

Re-Examination of the Traditional Yoruba Cultural Traditions of Morality and Their Implication for Abundant Life

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Abstract.

This paper is a critical re-examination of the ways the ancient¹ Yoruba conceive of morality and how that conception affects their inter-subjective relations and their notion of abundant life. The paper addresses the pertinent questions, such as what does it mean for the Yoruba people to have abundant life? What are those modes of behaviours that constitute for the Yoruba morality and how and where are those notions derived from? How Yoruba cultural society transmits those patterns of moral behaviours such as: generosity/hospitality, kindness, respect for life, truthfulness and, etc. to individuals as a system of inherited conceptions from generation to generation? How have those conceptions changed in modern times? What role can religion play in informing, coordinating, synthesizing and moderating individuals and the collectives to conform to the culturally perceived moral abundant life? The paper uses anthropological and descriptive phenomenological methods of enquiries to argue that in the modern day Yorùbá world, traditional Yoruba conception of moral virtues would still need to be revisited.

Introduction

The main thesis of this paper is that the traditional Yoruba people had the criterion for moral atmosphere where life is lived in its

¹The way I used traditional here is traced to the time when the Yorùbá life and traditions have not been tainted by the colonial influence. In this connection, I am likely to be using the words ancient and traditional interchangeably, but where I do so I will try to make myself as clear as possible.

fullness; a communal life of good harmonious relationship where individualistic selfish tendency is critically frowned at. It also critically examines the current ugly experiences of the destruction of life and communal and cultural values in the name of Christianity and Islamic modernizing principles (ayé òlájú). I argue in this paper that one of the root causes of the erosion of moral values today has to do with the teaching of especially Christianity and Islam that relegate the traditional Yoruba moral teachings to archaic and anachronistic modes of behaviours. I examine this paper in four sections: in the first section I examine the traditional Yoruba conception of abundant life; in the second section I critically analyze the ancient Yoruba conception of moral virtues and how this conception affects their worldviews, in this endeavour, I isolate two or three examples of moral virtues that seem to be vastly eroding away from the modern Yoruba society; in the third section I examine the roles of community and religion in informing, coordinating, synthesizing and moderating individuals and the collectives to conform to the culturally perceived morality; I argue in the last section that there is need for rethinking and embracing those traditional moral virtues in order to achieve a genuine moral abundant life in our modern world.

Traditional Yoruba Conception of Abundant Life

While it may be correct to claim that there are patterns of cultural behaviours all over the world,² yet it is paradoxically equally true to argue that all cultural practices are not similar and the same the world over. In fact, before the era of modernity and globalization, it is clear that there are elements of traditional ideas and values in all societies of the world that remained uniquely different from other. Even in our present dispensation, to a certain extent, we are in a world of relativity of moral values and ethics of behaviours. Two proverbs are relevant in this regard, *Ibi gbogbo ni a tí ndáná alé, sùgbón obè leè yàtò*. [We might be cooking everywhere at night, yet one soup will be different from the other]. Or the second one that says: *Bààyí ni à tí nsé ní ilée wa , èwò ibòmíràn*. [This is how we do in our family (house) is a taboo in another family]. Therefore, it

² See Benedict, Ruth (1959) *Patterns of Culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

is very important to know that moral values are different from culture to culture.

In the modern Yoruba society, however, just as one may find all over the African societies, it is without any iota of doubt that all traditional ideas and moral values are being abandoned, modified or coloured by the changing situations.³ The unfortunate matter of fact is that while we can identify what the ancient Yoruba people value to constitute abundant life to be slightly different from the Western value, yet many of these values are being rejected by some modern-day Yoruba educated elite.⁴ By way of digression, let us take for instance the value of showing deference or reverence by boys and younger men such as bowing (kneeling for girls and younger women) for all elderly people when greeting in the Yoruba culture is more than the narrow confine of the western conception of it in terms of mere submission or courteously yielding to opinions of superior powers.⁵ As insignificant as this behaviour may seem to the western observers, it is highly priced and valued by the traditional Yoruba people.⁶

³ See also this line of thought in John S Mbiti's 1997 edition: *African Religions and Philosophy*, (Oxford : Heinemann Education Publishers), p.x

⁴ P.O. Bodunrin believes that most African scholars in their endeavors and efforts to champion African course have unwarrantedly romanticized the African past, which prevent them from taking a rational, critical and objective look at the African ideas and beliefs they seek to defend. See P.O. Bodunrin (1981), "The Question of African Philosophy." *Philosophy* 56 (1981): 61-79; see also Ikuenobe, Polycarp, 2006, *Philosophical Perspectives on Communalism and morality in African Traditions*, (NY: Lexington Books), p.31.

