to the poor and a way of life for the rich. Most of those who are fighting corruption are themselves agents of corruption ... (*The Killers*, p.50).

The actions of the Major General and the Messenger show that our Government is full of Saboteurs. It is evident that even in government today, we have hardened criminals like Major General and Messenger who are driven by ego personality. They are ready to achieve their heart desire by any means and are prepared to do away with (get rid of) whoever wants to stand on their way.

The same is the case with the Prison Controller who confesses not feeding the Prisoners with Government money. This makes him a millionaire. The Bank Manager kills his Accountant and Bank Secretary to be able to destroy vital Bank documents. These are fraudulent acts and tantamount to anti-omoluabi behaviour. The author however makes us to believe that no culture, the world over approves murder. It is evil and it is a vice. The Yoruba believe that when a young person dies or when someone dies a sudden death, the spirit of such person roams about. The Director's ghost appears to the Killers, the Messenger being the most affected. The Diviner persuades the Messenger to confess his actions when they hear the news that Major General died from bomb explosion. Fear grips the Messenger who would not want to die. He persuades the Diviner to perform rituals on his behalf. The Diviner warns the Messenger not to visit him again. He says: "Purge yourself and search yourself, violence is anti-human. From now on, I don't want to see you again in my house..... (*The Killers*, p.56).

The Messenger threatens the Diviner in return. He reminds the Diviner that he has a

gun and could gun the Diviner down. He attempts to strangle the Diviner but for his magical (spiritual) power. Quite a number of prominent Nigerians have been killed through bomb explosion, food and fruit poisoning, and the likes, all because of money, position or material things. All anti-omoluabi behaviours of the characters are punished. The author makes us to understand that the message of the play is for everybody (leaders and the led alike). He assures his audience that the consequences of any anti-omoluabi behavior would be disastrous. He advises the "killers" in our society to change for better.

In Nigerian Government Administration of today, favouritism, god-fatherism, murder, killing of political opponents, kidnapping and ransom demands and several other anti-omoluabi behaviours have become the order of the day. Our Government is insensitive to the plight of the masses. Oppressive rule is encouraged in all three arms of Government even with the application of the country's constitution. Our leaders syphon public money, earn huge salaries, award huge contracts to themselves, even when most state Governments are unable to pay up to ten months salary arrears owed their workers.

Presently, an average Nigerian lives in abject poverty. Things are hard for majority of the people, yet the leaders are insensitive to their plights. The author warns that nemesis will surely catch up with perpetrators of evil just as all perpetrators of evils are rewarded in the play under scrutiny.

Akinjogbin, (2009, pp.20-24) asserts that the influx of foreigners from different parts of the world to Yoruba land punctured her ethical principles. New religions, new system of education and politics, new trade and professions different from those of the pre-colonial era has emerged. This implies that the advent of foreigners marks the beginning of a new orientation not only in politics, economic and social life, but also in the ethical principles of the people. These experiences and the reasons that emanate from them have made the resuscitation of the classic social life of the Yoruba people imperative.

Conclusion

The paper carefully examined the presentation of characters of "omoluabi" in the Play text, *The Killers*. It is discovered that Nigeria is fast becoming a terrorist country where people just kill their fellow man (political opponent) or/and their business associates at will and for dubious reasons. Oppression is the order of the day. Oppressors are indifferent to the plight of the oppressed. Everybody is being driven by ego personality. Even a messenger wants to get rich through dubious means. No wonder, the Messenger in the play surrenders himself to be used as an instrument of destruction. Similar anti-omoluabi behaviours perpetrated by the Characters mentioned above led to the death of prominent Nigerians who could have been of great value to the country. These kinds of happenings draw the country backwards politically, economically or even socially too. A situation where our rulers/leaders

are controlled by 'id' and ego personality cannot do the nation any good. The author is of the view that no sinner should go unpunished. All anti-*omoluabi* characters must be visited and rewarded accordingly and unless we turn new leaves, revisit our tradition, our culture, our origin and imbibe the spirit of '*omoluabi*', as only doing so can move our society forward positively.

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