⁵ See Merriam Webster online Dictionary definition of deference. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/deference>

⁶ This tradition is vastly eroding, because such principles mentioned in the body of this paper are no longer being taught in most elitist Yoruba family in modern times, which can be traced to the influence of the Western values on the Yoruba. Apart from this, majority of Yoruba Muslims believe that showing deference in form of bowing is only meant for Allah in their reading and interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. I see this as part of Islamic modernizing principle which cannot be ignored.

The act of greeting elderly people through taking the first initiative of shaking elderly people's hands in the Yorùbá culture is considered highly immoral, or if we put it in contemporary language; it is an indication that a person has not been properly schooled in the Yoruba normative moral values. The Yoruba people will say *Kò ní èkó* [He or She does not have (moral) education]. In fact, the Yoruba go as far as saying that such an individual lacks proper home training. So in this connection ancient Yoruba family plays a significant role in schooling a child for cultural appreciation. Community in the Yoruba context is also another basis for morality in that it guarantees the well-being of both the individual and the community. I will come back to this point in the latter part of this paper. What is the meaning of abundant life for the Yoruba people? I will describe such life as a life of individual and communal peace and harmony with oneself and with other people (visible and invisible, living and the dead), general welfares, bonding and sharing in another person's joy and suffering (sorrow); it is a life that is lived in its fullness in the midst of reality of good and evil. The concept of Ubuntu captures this very well.

According to the principle of Ubuntu, human beings are inextricably connected to one another in concrete, rather than abstract ways, such that the humanity of one is defined by the humanity of the other person and by membership of a community. According to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, "A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed."⁷ This latter part of the quote; "is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed..." needs further probing and worth carefully reflecting upon.

There seems to be presently lacking, this very important virtue and character trait in many of the highly placed individuals even among

⁷ Tutu Desmond (1999,) *No Future Without Forgiveness*.

the so-called religious people in the modern day Yoruba society. Selfish and egocentric individuality is the order of the day. The whole concept of abundant life has been given a totally new meaning. Abundant life is now interpreted using the narrow lenses of how well an individual fares well economically within any given society. The Pentecostal/Evangelical interpretation of abundant life with regard to individual salvation and not as a collective one has made the matter worse. In many Christian churches in the Yoruba society home and abroad, there is now a tendency to think of the concept of the biblical phrase, “goodness and mercy” in terms of individual possession within the same *kononia* (community) of faith without giving any consideration to the community as a whole⁸. I hope to shed more light on this also later on in this paper.

Moral Virtues and how they Impact on Abundant Life

The widespread acceptance of good moralities such as generosity (*ìfifúni*), hospitality (*ìkónimóra*) kindness (*ìsoore*), truthfulness (*ìsòtító*), respect for life (*ìbòwò fún èmí èniyàn*), selflessness (*àìmo ti ara eni nìkan*) are common motifs in Yorùbá folklore, particularly ‘*Àló*’ (also known as Yorùbá folk tales), and can also be learned through proverbs and perhaps in *Ifá* corpus (*Odù*) and some mythical stories and parables. Many of these Yorùbá proverbs and folk tales (i.e. *Àló*) are meant to convey moral precepts, to teach societal norms and etiquettes, to comment on life and living, and to portray the structure of society⁹. Of particular relevance for the present discussion are the ‘*Àló*,’ proverbs and the thought systems of *Ifá* corpus. I hope to shed more light on these important

⁸ In the local church I am presently attending in Houston, it has become a common expression, anytime the church service is to end for the priest to ask people to say the common routine biblical expression: “Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life...”(Psalm 23: 12). Pay attention to the personal word “me” as opposed to collective “us”. The reason according to the priest, why the statement should be personalized is because one may not be too sure whether somebody sitting besides one may or not want goodness and mercy to follow him or her.

⁹ See Moses Oke’s article on An Indigenous Yoruba - African Philosophical Argument against Capital Punishment, in *The Journal of Philosophy, Science & Law*. Vol. 7, July 11, 2007 www.miami.edu/ethics/jpsl

pedagogical tools in the next section. Proverbs, adages, and wise sayings represent rich sources for the study of African beliefs and practices as well as moral values.

When we closely look at the words generosity, hospitality, and kindness, we can easily see that they are interconnected and are keenly related. It is expected that a person who possesses a virtuous moral character, such as kindness ought to be generous and hospitable. But all these virtues are very intrinsically connected with and relevant to individual and communal abundant life so much so that where they are lacking we cannot be talking of abundant life. In fact, we can link the fourth closely related virtue, selflessness to the three and proceed to make a claim that where these four virtues are found, peace and progress are not to be found wanting. In this paper, my ultimate aim is to argue most importantly that two moral virtues: selflessness and kindness, serve as superstructure upon which all other moral virtues are laid.

A person who has these two moral virtues is considered by the Yoruba people as *èniyàn* in a normative sense. Since according to Gbadegesin (1991: 27-59)¹⁰ the Yoruba word for person can be contextualized in two ways: the literary and normative. Of course, a person must first and foremost qualify as a literal person before his/her character could be judged as either normatively good or bad. Thus, a selfless and kind individual is *èniyàn gidi* (which I can transliterate to mean original person, or a variant of it, a normal person). It is not uncommon for the Yoruba to express a word of gratitude for a selfless and kind individual who is either alive or dead as *Eni tí ó sé èniyàn* in its short form, *Ó s' èniyàn* (He is a

¹⁰ I am not intending to go into the details of the four components of personhood as carefully explained by Segun Gbadegesin within this limited time frame. However, I will show the connection between the Yoruba concept of normal *eniyan* (person) and how it affects abundant life. See Gbadegesin Segun (1991), *African Philosophy: Traditional Yoruba Philosophy and Contemporary Realities* (New York: Peter Lang), chapter 2 is very important to this discussion.

great, good, or an honourable person or a human being).¹¹ On the contrary, however, a person who is selfish and unkind is said to have a flawed moral character. Thus, he or she is not a person in a normative sense. Yoruba will say *Kìì sé èniyàn* (he is not a normal person not in anatomical and physiological sense here but in a moral sense).

When the traditional Yoruba think about abundant life, they think this in terms of persons who exhibit good moral characters that lead to peaceful co-existence of an individual and the community these persons belong. They think in terms of a situation whereby one person is not making progress at the expense of the others. In fact, a Yoruba proverb captures this concept very well, which says: *Olówó kan ni ààrin òtòsì méfà, òtòsì ni gbogbo won* [one rich person among six other poor persons, all of them combined together are all poor]. Initially I used to think of this proverb in term of the one who is rich being rendered poor by the other six poor persons by their uncontrollable demands of material substance from him or her. But upon my careful reflection, I note that what the Yoruba mean is that a selfless and kind individual will not close his or her bowel of compassion and continue to enjoy his/her wealth when people around him or her are suffering.

Hence, because he or she is as compassionate as he/she is selfless, he or she constantly thinks of his or her abundance in terms of how much he or she could make other poor people around him or her happy, thus contributing to the general welfare of the other people.

¹¹ Upon my resumption in Rice University for my Graduate program, a weeklong orientation program was organized for the International Students. On one of those days, we were hosted by the president of the University in person of Professor David Lebron in his house. As we students were busy interacting among ourselves, the president spotted me from afar and came straight to my place. He asked about what area of study I belong, I told him, I am in Religious Studies, he asked further, and who is your advisor? I answered that he is Professor E.B. (I keep the full name for political reason). He exclaimed: That is a human being!!! I kept that in my mind for some hours and I continued to ask myself the pertinent question; does that mean not all people in Rice University are human beings?

This could be in term of ensuring that the poor people also have some degree of access to the basic necessities of life. In fact, another Yoruba proverb tidies this up very clearly: *Bí orí kan bá sunwòn a máa ran igba* [when one head is great, wealthy, good, etc; it affects other two hundred heads]. The implication of this is that, one person who is well-to-do cannot claim to have abundant life where these moral virtues of selflessness and kindness are lacking.

According to Gbadegesin (1991: 58):

A person whose existence and personality is dependent on the community is expected in turn to contribute to the continued existence of the community. This is the normative dimension of the concept of *Ènìyàn*. The crown of personal life is to be useful to one's community. The meaning of one's life is therefore measured by one's commitment to social ideals and communal existence.

In this connection, I assume that the Yoruba will think of such persons such as Obáfémi Awólówò whose concern was the improvability of all Yoruba people by having access to free and quality education; Móremí of Ile-Ife, who volunteered herself to make a discovery of the Igbo (Ibo) people, the then enemies who had been troubling the Ife people, and upon her discovery fulfilled her vow by sacrificing her only son for the welfare of the whole community; and Ogedengbe of Ilesa, who fought relentlessly and selflessly for the freedom of Ijesa people from the Ibadan overlord. These people and various others that are too numerous to mention here are regarded as *ènìyàn* possessing moral virtues in the real sense of the word.

Whereas, a person who thinks of how he/she can cheat others, manipulate others, get more than he/she deserves is regarded as egocentric, selfish individual. He/she is said to be no person or not human being (*Kí se ènìyàn*) or they say, *kò ní awo (skin) ènìyàn ní ara* [he/she does not have compassion of human person]. His/her concern does not go beyond self. In the contemporary Nigerian

political system (democratic) today, many Yoruba people who have been chosen to represent their different wards with a view to bringing relief and better life to the people they represent in terms of social amenities such as good roads, drinkable water, constant electricity and provision of jobs are busy amassing wealth for themselves that are meant to do those projects. It is highly inconceivable that the culture of acquiring many motor cars, building many houses, acquiring many landed properties that actually belong to a whole community by a single individual is the order of the day with the modern day Yoruba political, spiritual and community leaders. In this regard, I am also thinking of some Obas (kings) in the Yoruba society who are supposed to advocate for better life for the people they rule over but are busy profiting themselves through exploitation and manipulation of the people they are ruling.

Examples such as this abound in the modern-day Yoruba society, namely: the immediate past speaker of the nation is a Yoruba person, who is now being indicted for misappropriating more than nine billion naira; it is also one of the Yoruba Obas who was awarded a contract of road construction in the early Nineties, yet the road was poorly done and pathetically, thousands of lives have been claimed; it is also one of the top Yoruba women at the helm of affairs of a thriving bank in Nigeria, who amassed so much money through stealing that the bank went into liquidation. One wonders; how can there be an abundant life in a community or society where these kinds of people are living?

The most unfortunate thing still is the ugly examples of some Yoruba pastors who are making a lot of money at the expense of their poor congregation who needed one help or the other. It is worrisome still, that the school fees of many of the private schools founded by some of these Yoruba Christian leaders are too expensive and out of the reach of the poor masses. Yet, paradoxically, these pastors preach to their congregations who are still wallowing in abject poverty that the only way to abundant life is through the sacrificial giving by these poor masses. Of course, this exploitation of the masses by the ruling classes has always been part of the ancient Yoruba society, which according to

Gbadegesin (1991:177) “was predicated upon the doctrine of predestination which was accepted by the people without questioning.” Yet, the case was not as bad as we are witnessing in our contemporary Yoruba reality. In those days, people still enjoyed a higher degree of peace and progress, and even if they were not, is our culture ought to be dynamic and progressive by learning from the mistakes of the past so as to better the present?

Roles of Religion and Community

There have been abundant arguments as to whether moral virtues or simply put morality is a product of religion. Many African theologians and scholars have argued in favor of religion being the source of morality (Bolaji Idowu[1962], 1990; J.S. Mbiti [1969], 1997; Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, 1996; Laurenti Magesa [1997], 2001), while some African philosophers have raised objections against this argument (Wiredu, 1983; Gyekye 1987; Gbadegesin, 1991).The former especially Idowu argued that, “with the Yoruba, morality is the fruit of religion...”¹² The latter contend that, morality is “logically independent of religion.”¹³ What I intend to do here is to see how these two opposing opinions can be used prospectively to argue that both can serve as the sources of morality. How I intend to do this here is by referring to some of the folktales that are usually told in the Yoruba society without making any reference to religion, on the one hand and on the other hand, I intend to show how religion has been used in both the ancient and modern Yoruba society as the foundation of morality.

As said earlier in this paper, folktales (*Alo*), are often told to children in virtually all Yoruba communities to teach and imbue good moral character in children and youth. *Ìjàpà* in particular, as

¹² Idowu Bolaji (1962), 1990, *Olódùmarè: God in Yoruba Belief* Lagos: Longmans, p.146.

¹³ Wiredu Kwasi “Morality and Religion in Akan Thought” in H. Odera Orika and D. A. Masolo [eds] 1983 *Philosophy and Cultures*, Nairobi: Bookwise, p.13.

an “allegorical animal”¹⁴ features more frequently than other animals in the Yoruba storytelling ingenuity. Usually animal stories are like myths that are told to “validate a social order.”¹⁵ Growing up in this Yoruba community in about four to five decades ago, I always looked forward to hearing *àlò* being told by the elderly people to reinforce the moral characters these elders would want to inculcate in children and youths. One example of such folktales (*alo*) is the one that involves Ijapa. This story shows one of the various ways the Yoruba use in teaching on morality. In this story,¹⁶ Ijapa and other animals were invited from *ajule aye* (earthly abode) for a great and memorable party in *ajule orun* (heavenly abode).

Ijapa being a trickster schemed out other animals by making himself the master of ceremony who was to be contacted by both the organizer and the attendees in case of any new development. Eagle (the bird) was the messenger who was sent from *àjùlè òrun* to *àjùlè ayé* to be contacting Ijapa on the arrangements about this all-important party being organized. Ijapa informed all other animals including birds on how to go to the party. Of course, going to party in *ajule orun* will involve flying there. A solid arrangement was made on how this could be made possible in transporting land animals — Ijapa inclusive. Eagle offered to carry Ijapa on his back to *ajule orun*, and other big birds offered to do the same for other animals.

However, on the way to *ajule orun*, Ijapa told all the animals that whenever the organizer asked where all of you are, he should be allowed to answer since he is the master of ceremony. All the animals consented to this seemingly perfect but flawed arrangement. On getting to *ajule orun*, all animals were made to sit

¹⁴ See Michael Jackson (1982). “Hare and Hyena” from *Allegories of the Wilderness: Ethics and Ambiguity in Kuranko Narratives*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp.90-122.

¹⁵ Schmidt, Roger (1980) *Exploring Religion* California, Wards worth Inc.

¹⁶ Oral stories like this are common to all societies of the world. In fact, Stories connect us to the time-tested wisdom of the world's peoples and teach moral lessons we want to pass on to the younger generations

at one place assigned for them. Ijapa was allowed to be moving forth and back from the organizer of the party to where all other animals were. When it was time to serve food to the invitees, Ijapa was asked: where are all of you? Ijapa told the organizer that he is the one representing “all of you” (*gbogbo yín*). Ijapa received the food that was meant for all of you and treated himself to a sumptuous meal all by himself. After he had eaten to his fill, he made arrangement on how to transport the remaining to *ajule aye* to give his wife and his only child. Ijapa thought to himself: what could I do so as to get away from this place before other animals know what had happened? As he was thinking about this new scheme, all other animals aware that food had been made ready long ago became impatient. They all went to meet the organizer to ask for what was causing a delay in serving them food.

On getting to the organizer, they asked him what had happened to their food and Ijapa. Eagle who was representing the organizer, told them that their food had been given to Ijapa more than an hour ago. The organizer asked that eagle and other animals should search for where Ijapa was. When Ijapa was found, the food that was meant for “all of you” had been consumed all by him alone; he was actually busy contemplating on how to escape with the remaining food to *ajule aye* when they caught him. All the other animals became furious and they left in anger for *ajule aye*. Ijapa became helpless and did not know what to do to get back to *ajule aye*. He later thought of jumping from *ajule orun* to *ajule aye*. At least law of gravity should be able to assist him now, he thought to himself. He gathered all the remaining food and then jumped with all his power but when Ijapa landed, he landed on a rough solid rock. The unfortunate happened, he crashed and his bones and his back were fractured beyond repair. This is the end of the story. The elderly people would ask: what does this story teach us? They would explain that the story teaches us that we should not be selfish, because selfishness leads to self-suffering and destruction. [*Eni tí ó bá dá ayé je òhun ní yòò dá iyà je*]; He who enjoys life alone will suffer alone.

One can see the relevance of this story to this paper in at least three ways. First, in a larger community, no single person can be named

“all of us” or “all of you,” a community is made up of aggregate of collective individuals. Secondly, no one person can acquire what belongs to the whole community and thinks he could get away with it; there is usually an adverse effect of that as seen in the story above. Thirdly, no matter how long, truth will eventually uncover a lie, which is also what happened to Ìjàpà, who thought he could cover up his lie by secretly leaving the scene of the occasion in *ajule orun*. This story and others like it were usually told without any reference to religion. But we can bring out at least one element of an appeal to religion in this story, namely: the mere reference to *ajule orun* (heavenly abode), will make a student of religion like me to think in term of a reference to metaphysical realm of abode. It is equally plausible to think that the organizer of the party might be Olódùmarè or any of the heavenly divinities. If this assumption is correct, religion is already implied in the above story. But this is just my own religious reading into this story¹⁷. Let me briefly show how religion often has been explicitly used by the Yoruba to teach good moral characters.

Traditional Yoruba religious worshippers often see themselves as a community of believers and they enter into covenant relationship with one another in order to see that there is peaceful and harmonious co-existence. But in all cases, such covenant relationship is carried out in the presence of the divinities that they would all co-exist peacefully and be of good moral characters. In fact, Gbadegesin (1991:101) adds another dimension to this, by claiming that, “Co-worshippers receive their instructions from and enter into covenants with the divinities to be of good behaviour. These covenants oblige them to enter into good relationships, not only with one another, but also with their fellow community

¹⁷ I am not trying to commit the same fallacy that many African theologians have committed in arguing that “the study of morality or ethics, therefore, involves the study of religion (Laurenti Magesa, 1997: 3)” or for that matter to make a sweeping generalization that “In all things for Africans is religion,” (E. B. Idowu 1962; Mbiti, 1969). But what I am trying to show is that for religious students and scholars or for that matter those who have religious perspectives to every area of their lives, religious meaning is read to all those areas of life.

members who belong to different *Òrìsàs*.” It is in this sense that one can make a case for teaching of good morality using religious argument. For instance, Obàtálá, an-arch divinity who was commissioned to create human beings and the earth in the Yoruba mythic account of creation, was said to be very drunk so much so that he forgot what he was commissioned to do. In order to correct this error, all his devotees bind themselves with an oath to abstain from strong wine so as to avoid being intoxicated and thereby maintaining purity of conduct and character.

Because of the covenant that they all have entered into, everybody is careful to abide by the terms of the covenant so as to avoid bad consequences in not abiding by the covenant. The good thing about this covenant is that it is non-prejudicial; it is binding on all and sundry. This is one beauty of traditional Yoruba religion. Any devotee who breaks the covenant, perished in the process. Unfortunately, what we are seeing today is that such atmosphere of trust is completely gone and good morality has been thrown into the wind. The questions we need to ask ourselves in this contemporary political dispensation is: Why are those people in the Yoruba community who have entered into covenant with their fellow human beings and in the presence of or with Christian/Islam or traditional Yoruba religions Gods to serve their people breaking those covenants, hence, forgetting the people who elected them into power? Why should those people who have pledged their allegiance to represent their people at the state and federal levels of government choose to lead the kinds of selfish and uncanny lives they are living? Is it not about time we reverted to some of the good ideals of the traditional Yoruba concept of moral abundant life?

Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that there is need to re-examine those traditional Yoruba practices of morality, which have contributed to abundant life for them. I started by examining those precepts of good morality such as kindness, selflessness, compassion, truthfulness, hospitality and others, which have been contributing to good harmonious relationship in the traditional Yorùbá society. I

looked at what the Yoruba mean when they say *èniyàn* especially in normative sense. I discussed the paper without elaborating in details the examples of people who meant well and have contributed to the general welfare of the Yoruba people in the past. I examined both religious and non-religious means (oral folktales) as pedagogical tools through which good morality have been prospectively used by the traditional Yoruba in informing, coordinating, synthesizing and moderating individuals and the collectives to conform to the culturally perceived morality. My conclusion is based upon this nuance, that if we could revert to those good traditional values we are very likely to enjoy an atmosphere of moral abundant life again.

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